

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHTON ST PETER'S VA SCHOOL

Dunstable

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109703

Headteacher: Mr M H Curtis

Reporting inspector: David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 10 - 13 October 2000

Inspection number: 224748

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Street Dunstable Bedfordshire
Postcode:	LU5 4RP
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Graham Newton
Date of previous inspection:	05/06/98

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Westall 2414	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Music Design and technology	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Elizabeth Forster 1333	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Sarah Foulkes 22840	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Equal opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
Sandy Wellsted 3860	Team inspector	English Geography Physical education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 127 pupils on roll, aged from four to nine years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average; and no pupil speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average; and two pupils have statements of special educational need. In 1999 and 2000, children's standards on entry to the reception class were significantly lower than in previous years. Children's standards on entry to the current reception class were broadly average in relation to their personal and social and mathematical development, while their speaking and early literacy skills were a little below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school in which pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science, and benefit from particularly effective teaching in Years 1, 2 and 4. The school is a caring community where pupils' personal development is fostered well and their attitudes are good. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, although elements of the headteacher's monitoring procedures need improvement. Standards are at least satisfactory in all subjects of the curriculum, with the exception of information and communication technology, and design and technology. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' standards are above average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils benefit from good teaching in Key Stage 1 and in Year 4.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is good.
- The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- The school has effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development.
- The school benefits from a highly committed and well informed governing body.
- There is a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- The school is a caring community.

What could be improved

- Standards are too low in information and communication technology and in design and technology.
- The headteacher needs to establish a more systematic programme for observing teaching, and his work as co-ordinator for science and design and technology needs to improve.
- Most subject co-ordinators should make more effective use of information from their monitoring to raise standards.
- The length of the school week is below the recommended minimum period in Key Stage 2.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress since its full OFSTED inspection in 1995 (when it was found to be failing to provide an acceptable standard of education) and its shorter inspection in 1998 (when it had improved but still had serious weaknesses, particularly in leadership and management). The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in four out of every ten lessons in 1995, and in one in every five across the school in 1998. Unsatisfactory teaching is now very rare, and good teaching is frequently evident. In both the previous inspections, more able pupils were often making unsatisfactory progress, but this is no longer the case. Indeed, they progress particularly well in English and mathematics, across the school. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspections; and teachers now make good use of assessment. Weaknesses in school development planning have been successfully addressed, and the overall quality of leadership and management has improved. However, there are still some weaknesses in aspects of monitoring by the headteacher; and the school has made insufficient progress in improving standards in information and communication technology, which are still too low.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	C	B	A	A
Writing	A*	A	A	A
Mathematics	B	A	A	B

Key	
In the highest 5% nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that the school's results in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average and the results of similar schools. At the time of the inspection, no national averages were available to compare with the school's 2000 results. However, in all three subjects, the school's results were at least equal to those it achieved in 1999.

Inspection findings confirm the good standards reached in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1, in Year 2, and also show that pupils achieve similarly well in these subjects in their final year at the school, in Year 4.

Pupils achieve standards which match those expected nationally in art and design, geography and history in Year 2 and Year 4. However, standards are below average in information and communication technology, and in design and technology.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with each other. They share equipment sensibly, listen with interest during discussions and respect the ideas and beliefs of others. Pupils respond well when given responsibility for a range of school duties.
Attendance	Attendance is good, with low levels of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 97 per cent of all lessons observed. In reception, the teaching is mainly satisfactory and is otherwise good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is particularly effective, with over three-quarters of all lessons demonstrating good, and occasionally very good, teaching. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is satisfactory in Year 3 but usually good in Year 4. The needs of more able pupils and those with special educational needs are mainly addressed effectively.

In English, mathematics and science, the teaching is mainly good, and enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. The most effective teaching in these subjects is in Years 1, 2 and 4. The literacy hour is being implemented successfully, and reading and writing are taught well. Teachers are making good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental mathematics is taught particularly well, plenary sessions are used to good effect, and teachers provide pupils with a range of opportunities for practical investigations. In science, most teachers use skilful questioning to probe pupils' understanding, and the principles of scientific enquiry are taught well. In information and communication technology and in design and technology, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their learning; and evidence suggests that teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge in these subjects.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. Lessons are generally well organised, move at a good pace and capture pupils' interest. As a consequence, pupils usually listen very attentively to their teachers, concentrate well and persevere with their tasks.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. In the reception class it provides a sound basis for the National Curriculum, and in Key Stages 1 and 2 it is broad and reasonably balanced. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and this time is used well. However, more opportunities need to be provided for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology and design and technology. The length of the school week is approximately one hour short of the recommended minimum period in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are well taught and make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, and sound provision for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community where every child is valued as an individual. Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic and personal development are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership and management skills are satisfactory, overall. He promotes a positive atmosphere in the school, fosters teamwork among the staff, develops good relationships with parents and works well with governors. He has worked successfully with staff and governors to produce a school development plan which is well organised and has sound content. The headteacher has monitored teaching, particularly in English and mathematics, but there is no systematic programme for his observations, and few have been undertaken since January. He has given insufficient attention to his work as co-ordinator for science and design and technology, and has very limited impact on standards in these subjects. The deputy headteacher makes a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Most subject co-ordinators are monitoring work in their subjects conscientiously, but need to make more effective use of the information gathered to promote higher standards.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is a strength of the school. Governors are highly committed and are well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school regularly to monitor its work and provide well-focused reports on their observations. The governing body is an effective critical friend to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The results of statutory and non-statutory tests are carefully analysed by staff and governors. The English co-ordinator has a good overview of the subject. She checks standards and the quality of teaching and acts effectively to raise standards. In most other subjects, co-ordinators have gathered very useful information about pupils' work and teachers' planning. However, there is scope for them to use this information more effectively to raise standards further.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully by the headteacher and governors, and financial planning is linked to the priorities in the school development plan. Overall, the school makes sound use of its resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They find it easy to talk to the staff. • They are pleased with the teaching. • They believe the school is well led and managed. • They believe the school encourages positive attitudes and good behaviour. • They believe that homework is well planned and benefits children's learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like a greater range of extra-curricular activities. • They would like more information about the curriculum.

Inspection findings broadly support parents' positive views, although some elements of management require improvement. The school recognises there is a limited range of extra-curricular activities, and is keen to rectify the situation. There is scope for the school to provide more information about what is taught.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment profile of cohorts on entry to the school is unusually variable. Evidence from baseline assessments for both the current reception class and for the year before's cohort shows that overall attainment on entry is lower than in previous years. While it is likely that pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 had overall standards which were a little above average on entry, the current reception class demonstrate standards which are broadly average in relation to their personal and social development, while their speaking and early literacy skills are a little below average.
2. In the reception class, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development; and in language and literacy and mathematics. Their progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development is sound. The current reception class demonstrates standards which are mainly average, but which are a little below average in speaking and in literacy.
3. In Key Stage 1, the results of the 1999 statutory assessment tests (SATs) were well above the national average in reading and writing, and were also well above the results achieved by similar schools. In the SATs in 2000, no pupil failed to achieve the standard expected for seven year olds, and 42 per cent and 22 per cent achieved above this level in reading and writing, respectively. At the time of the inspection, no national averages were available to compare with these results. In Years 3 and 4, the school administers the optional national tests and these show that most pupils reached or exceeded the standards expected of pupils in their final year in the school. Inspection findings in English show that the standards achieved by pupils currently in Years 2 and 4 are above average, overall, in both reading and writing, and a significant minority in each year demonstrate standards which are well above average. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in English, across the school.
4. In mathematics, the results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 SATs were well above the national average and were above the results achieved by similar schools. The results from the 2000 SATs show that all pupils reach the nationally expected standard and a third reached the higher level. At the time of the inspection, no comparative data was available to judge the current results, although it is clear they are an improvement on those achieved in 1999. In Key Stage 2, the results of the 1999 optional SATs in Year 4 show that the vast majority of pupils achieved the nationally expected standard for this age group. In the 2000 optional tests, the school improved its results, and 97 per cent of pupils achieved the expected standard in Year 4. Inspection findings show that pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, make mainly good progress in their learning in mathematics. Almost all pupils achieve the nationally expected standard at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4, and a significant minority do better.
5. In science, the results of the 1999 statutory teacher assessments were very high when compared to the national average and to the results of similar schools. At present, there are no national averages to compare with the statutory assessments in 2000, but the school's results are little higher than those achieved in 1999. Inspection findings show that all pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well in science, and their overall

standards are above average. In Year 3, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, while pupils achieve well in Year 4 and demonstrate standards which are above average, overall.

6. The school has raised pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science since the last full OFSTED inspection in 1995, and since the shorter 'follow-up' inspection in 1998. In both the earlier inspections, standards were judged to be broadly average in these subjects, except in science when standards were found to be below average in 1995. Both the 1995 and 1998 inspections found that more able pupils underachieved in English, mathematics and science. This is no longer the case, and these pupils achieve well in all the subjects in Key Stage 1, and in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2. In science, in Key Stage 2, more able pupils make satisfactory progress, and their achievements are sound in relation to their prior attainment.
7. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design, geography and history in both key stages. Their achievements are sound, and standards are in line with those expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 4. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to judge pupils' overall standards in physical education in either key stage. However, in the few lessons seen, pupils achieved standards which were at least in line with those expected nationally. In music, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and their standards are average. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' overall standards in music in Key Stage 2. However, pupils' singing skills are usually good, across the school. In information and communication technology and in design and technology, pupils' progress is too slow in both key stages. As a consequence, their achievements are unsatisfactory and standards are below those expected for pupils in Year 2 and Year 4, in both subjects. The 1995 and 1998 inspections also found that standards were too low in information and communication technology, and the school has made unsatisfactory progress in rectifying this weakness.
8. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make consistently good progress. In both key stages, they achieve standards which fully reflect their capabilities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Children in the reception class settle quickly into classroom routines and come happily to school. Although some are initially shy and reticent, they gradually gain trust and confidence in their ability to communicate openly with all the adults who work with them, and they begin to form constructive relationships with other children.
10. Pupils of all ages enjoy being in school where they are regarded, and regard themselves, as members of an extended, caring, family community. In almost all lessons, they listen attentively and with interest to their teachers and to other pupils, and are always ready to answer questions or make their own observations on the topics under discussion. They try hard to recall things they have learned on previous occasions, apply their skills to new tasks, and make good use of any resources provided to help them to work independently, for example in the literacy hour. In practical lessons such as physical education, they can be trusted to handle equipment safely and responsibly, and pupils in most lessons respond swiftly to teachers' signals or requests for attention. They show genuine interest in all aspects of school life, responding just as positively to the intangible ideas and values discussed in assemblies as to the thrill of placing a try when learning the skills of a game of rugby. They show respect for beliefs, faiths and cultures other than their

own, and they show appreciation of the efforts and achievements of all their peers, whether those with particular talents, or pupils with special educational needs.

11. With very rare exceptions, pupils behave well at all times, whether in the classroom, the dining hall or the playground. There is no bullying or racism, and boys and girls work well together. Almost all pupils bring with them from home a strong sense of right and wrong, and good manners. The school is fortunate in being able to build on pupils' moral values and concern for others. The very few pupils who have special learning needs associated with behavioural difficulties work hard to meet their targets, and no misbehaviour was seen during the inspection. Rarely, when the management of pupils or of learning is not totally secure, pupils chatter about their work more than they should, but their talk is work-oriented and they stay steadfastly on task. All pupils are fully aware of the school rules and of the classroom rules they have helped to draw up, and, with very rare exceptions, these rules are kept.
12. When they are given opportunities to take responsibility, for example for jobs in the classroom, or, in Year 4, for more prominent roles in the school as a whole, pupils respond very well indeed. They carry out their duties responsibly and without fuss. All pupils are courteous and polite, and they respond to others' needs as a matter of course as they move around the school, holding doors open for one another and greeting visitors with a warm smile and a word of welcome. They have a well developed sense of social and moral responsibility, working hard to support various local and national charities, and sometimes initiating and organising their own fund-raising ventures.
13. Attendance is good with low levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are correctly completed and meet statutory requirements. Sessions start promptly and nearly all pupils arrive in good time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 97 per cent of all lessons observed. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching is mainly sound but is sometimes good. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is particularly effective, with over three quarters of all lessons demonstrating good, and occasionally very good, teaching. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is satisfactory in Year 3 but usually good in Year 4.
15. In the last full OFSTED inspection, in 1995, weaknesses in the teaching contributed to the judgement that the school was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education. Four out of every ten lessons were unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1, and this was the most significant area of weakness in the school. Tasks did not always match pupils' abilities and planning was often weak, with unclear learning intentions for lessons. The shorter, follow up inspection in 1998 found that teaching had improved. However, 20 per cent of lessons were still unsatisfactory, and there was little evidence of good teaching. Teachers' planning was satisfactory, but the more able pupils sometimes needed more challenging work, and the pace of some lessons was too slow.
16. It is clear that the school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching since these inspections. Unsatisfactory teaching is now very rare, and good teaching is commonplace, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. Teachers' planning has improved, and the needs of more able pupils are particularly well addressed in English and mathematics, across the school, and in science in Key Stage 1.

Learning objectives are usually clearly identified and the pace of learning is only a concern in occasional lessons in Year 3.

17. In English, the teaching is good, across the school. The literacy hour is being implemented effectively and, with rare exceptions, lessons are conducted at a good pace. Reading and writing are taught well. All teachers make effective links between different language modes so that pupils learn how to write by appreciating, discussing and analysing the work and techniques of successful writers, and by learning to draft, discuss and improve their own work.
18. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is good. Across the school, it is never less than satisfactory, and good teaching is evident in Years 1, 2 and 4. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use the National Numeracy Strategy well. The mental/oral session is a strength of the daily mathematics lessons, across the school, and most teachers use questioning successfully. In the best lessons, teachers support pupils well as they work, taking care to circulate and assess progress. Teachers provide good opportunities for practical investigations in mathematics. Plenary sessions are used effectively to check that learning objectives have been achieved, and to discuss the strategies pupils have used to solve the problems set.
19. In science, the teaching is mainly good, across the school. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. In the most effective lessons, in Years 1, 2 and 4, teachers make particularly good use of questioning to probe pupils' scientific understanding. Appropriate technical vocabulary is introduced in all classes, and the principles of scientific enquiry are taught well.
20. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to make secure overall judgements about the quality of teaching in other subjects, except music in Key Stage 1, where the teaching is satisfactory. However, in the few lessons seen in art and design, history, geography and physical education, the teaching was satisfactory or better. In information and communication technology and in design and technology, pupils make unsatisfactory progress; and evidence suggests that teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge and to raise their expectations of pupils' potential standards in these subjects.
21. In the majority of lessons, teachers' plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. All teachers know their pupils well and take particular care to involve pupils with special educational needs in discussions and in all other activities, including the sharing of work in plenary sessions. Most individual education plans identify suitable, achievable targets, although a few of those seen lack clarity and precision. Parents and pupils are made aware of their targets, and, as a result of close co-operation between all parties concerned, teaching is strongly reinforced and therefore particularly effective. Learning support assistants who work with individuals and groups of pupils on a regular basis are well qualified and make a good contribution to pupils' progress and to the quality of their learning experiences, particularly in literacy. The few pupils who have complex learning difficulties and who have statements of special educational need are supported very ably and sensitively by regular support staff who know when to encourage, when to assist, and when to hold back and allow their charges to work things out for themselves. Where necessary, outside agencies with sources of specialist expertise are consulted and provide help for the school in planning suitable work or devising appropriate targets for particular pupils.

22. Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, lessons are generally well organised and tasks capture pupils' interest. As a result, pupils generally listen very attentively to their teachers, concentrate well and persevere with their tasks. Across the school, teachers use homework effectively to develop pupils' learning, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Less effective learning occasionally occurs, in Year 3, when weaknesses in classroom management enable a small minority of pupils to disturb others' concentration.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

23. The school has made sound progress in addressing the key issue from the last full inspection in 1995 when it was required to 'plan the whole curriculum to meet statutory requirements'. Both the current inspection and the two-day inspection by Her Majesty's Inspector in 1998 show that, across the school, the curriculum now meets the statutory requirements, including those for children aged five and under. Long-term planning has improved so that the curriculum now has satisfactory breadth and balance. However, the length of the school week in Key Stage 2 is approximately one hour short of the recommended minimum. Sufficient time is allocated for developing the key skills of literacy and numeracy and this time is used well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is also a strength; and more able pupils are well catered for in English and mathematics.
24. In the reception class, the curriculum has been suitably adapted to take account of the new curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. A sound range of learning opportunities is provided for pupils to develop their basic and personal skills both inside and outside, although there is currently a lack of large climbing equipment. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is mainly satisfactory and all staff have attended training on Curriculum 2000. They have disseminated changes and modified the long and medium-term planning where appropriate. However, some additional time needs to be spent to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills in information and communication technology; and that key skills are developed systematically in design and technology. There is satisfactory progression in all other subjects although some adjustments would improve planning for geography, history and art still further. While planning has previously helped to address issues arising from mixed-age classes, a more coherent year-by-year plan would help to avoid unnecessary repetition of topics in geography and history, and aid the progressive development of key skills in art.
25. The school enriches the curriculum through a sound range of additional learning opportunities. There are a limited number of lunchtime extra-curricular activities and the governors hope to extend these in the near future. Sound use is made of visits and visitors; and there are satisfactory links with the community through the church and sporting links with partner schools. A draft scheme of work has been written to take account of new guidance on pupils' personal, social and health education, to include health, safety, drugs awareness and citizenship. There is a sound policy for sex education.
26. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and out-of-school clubs. The curriculum only provides limited opportunities for pupils to learn about the diversity of other cultures.

27. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development, and sound provision for their cultural development.
28. The school is committed to promoting the principles and values of Christian life. Strong relationships and a sense of unity within a Christian community underpin the day-to-day work of the school. A sense of common purpose pervades the school's work and is evident in the mutual trust demonstrated by governors, parents, staff and pupils at all levels.
29. The school has close links with the Priory Church of St Peter, and the Rector and a team of ministers are regular visitors who often lead assemblies and who are well known to the pupils. Assemblies and religious education lessons make good contributions to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on spiritual and moral themes, and the purpose and power of prayer are communicated to pupils who regularly compose prayers of their own. Assemblies not only meet statutory requirements for a daily act of worship, but go much further in so far as they provide a daily focus for the reaffirmation of the principles and values that bind the school together. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to see and to recognise God's work in the world, whether through the wonders of nature or through mankind's most noble endeavours.
30. The school has a strong moral and social ethos. As in a family, care and support for each individual lies at the heart of its work, and pupils are taught from an early age to assume responsibility for their own actions and to adopt responsible attitudes towards others less fortunate than themselves, whether through helpful actions or through giving. Pupils regularly raise funds for various national and local charities, and they give generously in the form of gifts for the elderly in the community each year at Harvest time. School rules and classroom rules provide daily reminders about behaviour and its impact on others, while teachings from the Bible, for example in the form of stories told in assemblies, ensure that pupils recognise God as the prime source of law, truth and strong moral principles. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good, and all teachers provide good role models by valuing pupils' responses and by seeking their views. The practical and moral support given to pupils with special educational needs is particularly good, and they are encouraged by all staff, and by pupils, to play a full role in all aspects of school life.
31. Overall, provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. Visits and visitors are used to good effect to enhance the curriculum, and pupils are able to participate in a limited number of sporting and musical activities both within and beyond the school. They learn about different cultures and ways of life, past and present, in geography and history, and are familiar with the work of a range of well known artists and composers who enjoy international renown. In religious education lessons, they learn about Christianity and, to a lesser extent, about other major world faiths. However, there are no existing curriculum links with places of worship other than Christian churches, and the school could do more to develop links with its immediate and its wider community, including representatives of minority ethnic groups. This aspect of its work continues to be an area for development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Overall, the school has effective procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development. Policies and procedures are clear and are mainly implemented consistently across the school. This represents good progress

since the last full inspection in 1995 when this aspect of provision was unsatisfactory. It is also an improvement on the two-day inspection by HMI in 1998 when there was still a need to implement agreed procedures vigorously. The school has worked hard to address this weakness and the monitoring report by the link governor for assessment is exemplary.

33. In the reception class, the teacher and nursery nurse keep good assessment records for each child. The parents complete an initial child profile; and reception staff build on this through records of significant development, and evidence of attainment against the key Early Learning Goals for the Foundation Stage. Baseline assessment information is analysed well and targets are set in language and literacy, mathematical and personal development. Progress is tracked from the baseline assessment onwards, and regular planned and informal observations are made of children at work and play.
34. In Key Stages 1 and 2, summative assessments are used effectively to assess pupils' progress and aid predictions of future performance. Data from optional and statutory testing in Years 2 and 4 is analysed rigorously to identify strengths and areas for development, and the evidence is used to inform planning and provision. All pupils also have work assessed half-termly in numeracy and this helps to inform the class groupings for different abilities. In English, two samples of written work are assessed and moderated annually, and all teachers maintain good reading records linked to attainment during guided reading sessions. Across the school, teachers regularly assess and evaluate the impact of their planning in literacy and numeracy on pupils' learning; and the information gained is used well to inform their future plans. Every child has a Record of Achievement in which several pieces of work in English and mathematics are collected, throughout the year, and a selection from the other subjects. Anecdotal records are also kept by teachers of significant issues in pupils' learning and personal development.
35. Marking is consistent and mainly of a good standard, across the school, although it now needs to be monitored regularly by the co-ordinator. Individual targets are set for pupils, are shared with the parents in the autumn term, and are reviewed with both the parent and child in the spring term. This is good practice. Following individual pupil analysis by teaching staff, the Governors' Monitoring Committee meets to discuss, agree and monitor the whole-school targets for attainment in English, mathematics and science. Overall, this target-setting process is satisfactory although there have been some discrepancies between the teacher assessments and test results for more able pupils in writing and mathematics. In addition, most subject co-ordinators collect and level samples of work from across the school to create sound portfolios in particular strands of their subjects. A more rigorous evaluation and dissemination of the findings would help to ensure that key skills are developed systematically in all subjects. The assessment co-ordinator has a secure understanding of this aspect of school provision, works well in partnership with the linked governor and now needs to ensure that regular monitoring is maintained.
36. Ashton St Peter's is a caring community where each child is valued. The school encourages good communication with parents so that pupils' pastoral needs are well known to staff and effective support can be provided. Support staff are well deployed to help pupils with particular medical or educational needs, and appropriate use is made of outside specialists. Relationships in the school are very good and the pupils learn to treat each other with the same kindness and respect shown to them by adults. All staff are well briefed to listen to pupils' concerns. This ensures pupils

develop confidence in coping with all aspects of school life and have positive attitudes to learning.

37. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory and staff have county guidelines to develop their awareness. Pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of personal safety. Attendance is closely monitored, and the school takes the initiative to contact parents if their children's absence has not been explained within a couple of days.
38. The school has effective strategies to promote high standards of behaviour. These are clearly understood by pupils and are consistently promoted by all adults in the school. Pupils have regular opportunities to talk about their feelings and any matters of concern in circle time, and this helps them develop confidence and consideration for others. Consequently, incidents of bullying or racism are very rare and are dealt with promptly and effectively.
39. The school has a well planned programme to cover all elements of personal and social education, with aspects such as healthy eating and sex education appropriately covered in science. The school is planning to include appropriate drugs education as part of this programme later in the year. Pupils benefit from occasional visits from the fire service to make them aware of safety issues, and road safety is adequately addressed.
40. The school has regular inspections by the headteacher, caretaker and governors to monitor health and safety and is mindful of the need for security in the light of the school's close proximity to a busy main road and car park. Teachers follow the guidelines about the collection of pupils from school by known adults. There are well established procedures for first aid and emergencies, and appropriate records are completed conscientiously by support staff. The school is very clean, tidy and soundly maintained.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. A strong partnership is established with parents and this is a strength of the school. Parents and pupils are warmly welcomed into the school community and are encouraged to play their full part in school life. Parents find staff easy to talk to, and this ensures that any concerns are shared. Parents receive a sound range of documentation about the school and regular newsletters keep them well informed about school activities. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage have clear information about the activities to be undertaken in each curriculum area; this good practice is more limited higher up the school. Occasional workshops are organised to keep parents up to date with new initiatives such as the numeracy strategy.
42. Parents expressed very positive views about the contribution that homework plays in their children's education. The frequency, challenge and variety of work set is carefully planned; and the guidance notes for parents give them the confidence to provide good support for this at home. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's academic progress and personal development with teachers. Targets are appropriately shared and reviewed with parents. Annual written reports are detailed, and give sound indications of pupils' progress as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

43. The headteacher and governors value parents' opinions and consult them from time to time on developments and changes in the school, such as the possibility of moving to a new school site. This good practice helps parents to feel true partners in the school community and fosters in them a strong sense of loyalty and commitment to the school. Parents' satisfaction helps their children to develop an enthusiasm for school and positive attitudes to learning.
44. Some parents help in classes and they make a valuable contribution in the running of extra-curricular activities, including the school football team. An active parents' association works hard to organise a range of well supported social and fundraising activities to provide useful additional resources and equipment for the school.
45. There is good communication between the school and the parents of pupils with special educational needs. The parents are kept informed of their child's progress and are involved appropriately in reviews. They are made fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in their child's performance, and, where relevant, are involved in setting, and helping their child to achieve, new targets. These parents are very supportive of their children, and also of the school's efforts on their behalf. As a result, there is a genuine partnership which serves the pupils well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The governing body is a strength of the school. The governors are highly committed and make a particularly valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. Attendance at governors' meetings is very good, and governors regularly attend training courses. Appropriate committees are established and help to guide the school's work effectively. The school is fortunate in having an astute chair of governors who has good inter-personal skills and monitors its work through regular visits. The governors for literacy and numeracy are well informed, and are taking a keen interest in the implementation of the national strategies for these key skills. Individual governors are linked to other subjects of the National Curriculum or to other key aspects of the school's work. Many have observed lessons in their subjects and all meet with co-ordinators to discuss provision. They provide well-focused reports to the full governing body; and some reports, for example, on English and the school's assessment procedures, are of particularly high quality. The results of statutory and non-statutory assessments in English, mathematics and science are debated carefully, and appropriate targets are agreed for pupils' future attainment. Overall, the governing body is an effective critical friend to the school and has played an important part in improving management practice since 1995.
47. Weaknesses in leadership and management were among the key factors which meant that the school was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education when it was inspected in 1995. A shorter 'follow-up' inspection in 1998 judged that the school had made improvements in important aspects of its performance, including in teaching and in the standards achieved by the pupils. However, the leadership and management provided by senior managers still required improvement, and constituted a serious weakness in the school.
48. The headteacher has responded constructively to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspections, and his leadership and management are now mainly satisfactory. The positive atmosphere which exists in the school reflects his concern for the well-being of pupils and staff. He fosters the development of the roles of co-ordinators, encourages teamwork among the staff and works effectively with the

governing body. The headteacher has good relationships with parents, and they hold him in high regard. Over half of the questionnaire returns from parents strongly agree that the school is well managed, and no returns express dissatisfaction with this aspect of the school's work. The school development plan has been created with sound leadership by the headteacher, and effective involvement by the staff and governing body. Since the last inspection, the headteacher has improved elements of his monitoring; and he works well with the co-ordinators for English and mathematics to set sensible targets for pupils' attainment in these subjects. He has observed lessons in English and mathematics, across the school, and provides useful feedback to the staff. However, there is no systematic programme for his observations, and few have been undertaken since last January. As co-ordinator for science and for design and technology, he is not providing an effective model for his colleagues. He has not analysed pupils' standards or the quality of teaching in these subjects with enough rigour, and recognises that this aspect of his work requires more attention.

49. The deputy headteacher has been in post for five terms, and is making a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. She is a well informed English co-ordinator and also provides a good model for her colleagues through her teaching. The deputy headteacher works well with the headteacher, and her mainly good knowledge of the curriculum contributes significantly to the effectiveness of their partnership.
50. Subject co-ordinators had very little impact on provision when the school was inspected in 1995, while the 1998 inspection found their roles were clearly defined and their work was developing. Current evidence shows that most co-ordinators have become more effective since the last inspection. The vast majority examine planning for their subjects carefully, and collect examples of pupils' work to increase their knowledge of the standards achieved, across the school. The co-ordinator for English has observed teaching in both key stages, and has contributed significantly to the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Overall, most co-ordinators have worked conscientiously to accumulate a good evidence base to form judgements about the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. In the majority of cases, however, there is scope for co-ordinators to make better use of this evidence base. Some co-ordinators need to analyse their collected data more carefully to draw conclusions and to decide on appropriate future actions. Others are clear about the strengths and weaknesses across the school, but have not communicated their findings to their colleagues with enough clarity and emphasis.
51. When the school was inspected in 1995, its aims did not provide a sense of direction and the development plan was not an effective tool for school improvement. The 1998 inspection found that clear and appropriate aims had been agreed but there were still important weaknesses in the development plan. These weaknesses in development planning have been rectified. The current plan is well organised and has sound content. There is a useful overview of planned initiatives over a three year period, and there are detailed action plans to support work in the current year. The action plans appropriately include success criteria, budgetary implications, time scales and those responsible for leading and monitoring individual initiatives.
52. The headteacher provides sound leadership and management of special educational needs provision, and is effective in his role as special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO). He regularly attends courses and other forms of training to keep abreast of developments in special educational needs work, and has been instrumental in ensuring that teachers and support staff also receive relevant training. As SENCO,

the headteacher works closely with class teachers to monitor the progress of all pupils with special educational needs and to make sure that the more able pupils are identified and given work with a suitable level of challenge, sometimes intervening directly to make sure this happens. The special educational needs governor, responsible for the oversight of special educational needs provision, is well informed and supportive, and has undertaken some training in special educational needs issues.

53. The day-to-day management of the school is sound, and benefits from effective secretarial support. Routines are well organised and help to promote an orderly atmosphere in the school.
54. The administration of the budget is carried out satisfactorily by the headteacher and school secretary. Spending is also carefully monitored by the finance committee of the governors. The budget is analysed with particular care during the spring and early summer terms, by the headteacher and governors. Financial planning is appropriately linked to initiatives on the school development plan, and individual tasks are carefully costed. A recent fall in the school roll has reduced the school's income, and it maintained its staffing level in the spring term 2000 by augmenting the budget with funds carried forward from previous years. These funds are now substantially eroded, and the governors sensibly reduced staffing from September 2000. They recognise the need for prudent financial planning to ensure the school manages within its budget allocation in future years.
55. The school takes care to obtain value for money when purchasing educational materials and equipment, and estimates are considered by governors when appropriate. It makes sound use of finance, staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and mainly sound progress in other subjects except information and communication technology and design and technology, where their standards are too low. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
56. There are sufficient teachers, and the staff have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is usually secure, and it is mainly good in English and mathematics. However, evidence suggests that some teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge about information and communication technology and design and technology. Classroom assistants are well briefed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
57. The accommodation is in sound condition, and classrooms are of at least satisfactory size. There is a school playing field, and sufficient playground space. The staff take care to enrich their classrooms, and other areas around the school, with attractive displays of pupils' work. The school is kept in clean condition by the conscientious caretaking staff.
58. Resources for learning are satisfactory, overall. However, some reading materials are outdated, there are few artefacts to support pupils' work in history, and some geography books and atlases need to be replaced. The quality and quantity of information and communication technology resources are improving, particularly through the use of funding from the National Grid for Learning. However, the current provision does not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in the subject.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve pupils' standards and the leadership and management of the school, the following issues should be included in the school's post-inspection action plan:

- Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - (i) providing in-service training to increase teachers' confidence and skills in the subject;
 - (ii) ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to develop their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum;
 - (iii) making more effective use of the information and communication technology co-ordinator's skills in order to raise standards;
 - (iv) improving resources for the subject.

(see paragraphs 7, 20, 24, 56, 108, 109, 110)
- Improve the leadership and management of the headteacher by ensuring:
 - (i) he establishes a systematic programme for monitoring the quality of teaching across the school;
 - (ii) he becomes a more effective co-ordinator for science and for design and technology by checking pupils' standards and the quality of teaching with increased rigour.

(see paragraphs 48, 88, 97)
- Increase the impact that most subject co-ordinators have on pupils' standards by ensuring they make more effective use of the information they gather from their monitoring procedures.

(see paragraphs 50, 81, 88, 94, 97, 102, 107, 110 and 114)
- Raise standards in design and technology by providing teachers with in-service training to increase their knowledge about the subject and their expectations of pupils' potential attainment.

(see paragraphs 7, 20, 24, 56, 95, 96 and 97)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- review the length of the school week for pupils in Years 3 and 4, in order to bring teaching time in line with the recommended minimum period.

(see paragraph 23)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	49	43	3	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR - Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	127
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	19

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	24	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	9
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	30	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (78)	91 (92)	100 (93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	9	9
	Girls	22	24	24
	Total	28	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (89)	100 (88)	100 (87)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	6
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	103
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	25.4

Education support staff: YR - Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	99

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999\2000
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	£
Total income	340,706
Total expenditure	323, 906
Expenditure per pupil	2,266
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,576
Balance carried forward to next year	31,376

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	57

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	26	2	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	47	44	5	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	42	2	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	60	4	0	5
The teaching is good.	60	35	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	47	14	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	9	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	53	44	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	37	25	4	23

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

60. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 children in the reception class, all attending full time. The age profile for this particular cohort shows that only two children will be five during this term, and that the class as a whole is on the young side. Baseline assessments for both this and the previous year's cohort show that the overall attainment on entry to the school is becoming progressively lower than that in previous years. While children come to school with mainly average skills in personal, social and mathematical development, their early literacy and speaking skills are a little below average.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. The teacher and nursery nurse know the children well and provide the right blend of support and challenge for all children, including those with special educational needs. Regular observations and assessments are particularly effective in helping staff adapt and improve provision in this area of learning. As a result, a good range learning experiences is on offer designed to develop children's personal, social and emotional skills. Children learn to develop constructive relationships with each other through a variety of play opportunities both inside and outside. Through the good use of praise and encouragement, children respond positively to the tasks set and show an interest in what they are doing. High expectations of behaviour and continuous positive reinforcement have clearly enabled these young children to learn the routines of the classroom quickly. As a result, children are already able to share resources amicably, respond appropriately to instructions and are beginning to understand the difference between right and wrong.

Communication, language and literature

62. Inspection findings and the school's own baseline assessments show that the attainment of children who have recently joined the reception class is a little below average in speaking and in early literacy skills. They are making good progress in lessons, each child growing in confidence day by day and building securely on his or her prior attainment. Most children can match sounds to some letters and identify objects beginning with a given sound that they have been taught. Most show interest in books, know that they are read from front to back, turn the pages correctly, and talk meaningfully, though sometimes with poor expression, about the pictures. Some know the alphabet and recognise that the names of letters are not the same as the sounds they make when we read. While the more able children are already beginning to use inference, for example to guess what a character might be saying, and can retell stories they have heard before, some children might identify a favourite object on a page, but find it difficult to explain why they like it. At this early stage of the term, it is clear that some children are still shy of talking in front of their peers and with adults, although almost all join in enthusiastically when singing rhymes they have learned by heart. Little evidence of children's written work had been accumulated by the time of the inspection.

Mathematical development

63. An analysis of last year's work and work in the first few weeks of this term, shows that children generally make good progress in their mathematical development and securely attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. A significant minority of children attain above average standards. Children can recite the numbers one to ten, both forwards and backwards, can name simple two-dimensional shapes, and can count how many are in a set. They have learnt to use their number fans confidently to show their answers and show an enthusiasm for numbers. By the end of the year, children can count in twos, using odd and even numbers, measure distances using non-standard measures and begin to add and subtract numbers to ten. Activities are suitably challenging for more able pupils, and there are appropriate opportunities for all children to learn through practical tasks, for example in the sand, water and role-play corners. Early number recognition is also reinforced through simple number games on the computer.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children in reception acquire a sound foundation for the study of geography. They learn about the purpose of man-made features such as the traffic lights in the street near the school: they understand that roads are built for traffic, and that people walk on the pavements, using pelican crossings and zebra crossings to make safe journeys across the roads when traffic is brought to a halt. They go for walks in the area around the school, talk about the things they see and the purposes they serve, and record their observations on their return to school. They learn, for example, the purpose of the recycling bins, and they comment on particular things that they have seen and liked, such as the helicopter used by the rescue service. Children make satisfactory progress in developing their scientific understanding of the world when learning about sound. They achieve satisfactory standards when using construction kits to make simple models, and when using scissors and glue.
65. Children have sound opportunities to find out about the past through discussing events in their own lives and by exploring the way familiar everyday items have changed over time. They learn to create a simple personal timeline by collecting information from babyhood onwards. They begin to learn to use the 'mouse' with increasing confidence when playing games on the computer and using the painting program 'Splosh'; and, with adult support, begin to learn to type their name.

Physical development

66. Children in the reception class have regular periods of outdoor play in a secure area with opportunities to use large wheeled toys and other apparatus such as hoops and balls. They are beginning to show awareness of each other and engage happily but safely in 'rough and tumble' play, running and chasing but avoiding collisions. In physical education, children show developing confidence, control and co-ordination in all their movements. Some children already create their own patterns of movement and bring imagination into their work when they 'become' horses, changing speed and posture as the music changes to represent the animal's various speeds and movements. In the classroom, children handle pencils and other small objects with increasing control. At the time of the inspection there was no climbing equipment to support outdoor play, and this is a shortcoming which the school needs to address.

Creative development

67. Children enjoy music lessons, and demonstrate satisfactory standards when playing percussion instruments and performing simple songs. They achieve sound standards when drawing and painting fruits from direct observation, and learn how to make simple prints.

ENGLISH

68. In Key Stage 1, pupils build well on their early language experience, making good progress in all aspects of literacy and developing the skills necessary to do well in the national tests. Indeed, the school's results in the national tests (SATs) for seven year olds in 1999 were well above the national averages in both reading and writing, and also well above the results of similar schools. In the 2000 SATs no pupil failed to achieve the standard expected of seven year olds, and 42 per cent and 22 per cent achieved above this standard in reading and writing respectively. In Key Stage 2, the school administers optional national tests in Years 3 and 4. Data provided by the school shows that most pupils achieved, or exceeded, the standard expected of pupils of their age by the end of Year 4 in reading and writing, both in 1999 and 2000. However, the result for English in the year 2000 fell short of the school's anticipated target when a particular weakness in spelling amongst pupils in the cohort adversely affected the overall results. The school has responded quickly and rigorously to address this weakness.
69. Inspection findings show that the standards achieved by pupils currently in Years 2 and 4 are above average overall in both reading and writing, while a significant minority in each year achieves standards that are well above average. Pupils of all abilities, including the more able and those pupils who have special educational needs, make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in almost all lessons in both key stages. Throughout their time in the school, pupils learn a wide range of reading strategies which help them to decode, understand and respond to different kinds of fiction, poetry and information texts. Many very young pupils, from Year 1 onwards, are capable of 'reading between the lines', using inference and hypothesis to answer their teachers' questions about the deeper meanings of texts. In writing, they gradually learn to adapt the grammar, vocabulary, style and format of their work to match its intended audience and purpose, to use punctuation accurately and to spell increasingly complex words correctly. By the end of Year 1, almost all pupils have a fairly secure grasp of what constitutes a sentence, and most have developed neat, well formed handwriting. By the end of Year 2, most can produce extended pieces of well organised writing and have sufficient insights into the craft of writing to suggest both stylistic and technical improvements when composing a text with their teacher. By Year 4, most pupils plan their writing well, organise it appropriately in paragraphs, select relevant descriptive or other detail to add interest and engage the reader, and use punctuation accurately, including the comma. Standards of handwriting and presentation are high throughout the school. While weaknesses in spelling persist in the work of some older pupils in Key Stage 2, evidence from work samples and from lessons shows that the action taken to address spelling is having a positive impact: overall, standards in spelling are above average in Key Stage 1, and at least average in Key Stage 2. Standards of speaking and listening are generally above average in Years 2 and 4, but are broadly average in other year groups.
70. The school has worked hard to address those weaknesses in English identified in the full OFSTED inspection in 1995 and in the shorter inspection in 1998.

Underachievement by the more able pupils is no longer a regular feature in lessons. Indeed, in most lessons, these pupils are suitably challenged in discussions and are usually given independent work which is tailored to their linguistic and intellectual needs. Overall, work is well matched to the needs of pupils' of different abilities, including those pupils who have special educational needs, while the work of learning support assistants in lessons and when providing additional literacy support does much to help raise standards. Aspects of reading were criticised in earlier reports. Since then, the National Literacy Strategy has been introduced and is being implemented well. Although the library is not well used as an area in which pupils develop library skills or settle to work independently, teachers do ensure that higher order reading skills are taught thoroughly. In addition, older pupils pursue reading research, sometimes in the form of homework, which requires them to apply those skills independently. All teachers now keep reading records which chart the progress of individual pupils against the competencies set out in the National Curriculum. This system enables teachers to identify, and then address, individual weaknesses. The excessive use of worksheets was a further source of concern to previous inspectors. Current findings show that there is now a judicious balance, reflecting pupils' ages and stages of development, between work which is entirely generated by pupils and that which is usefully supported by prepared 'writing frames' which serve to focus pupils' thinking or to remind them of the organisational features of different kinds of texts.

71. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and all but one were good. Frequently, the teaching in 'shared time' helps pupils to achieve higher levels of understanding and performance than they could reach on their own, for example in a test. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously. They make sure pupils know what they are intended to learn, and how it will help them with their work. The literacy hour is generally organised and managed well, and, with rare exceptions, lessons are conducted at a good pace. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of work and behaviour. Pupils with special educational needs are ably supported, and are encouraged to play a full part in all lessons. Reading and writing are taught well. All teachers make effective links between the different language modes so that pupils learn how to write by appreciating, discussing and analysing the work and the techniques of successful writers, and by learning to draft, discuss and improve their own work. During discussion at the beginning and end of lessons, through intervention as pupils read or write, and through the careful marking of work, most teachers use assessment to good effect.
72. Since her appointment in 1999, the literacy co-ordinator has worked very hard, with the support of the headteacher, the staff and the literacy governor, to address outstanding issues identified in the previous OFSTED reports. As a result of sustained effort, the National Literacy Strategy is being implemented well, assessment is a strength in English, there is a good scheme of work, and many new resources have been introduced. Regular monitoring procedures give the co-ordinator a good overview of standards and teaching throughout the school, and she, in turn, gives valued support to her colleagues.
73. Few outstanding issues requiring action have been identified in the current inspection of English. Most notably, there is a need for increased intervention to develop the speech and vocabulary of pupils in the reception class and in Year 1, many of whom struggle to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. The use of information technology to support learning in English is generally underdeveloped, and more thought needs to be given to finding ways in which pupils might use word-processing

to draft, redraft and edit their work. The school is aware that some very old reading resources need to be replaced, and the library needs to be developed into an active centre of learning.

MATHEMATICS

74. In the 1999 Key Stage 1 SATs, pupils attained standards that were well above the national average and above those in similar schools. Results from the 2000 Key Stage 1 SATs show all pupils reached the nationally expected standard and a third attained the higher level. At the time of the inspection, no comparative data was available to judge the current results although it is clear that these are an improvement on those achieved in 1999.
75. In Key Stage 2, the results of the optional SATs taken at the end of Year 4 show that the vast majority of pupils achieved the nationally expected standard for this age group (Level 3) in 1999. In the 2000 tests, the school improved its results still further and 97 per cent of pupils reached this level. No comparative data is available to judge these standards but they represent high achievement.
76. Inspection findings show that pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, are mainly making good progress in their learning in mathematics. Almost all pupils achieve the nationally expected standards, and a significant minority attain above average standards in both key stages.
77. Overall, the results for pupils in both key stages and current inspection findings show that the school has raised standards in mathematics since the time of the last full inspection in 1995 and since the HMI two-day inspection in May 1998. In both these reports, standards were satisfactory but there was some underachievement by more able pupils.
78. Current inspection findings are based on an analysis of work in the previous academic year in addition to the work completed in the first few weeks of this term. In Key Stage 1, all pupils make mainly good progress in all elements of the mathematics curriculum including the key numeracy skills. Year 1 pupils respond well during mental/oral activities and can count confidently to 20 and beyond. They can use digit cards and number fans accurately to carry out simple addition and subtraction using numbers to ten, and learn to use the successful strategies employed by their peers. By the end of the year, Year 1 pupils understand place value when working out tens and units, can solve money problems to £1, can classify three-dimensional shapes accurately and attain above average standards overall. In Year 2, pupils can say the number that is one or ten more or less than any two digit number and can select the appropriate strategy to solve money problems involving two digit numbers. By the end of the year, they can use numbers to 100 confidently, understand inverse operations, use standard measures accurately and draw simple bar charts. Attainment is mainly above average.
79. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils can make 'doubles' of whole numbers to 15 and find corresponding halves. They can suggest suitable units of measure for estimating and measuring different distances and begin to understand decimal notation when converting centimetres to metres. In Year 4, pupils use good investigative strategies to identify simple nets for three-dimensional shapes; and more able pupils make particularly good progress in their learning, attaining well above average standards. They can investigate and draw up an accurate formula for calculating the perimeter of

- any regular polygon, and can check their results. They demonstrate very quick mental recall during mental/oral sessions and show an enthusiasm for numbers.
80. Overall, the quality of teaching in mathematics is good. Across the school, it is never less than satisfactory and it is good in Years 1, 2 and 4. This is an improvement on the last detailed inspection of mathematics in 1995, when there were many shortcomings in the teaching in Key Stage 1 and insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in practical activities in both key stages. Current inspection findings show that these issues have been successfully addressed. Teachers show a secure subject knowledge and plan mainly well-paced daily mathematics lessons, in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. The mental/oral session is a strength in the teaching, across the school, and most teachers use questioning successfully. In the best lessons, in Years 1, 2 and 4, time is used efficiently, lessons move at a brisk pace and teachers have high expectations of pupils' work habits. Questions are clear and often targeted at individual pupils to check learning. In these lessons, teachers support pupils well as they work, taking care to circulate and assess progress. Teachers provide good investigative practical activities wherever possible, and more able pupils are challenged well. Plenary sessions are also used effectively to check that learning objectives have been met and to clarify the strategies pupils have used to solve the problems set. As a result, pupils show an interest in their work, work at a good pace and develop their mathematical understanding well. In the less effective, but nevertheless sound, lessons in Year 3, a minority of pupils work too slowly due to weaknesses in teachers' classroom management. Across the school, teachers plan the three-part mathematics lesson carefully, differentiate work for pupils of different abilities and use marking effectively to target and support learning. On-going assessment and evaluation are used well to inform future planning and all available data is analysed carefully to set pupils' appropriate individual targets. Regular good quality homework is set to reinforce learning in school; and some sound information and communication technology opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their skills, for example, when telling the time in Year 1, or drawing shapes on the computer and using calculators for quick mental recall in Year 4. Overall, however, pupils have insufficient individual access to the computers for them to consolidate their mathematical learning regularly.
81. The co-ordinator for mathematics has only recently taken on the post and has made a good start. She is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has already made a sound start to monitoring and supporting the subject. She collects planning, checks on-going assessment and supports colleagues when issues arise from their evaluations. She has re-organised the portfolio of samples which she inherited from the previous co-ordinator and is collecting examples of 'place value' to check coverage and progression across the school. While this is good practice, the dissemination of evaluation findings will improve the role further, and will help the co-ordinator to identify priorities for future monitoring in classrooms. Resources are sound although there is scope to update existing scheme materials with newer publications linked to the National Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

82. The results of the 1999 statutory teacher assessments, at the end of Key Stage 1, were very high when compared to the national average and to the results of similar schools. At present, there are no national averages to compare with the school's statutory assessments in science in 2000, but the school's results are a little higher than those achieved in 1999. Inspection findings broadly reflect the 1999 SATs results, and show that overall standards are above average in science in the current

Year 2 class. A few pupils, with special educational needs, do not reach the expected level, but a significant minority exceed this standard. All pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning as a result of effective teaching.

83. In Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, overall, in Year 3 and are good in Year 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in both year groups. The progress of more able pupils is satisfactory in these classes, although they could sometimes do even better if they were given more challenging work. Overall, pupils' standards are above average in Year 4.
84. Pupils' current standards in science are very significantly higher than when the school was inspected in 1995, and were found to be below average. Standards have also improved since the last inspection, in 1998, when they were broadly average. Both reports identified underachievement by more able pupils; and the school's progress in addressing this weakness is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2.
85. In Year 1, pupils make good progress when describing the properties of a range of materials in everyday terms, such as their hardness and smoothness. They also achieve well when deciding the best materials to use for wrapping parcels. When they started at the school, the overall attainment of the Year 1 class was notably lower than the entry profile of the current Year 2 class. As a consequence, the overall standards of pupils in Year 1 are broadly average, despite the effective progress they are making. In Year 2, standards in science are generally good. For example, pupils demonstrate above average understanding when carrying out simple experiments. They are developing their understanding of fair testing; and know that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes.
86. In Year 3, pupils make sound progress when learning about the need for dental care and healthy eating. In Year 4, pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards when carrying out systematic investigations to discover the thermal insulating properties of a range of materials.
87. The quality of teaching is mainly good, across the school. All teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. In the most effective lessons, in Years 1, 2 and 4, teachers make particularly good use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding. Appropriate technical vocabulary is introduced in all classes, and the principles of scientific enquiry are taught well. Teachers' instructions and explanations are usually very clear; and good use is made of plenary sessions to assess what has been learned. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology by some Year 4 pupils when they present the results of their investigations on graphs. Occasionally, the teaching is less effective in Year 3 when the pace of learning needs to increase, and the noisy work-habits of a small minority of pupils are allowed to disturb the concentration of their peers. In some lessons, in Key Stage 2, more able pupils would benefit from more opportunities to devise their own simple investigations and to decide how to present their results. Across the school, relationships between teachers and pupils are constructive, lessons are generally well organised and tasks capture pupils' interest. As a result, pupils generally listen attentively to their teachers, concentrate well and persevere with their science work.
88. Teachers have benefited from well-focused in-service training provided by the local authority science adviser, and this has increased their effectiveness in teaching the

skills of scientific enquiry. The governor with particular responsibility for science has observed lessons in the last academic year and provided the governing body with a useful report on her visits. The science co-ordinator receives teachers' planning for the subject but his analysis of its quality needs to be more rigorous. There are no records of observations of science teaching by the co-ordinator since 1998, and he accepts the need for a more systematic monitoring procedure. Increased use needs to be made of work sampling, to enable the co-ordinator to develop a more informed view of pupils' standards and progress in the subject.

89. Resources for science are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Pupils achieve standards which are mainly satisfactory for their ages at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. There is little evidence of work of a higher standard in Key Stage 1, but Year 4 pupils have a good awareness of the work of a range of artists. The 1998 OFSTED inspection made no judgement about art, but the 1995 inspection also found standards to be average.
91. In Year 1, pupils achieve satisfactory standards when creating paintings of their favourite toys, using paint or pastels. They also make sound progress when making simple leaf prints. In Year 2, pupils' drawings of vegetables, from direct observation, are satisfactory and they also achieve sound standards when painting copies of their holiday postcards.
92. In Year 3, pupils' self-portraits represent adequate achievement, while their drawings of training shoes show mainly satisfactory, but occasionally good, standards. In Year 4, pupils learn about the work of artists including Georgia O'Keefe, William Morris, Vincent van Gogh and David Hockney. Their collage pictures of flowers represent satisfactory achievements, following their study of the pictures of Georgia O'Keefe; and they make sound progress when creating water scenes after discussing the work of David Hockney.
93. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was only possible to observe one art lesson, so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in the subject. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils make broadly satisfactory, though rather spasmodic, progress in their learning, across the school. While teachers provide a range of learning opportunities in the subject, and individual lessons are soundly planned, there is no effective programme for the systematic development of pupils' key skills in art and design. This restricts pupils' achievements in the subject.
94. The art and design co-ordinator is enthusiastic and highly conscientious. She has observed lessons in the last educational year and worked with the governor with special responsibility for the subject to report a broad overview of provision for the governing body. The co-ordinator has secure subject knowledge, examines teachers' planning and collects examples of pupils' work each half term for inclusion in a school portfolio. She has worked hard to collect a very useful evidence base to judge the school's achievements in art and design. She now needs to analyse this data with increased rigour to identify strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and to target areas for improvement. The current scheme of work does not provide sufficiently clear guidance to ensure that pupils' key skills are systematically developed, and the school has appropriately started to introduce the good scheme produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Overall, the school is in a sound position to

raise standards further. However, resources for the subject are only just adequate, and would benefit from review.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95. Overall, pupils make unsatisfactory progress in developing their design and technology skills in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4. As a consequence, their standards are generally below those expected. Inspection judgements are based on evidence from pupils' work in the last educational year, as well as in the current term; from analysis of teachers' planning; and from discussions with teachers, including the co-ordinator.
96. There is limited evidence of design and technology tasks completed in the last educational year. However, Year 2 pupils made clay rockets and Year 4 pupils created cross-stitch sewings. While these examples demonstrate careful work by the pupils, they do not represent satisfactory attainment in design and technology. In the current Year 2 class, pupils have made animal masks from paper, card and straws. They demonstrate satisfactory cutting and sticking skills but do not develop pupils' design skills since they are all based on the same design, provided by the teacher.
97. No design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection, so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching. However, evidence suggests that teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their knowledge about the subject. Their expectations of pupils' potential standards need to be raised, and their planning does not secure the systematic development of pupils' key skills in the subject as they move through the school. The 1995 inspection found similar weaknesses in teachers' planning, although standards were judged to be satisfactory. The co-ordinator does not analyse teachers' planning with sufficient rigour, and has not studied examples of pupils' work to develop a satisfactory overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the standards or the teaching. He also needs to develop his expertise and knowledge in the subject, in order to provide appropriate guidance for the staff. The good scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is shortly to be introduced, and this is a sensible strategy. Resources for the subject are adequate, overall.

GEOGRAPHY

98. As a result of timetabling arrangements, few geography lessons could be observed during the inspection. The judgements reached are therefore based on evidence not only from the lessons seen, but also from teachers' planning, the scrutiny of pupils' written work, and discussions with staff.
99. Overall, pupils make sound progress in both key stages, achieving standards which are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' written work shows that a significant minority of the pupils in Years 2 and 4 achieve standards which are above average for their ages.
100. There is no evidence from this inspection to suggest that there is any underachievement by pupils in Key Stage 1, a finding reported in the geography paragraph in the last OFSTED inspection report in 1995. The range of work seen and the lessons observed show that there is challenge in the work set for pupils of all

abilities, and that work in Year 4 is particularly challenging. Geography now has a secure place in the curriculum in all years, and there is written evidence in pupils' work and in teachers' planning to show that the Programmes of Study are fully covered in both key stages. In particular, a detailed scheme of work, which reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum 2000 and allows for progression in the acquisition of geographical skills across the school, is now in place. As a result, there is very clear progression in pupils' mapping skills across the two key stages, while fieldwork, work on contrasting localities and thematic studies all have their rightful place in the curriculum. Pupils in both key stages gradually extend their knowledge and understanding of the wider world in which they live and come to a very sound understanding of ways in which mankind uses, changes, and sometimes abuses, the environment. Nevertheless, the rolling programme introduced has not eliminated repetition of content, so that, for example, much of the work seen in Year 3 is not significantly different from that produced by pupils in Year 2, and this is an issue which still needs to be addressed. Resources have been increased, updated and reorganised since the last inspection. They are now broadly adequate, although some of the geography books in the library and some of the atlases stored for classroom use are very dated and need to be replaced.

101. Too few lessons were observed to support a secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching in either key stage. Nevertheless, the lessons seen were well planned, purposeful and interesting: key geographical skills and terms were introduced, and pupils in both Year 1 and Year 4, in very different contexts, were challenged to use geographical enquiry and to plot routes of their own.
102. The geography co-ordinator has been instrumental in introducing the rolling programme of work and has undertaken some useful monitoring of teachers' planning. She has also begun to assemble a portfolio of assessed work which demonstrates levels of achievement across the school. She has not yet had any opportunities to monitor teaching directly through classroom observation, and the portfolio, as yet incomplete, has not yet proved reliable as a basis for monitoring progression across the school as a whole. The use of information technology to support work in geography is underdeveloped.

HISTORY

103. Only two lessons were observed in history during the inspection. Judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work from the previous academic year and from the first few weeks of this term, teachers' planning, the lessons seen and discussions with pupils. On the basis of this evidence, standards in history are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4. These findings are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection when the substantial majority of pupils were deemed to achieve the national expectations.
104. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about events from the past and of how things have changed over time. For example, Year 2 pupils show a sound understanding of how toys and childhood games have changed by: collecting and researching toys; interviewing a visitor about his childhood reminiscences from the 1930s; and playing with equivalent toys. In Key Stage 2, pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of the main events associated with the invasion and occupation of Britain by the Romans and Vikings, and begin to give reasons for the events studied. For example, Year 3 pupils can recall key facts of the Roman occupation and can give reasons for their retreat. Across the school, pupils make sound progress in their

knowledge and understanding of historical events mainly through second hand evidence. While they have some opportunities to develop their historical enquiry skills through occasional 'living history' days in Key Stage 2, the use of artefacts and first hand experiences is underdeveloped.

105. Insufficient lesson observations were carried out to make a secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching in history. In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 1, teaching was good. Effective questioning and classroom management were used to help pupils recall prior learning and to reflect on differences between life in the past compared to now. Pupils were given good opportunities to ask questions and to extend their understanding through interviewing a visitor from the local community about his childhood experiences. In the Key Stage 2 lesson, teaching was sound overall. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to work collaboratively and to identify and share key facts from their study of the Romans. Pupils were suitably motivated and keen to contribute to class discussions, but a more assertive management style would help to curb the over-enthusiasm and noise level displayed by a small minority of pupils.
106. Across the school, evidence from pupils' work shows that history is mainly taught through teacher directed tasks and worksheet activities; with some independent research in Key Stage 2. The limited range of artefacts in the school does not allow pupils to investigate first hand evidence with sufficient regularity. However, individual teachers clearly augment the school's resources with some of their own, and some important opportunities are provided for pupils to empathise with people from the past. For example when interviewing 'Uncle Arthur' in Year 2, and when they become 'evacuees' for a day or meet a visiting 'Viking' in Key Stage 2.
107. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is keen to develop the subject further. She has collected a useful folder of assessed samples to exemplify particular historical skills although her findings have not yet been shared with colleagues. Changes in Curriculum 2000 have been disseminated to staff, and medium-term plans are checked. However, the overall curriculum plan needs to be revised since the current planning cycle for history was evolved to aid teaching in mixed age classes. While there is evidence of progression in history, the school now needs to develop a more coherent plan to ensure continuity and to avoid unnecessary repetition of historical topics. Photographic evidence is also collected; and the co-ordinator organised a successful and attractive display of history throughout the school to celebrate the millennium. While there are sufficient books and posters to support history, there is scope to increase the limited range of artefacts available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

108. Only one information and communication technology lesson was observed during the inspection. The evidence gained from an analysis of the limited range of pupils' work from the last academic year, from the co-ordinator's portfolio and from work carried out this term shows that pupils mainly make insufficient progress in the subject and attain low standards overall. These findings are similar to those at the time of the last full inspection in 1995 and the two-day HMI inspection in 1998. The school has, therefore, made unsatisfactory overall progress in addressing the key issue relating to improving information and communication technology standards from the last report.
109. In Key Stage 1, pupils make mainly satisfactory progress in using the 'mouse' to click and drag Teddy's clothes, draw pictures using 'Splosh' and to play word and number

games. Pupils can operate the print command but do not save, retrieve and evaluate their work. Overall, the limited time available for individual pupils to use the computer means that they make slow progress across the required breadth of study in information and communication technology and do not meet the expected levels at the end of the key stage. In Key Stage 2, pupils make slow progress in Year 3 and pupils attain standards that are low for their ages. Progress improves in some aspects of the subject in Year 4, and pupils attain sound standards when they generate graphs of the results of investigations in science and create command lines with a 'turtle' program to draw squares and octagons in mathematics. They mainly demonstrate standards associated with younger pupils when word processing; and keyboard skills are at a low level across the school. While progress in learning is often too slow in school, many pupils clearly have access to computers outside school. There are several examples of pupils using Encarta and the Internet at home to research topics studied at school. For example, pupils bring in print-outs of information on 'toys through the ages' in Year 2, and find out about the work of artists such as Hockney, Monet and Georgia O'Keefe in Key Stage 2.

110. Due to very limited evidence, it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, work sampling suggests that teachers would benefit from additional training to improve their expertise and raise their expectations. Some sound opportunities are provided for pupils to practise taught skills in English, mathematics and science lessons. However, it often takes two weeks for all pupils to gain individual access to a computer, and this results in slow progress overall. Insufficient time and resources also means that pupils are rarely able to draft, save, retrieve and review their own work. The most confident teacher is clearly the information and communication technology co-ordinator who taught the one lesson observed, which was sound. She has a secure knowledge and is keen and enthusiastic. However, as a part-time teacher, she has few opportunities to observe and support practice. It is unhelpful to her monitoring role that other teachers teach information and communication technology skills on a day when she is not in school. The co-ordinator has clearly helped the school to make good progress in the planning for information and communication technology, initially by introducing half-termly tasks and, more recently, by developing sound medium-term plans based on the key elements in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work. With the new statutory requirement at Key Stage 2 for information and communication technology to be integral to all subjects, except physical education, it would be helpful if other subject co-ordinators assisted her in identifying appropriate information and communication technology opportunities in their subjects. Some sound monitoring has taken place, mainly through work sampling. Feedback is largely informal and the co-ordinator is proactive in checking that teachers have what they need to deliver the units of work. The co-ordinator's relationship with the partner governor is obviously good and has resulted in useful reports on information and communication technology to the governing body. The quality and quantity of resources for information and communication technology is clearly improving, particularly through the use of funding from the National Grid for Learning; and there are hopes that the anticipated new school building will include an information and communication technology suite. However, not all the available funding has been spent and current arrangements result in pupils making slow progress overall.

MUSIC

111. Pupils' standards in music are generally in line with those expected at the end of Key Stage 1. Insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to judge pupils'

overall attainment in music in Years 3 and 4 or the quality of teaching. Evidence from pupils' performance in assemblies, and from lessons seen in Key Stage 1, shows that pupils' singing skills are mainly good across the school. Their diction is clear and their control of pitch and dynamics is generally secure. There is lunchtime tuition for those pupils in Key Stage 2 who wish to develop their skills in playing the recorder; and they make good progress in these sessions. The choir meets each week, and comprises pupils from Years 2 to 4. Unfortunately, it was not possible to observe their practice session during the inspection.

112. No judgement was made about music in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1998. However, standards were found to be in line with those expected nationally, in both key stages, when the school was inspected in 1995.
113. In Key Stage 1, the teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, and is supported by a commercial music scheme. In a lesson observed in Year 1, satisfactory teaching enabled pupils to make sound progress in developing their listening and appraising skills, through learning to identify changes in pitch and dynamics. In Year 2, the lesson observed enabled pupils to learn a new song and to achieve satisfactory standards when creating simple rhythms, using percussion instruments. Pupils respond well to their teachers and clearly enjoy their lessons.
114. The music co-ordinator is conscientious, checks teachers' planning and provides individual staff with useful advice when it is requested. As yet, she has not had the opportunity to observe music teaching across the school, and this restricts her understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' standards and the quality of teaching. Resources for music are just adequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Lessons in both gymnastics and games were observed in Key Stage 1, but only one, a dance lesson, was observed in Key Stage 2. These observations provide only a partial picture of pupils' achievements in the different disciplines and activities that contribute to pupils' experience of physical education as a whole, and it is therefore difficult to reach secure judgements about pupils' overall attainment in the subject. However, standards were never below average in relation to pupils' ages, and were above average for their age in a gymnastics lesson in Year 1 and a rugby lesson in Year 2. Almost all pupils in Year 1 achieve a degree of control and co-ordination in their movement that is above average when walking, turning, running and balancing, and more able pupils are able to make perceptive evaluations of others' performance. In games, pupils in Year 2 demonstrate good control when throwing and catching a rugby ball, when dodging round cones, and when placing a 'try'. In a dance lesson in Year 4, pupils attain standards which are broadly average for their age. Their movements remain rather inhibited and lacking in confidence, even though many show a good sense of rhythm and demonstrate skill in selecting appropriate actions and ideas to interpret the music.
116. In the few lessons seen, the teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. Insufficient lessons were observed to make an overall judgement about teaching in the subject. Lessons are always well prepared, cover a variety of activities which allow pupils to develop, practise and refine new skills, and give pupils opportunities to plan their own work and to demonstrate their achievements. Occasionally, the management of pupils is not entirely secure, especially when working outdoors, and good teaching is

not always as effective as it should be in terms of its impact on pupils' performance, for example in dance, when pupils have clearly suffered a lack of continuity in their previous experience of the subject.

117. Since the last OFSTED inspection in 1995, a good scheme of work has been introduced. It ensures that all relevant aspects of physical education, including outdoor and adventurous activities, are taught. Swimming, a compulsory element of the Key Stage 2 programme, is covered when pupils transfer to the middle school. The games curriculum has recently been broadened by the introduction of the 'Top Play' scheme which aims to give pupils 'taster' experiences of sports such as hockey, tennis, rugby and cricket, in addition to the football which is already well established in the school.
118. The 'Top Play' scheme has also led to a substantial increase in the resources available for the subject, an aspect of provision which was criticised in the last OFSTED report. Lesson observations during the current inspection show that pupils are now routinely involved in the evaluation of their own and others' work, and useful evaluation by teachers is a marked feature of all lessons. A new co-ordinator has assumed responsibility for the co-ordination and development of the subject since the last OFSTED inspection. She has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject, and has received good support from the link governor for the subject in developing her role and monitoring provision. She has formally monitored teachers' planning, and has assembled photographic evidence to produce a useful portfolio which demonstrates good standards in every strand of physical education. It is clear from the lessons observed that there is considerable expertise in various aspects of the subject amongst the existing staff. As yet, the impact of this 'best practice' is not evident in the teaching and learning in all year groups or in all aspects of the subject. The school now needs to find ways of disseminating the best practice in order to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the key stages.