

INSPECTION REPORT

PETERCHURCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Peterchurch
Hereford

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116718

Headteacher: Mrs C A Garlick

Reporting inspector: Mrs O M Cooper
10859

Dates of inspection: 9-13 October 2000

Inspection number: 224773

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Peterchurch Hereford
Postcode:	HR2 0RP
Telephone number:	01981 550230
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Quan
Date of previous inspection:	10 – 12 December 1996.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs O Cooper 10859	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Music Religious education Under fives	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results & pupils' standards. How well are pupils' taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr R Watts 9399	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr G Simpson 17686	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Art and design History Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a village community school for boys and girls between four and eleven years of age. There are 119 pupils on roll, which is below average size, with 6 attending the reception class part-time. No pupils are from ethnic minority groups and none have English as an additional language. The school is included in an Education Action Zone to help overcome the problems of rural isolation and deprivation, which can lead to disaffection and low expectations. The proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals is broadly average. There were 18.5 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs in the previous year, a broadly average proportion, although the proportion of pupils with formal statements of their needs was above the national average. There are now 34 per cent of pupils identified as having special educational needs; several pupils joining the school from outside the local area have special educational needs. Overall, attainment on entry to the school is below, and in some years well below, the average for the local education authority and for schools nationally, particularly in language skills. Of the three junior classes, two currently have temporary teachers and the other has a teacher new to the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in providing a satisfactory education for its pupils. Current standards for eleven-year-old pupils are broadly average in English and mathematics, and are above average in science. Standards in aspects of English and mathematics could be higher as they are below those of similar schools. Standards at the age of seven could also be higher if a small number of higher attaining pupils were given tasks that are more challenging. Teaching is satisfactory and is helping pupils to acquire knowledge and skills and so make sufficient progress over time for the below average overall standards at age four to rise to broadly average or higher by the age of eleven. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory; the headteacher, until very recently, had a class teaching commitment of four days each week but has still secured improvements since the last inspection. The school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in science are above the national average by the age of eleven.
- The school cares well for its pupils and they feel secure.
- The school's accommodation and resources are good, used well and conducive to learning.
- Attendance rates are high and support pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly writing, and in mathematics are below the national average by the age seven and below those of similar schools at age eleven.
- Standards in science by the age of seven are below average as no pupils are achieving higher levels than expected for their age.
- The behaviour of a small number of pupils is occasionally unsatisfactory in lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996. Since then there has been satisfactory improvement. Standards in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven have improved. Standards in writing and spelling at age seven have improved and standards in mathematics have been sustained. The quality of teaching remains similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection, although the proportion of very good lessons has increased. The action taken to remedy the weaknesses identified in the previous report has been largely successful. The action taken to improve standards in reading by the age of seven has had a positive impact but has not yet brought standards in line with the national average. The school portfolio of assessed samples of work was completed and is reviewed annually to check the samples are still appropriate. The range and quality of tools for design and technology have been improved and a programme of work agreed and implemented. The close match of tasks to the needs of all pupils in Year 2 has improved but is not evident in all lessons and hinders the progress of a small number of pupils.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	C	C	D
Mathematics	D	C	C	D
Science	D	B	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

These results show the school has improved from the below average standards in all three subjects in 1997, and well below average standards in English. The improvement in science has been better than that in English and mathematics and indicates standards in these subjects could be higher. When compared with similar schools, standards were below the average in English and mathematics, which indicates there is room for improvement. The inclusion of the school in the Education Action Zone and the additional support this has provided has been a factor in the improvement to date. The positive effect of classes designed to boost the performance of selected pupils in English and mathematics prior to taking the national tests has helped to raise standards; this has been particularly successful. Inspection evidence shows current standards for eleven-year olds are broadly average, with standards in science being above average. There are weaknesses in pupils' skills in writing.

The trends in the school's results in all three subjects over the last four years has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school was successful in meeting and exceeding its targets for English and mathematics in 2000 but will have to work hard to reach its target for English in 2001, particularly in writing. Over forty per cent of the current Year 6 pupils have special educational needs relating to literacy.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the age of seven and should be higher. Improvements have kept pace with the national trend in most years but need to be better to bring standards up to the national average. However, progress is satisfactory, as attainment of the current Year 2 pupils on entry was well below average. In information and communication technology, religious education and all other subjects where there was sufficient evidence to make judgements, standards are average by the age of seven and eleven. At the end of the Foundation Stage, current standards are broadly average. The improved level of attainment on entry, noted in the last two years, and the good progress in developing basic skills of literacy and numeracy is leading to higher standards for pupils entering Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils come to school happily and want to learn, but 10 per cent of parents' questionnaires disagreed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory for approximately seven per cent of pupils. Most pupils behave well, but a few pupils in junior classes behave in an unacceptable manner when the lesson lacks interest, interrupting the learning of others. Behaviour at lunchtimes and at play is satisfactory.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils get on well together and take responsibility when asked to do so. They show initiative in organising events in support of charities.
Attendance	Good, above the national average. Pupils arrive on time and lessons get started quickly. This supports their learning.

The particular weakness in behaviour is in the way a few pupils answer back to teachers in a rude manner at times, showing little respect for them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 is satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons. It is good in 44 per cent, including 15 per cent that is very good. The remaining 3 per cent are unsatisfactory. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good for children in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in all the other classes. The management of pupils is a strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage and Year 1, is satisfactory in Year 2, and the large majority of lessons in the junior classes. However, it did lead to an unsatisfactory lesson where a disproportionate amount of time was spent on discipline. In a few potentially good lessons, a short period was spent on discipline, which interrupted pupils' learning and resulted in only satisfactory teaching. The use of homework is a strength, particularly in the Foundation Stage and helps most pupils to make good progress in reading. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to make progress towards their targets. The teachers' expectations of other pupils are not always high enough and higher attaining pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable when they are insufficiently challenged in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The pupils experience a wide range of activities and opportunities within lessons. Relationships with other local schools are particularly good, as is the contribution of people in the local community. The range of extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The activities planned are based on each pupil's individual education plan or formal statement of need. The provision enables the pupils to make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall, with good provision for pupils' cultural development. The residential visits provide good opportunities for social development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and understand the impact of their actions on others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well cared for and feel secure in school. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good and for their academic performance is satisfactory.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are actively encouraged to support their child with homework and to use the reading diaries as a means of dialogue with teachers. The school does not have written procedures for considering parents' views so that any concerns or issues can be taken into account.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides clear direction for the work of the school and leads by example. She is well supported by the governors and staff. The teaching commitment of the headteacher has restricted the monitoring of teaching but this is now being remedied.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are totally committed to supporting the school and fulfil virtually all their statutory responsibilities. The school development plan is a good document by which governors can check the success of action taken to raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school makes good use of the wealth of data available to check the progress of pupils from year to year and over time in the school. The school is aware of the need to analyse pupils' performance in individual test questions to highlight any gaps in teaching or curricular provision.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The accommodation, staff, learning resources and finance available are used effectively to promote pupils' learning. Funding available from the Education Action Zone has also been used efficiently to secure improvements in standards.

There are sufficient teachers and support staff and all classes have fewer than 30 pupils. The adequacy of accommodation and outdoor facilities is good. Resources for learning are plentiful and of good quality in most subjects and have improved since the previous inspection, particularly the school lending library. However, the resources for children under five in the Foundation Stage are inadequate for outdoor play. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value satisfactorily, for example when purchasing large items of equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their potential. • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Parents feel comfortable in approaching staff with questions or problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's links with parents. • The information they receive on their child's progress. • The range of activities provided outside lessons. • Pupils' behaviour.

The inspectors support some of the parents' positive and negative views of the school. Teaching and leadership and management are satisfactory. Not all pupils are expected to work hard in lessons. The school's links with parents are satisfactory and parents present at the pre-inspection meeting could not suggest any ways in which the school could work in closer partnership with parents. The information received on pupils' progress is satisfactory, meets requirements and, in some classes, annual reports give good, detailed information about progress in English and mathematics. There are two open evenings in addition to reports, which provide sufficient opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. At the age of eleven, standards are currently average in English and mathematics and above average in science. In 1999, the school's national test results were broadly average in English and mathematics and were well above average in science. When compared with similar schools the results were below the average in English and mathematics but were well above average in science. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected in science was 47 per cent, which was well above average. This implies standards in English and mathematics could be higher. The 2000 results in English and science were similar to those in 1999 and did not keep pace with the improvement found nationally, whereas the standards in mathematics rose to a greater extent than found nationally and are above the national average. Of the Year 6 group of pupils in 2000, 33 per cent had special educational needs relating to literacy skills; this had a negative impact on the results in English. There has been good improvement in results at age eleven since 1997 when they were well below the national average in English and below the national average in mathematics and science. Most pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and developing skills over time in the junior classes and are well aware of their rate of learning through the individual targets set. The school does well to reach average standards from low levels of attainment on entry, especially in years where 33 per cent of pupils have special educational needs.

2. Current standards at the age of seven years are below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school's 1999 results of national tests in reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national and well below the average for similar schools. In fact, the results in reading were in the lowest five per cent when compared with similar schools. The results in 2000 showed improvement in all test results but the improvement, although better than that found nationally, has not brought standards in line with the national average because the proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard has declined in reading, writing and mathematics. Although the small numbers of pupils in year groups, the uneven distribution of pupils with special educational needs and pupil mobility leads to some fluctuation in results, standards by the age of seven years would be higher if pupils were consistently challenged in lessons. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments in science in 1999 showed standards to be below the national average and well below the national average for the proportion of seven-year-old pupils exceeding the national standard. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard fell slightly and no pupils exceeded this level. The teaching is not enabling pupils to achieve the higher level of which pupils that are more able are capable. Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard in reading, writing and spelling has improved by approximately 30 per cent. In mathematics, standards have been sustained with the exception of 1999. In science, however, the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard has declined each year. When the low levels of attainment on entry are taken into consideration and the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils make satisfactory progress in English and mathematics but should do better in science.

3. Attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage is currently average. Most pupils are making good progress, especially in developing skills of literacy and numeracy and are likely to attain the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Attainment on entry to the school has been well below average until the last two years when the results of assessments soon after admission show attainment is improving, but is still below average. The inclusion of the local pre-school playgroups in the Education Action Zone (EAZ) and the support given appear to be having a positive impact on pupils' attainment on entry. The school has gained, quite deservedly, a good reputation for supporting pupils with special educational needs. This resulted in an increased level of pupil mobility in the last year and 50 per cent of the pupils admitted during the year had special educational needs. This makes direct comparison of the attainment of year groups at the age of seven and eleven difficult. The school, therefore, tracks the progress of individual pupils over time in the juniors and virtually all pupils make satisfactory progress, with some making good progress.

4. Inspection findings show standards for both seven and eleven-year olds are average in speaking and listening and below average in writing. In reading, standards are currently below average for seven year olds and average for eleven-year olds. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented fully, with additional time for reading and writing outside literacy hours. This has helped in improving the rate of progress and raising standards in reading, but further work needs to be done to improve pupils' skills in writing and spelling. The EAZ focus, as well as the school's main focus, has been on improving pupils' basic skills and there has been some improvement since the previous inspection. There is a lack of inspirational teaching and this is not helping to overcome the disaffection of a small number of pupils, particularly boys, in junior classes. The teaching of writing skills is not leading to good quality writing and the redrafting of work does not lead to improvement. By the age of seven, pupils write in sentences but their use of capital letters and full stops is inconsistent. Common words are usually spelt accurately. By eleven, the use of punctuation remains inconsistent and spelling is below the level expected for pupils' ages. The additional literacy strategy is being used effectively to help pupils overcome these weaknesses and pupils are making satisfactory progress.

5. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented fully and is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' mental recall and strategies for calculation. However, further emphasis needs to be placed on mental work to improve pupils' skills further. Most pupils make satisfactory progress over time in the school, although the pupils in infant classes are not making as much progress as they could. The Year 1 pupils are taught in whole class sessions with children under-five and in order to involve all pupils in the lessons the pace is too slow for the more able Year 1 pupils. When other adults are available, they are not always deployed effectively to work with a small group and enable all pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. In the junior classes, there are some good brisk introductory sessions, which are challenging and lively, and the pupils work hard to succeed. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their numeracy skills and their understanding of shapes and measures and handling data. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 are working with Year 6 pupils and this is an effective arrangement to provide challenge and ensure satisfactory progress is made. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects, for example in design and technology and in science when measuring accurately the amounts of water to be used in experiments.

6. In science, standards are below average for seven year olds and above average for eleven-year olds. The arrangement for grouping subjects under topics, and including science, means the subject is not taught each week. No science was taught during the inspection period and very little work was available for scrutiny in the infant classes. Indications are that pupils gain a sound body of knowledge about life processes and living things, materials and their uses and physical processes and begin to develop their experimental and investigational skills satisfactorily. In the junior classes, pupils build rapidly on their body of knowledge and good progress is made in developing skills in investigational and experimental science. Pupils take responsibility for planning their own investigations and have a good understanding of the principles of fair testing. Pupils also gain a good level of knowledge from the in-depth coverage of the programme of study.

7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average by the age of seven and eleven. There has been a significant improvement in resources and teachers have undertaken many training courses to improve their subject knowledge. This is having a positive impact on standards and the pupils' rate of learning is now satisfactory. Equipment is shared amongst the local schools in the pyramid to ensure full and effective coverage of the programme of study. Pupils are confident in using computers to support their learning; there is increasing evidence of their use in many subject areas.

8. In religious education, pupils' attainment is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for seven and eleven-year olds. The time allocated to teaching the subject includes some assembly time each day and this is not effective in allowing for full coverage of the syllabus and the maintenance of the high standards found at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress and gain sound knowledge of Christianity and of other major world faiths and have some understanding of the impact of other people's beliefs on their daily lives.

9. In art and design, history, music and physical education standards are average at the age of seven and eleven and are above average in swimming as pupils have lessons in the school's own pool and most pupils make satisfactory progress. There was insufficient evidence for secure judgements to be made on standards in design and technology and geography.

10. Pupils with special educational needs attain well in relation to their prior attainment. They are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants who follow the individual education plans closely and so provide tasks which are closely matched to their needs and enable them to achieve well, particularly in English where most have learning difficulties. Some of these pupils attain the national standard at age eleven because of the support they receive and the effort they put into their work.

11. The trend in the school's results in English, mathematics and science at age eleven in recent years has been broadly in line with the national trend. The school was successful in meeting its targets for English and mathematics in 2000 and is in a good position to meet the improved target in mathematics in 2001. The target in English is more challenging and will require hard work in improving pupils' skills in writing and spelling if it is to be achieved.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes towards school are satisfactory overall. Whilst most pupils have good attitudes, the positive picture is spoilt by a few junior pupils who sometimes appear bored, or who show disrespect towards their teacher. This is sometimes linked to the lack of challenge posed by teaching or to the inconsistency of the approach to behaviour management. Most parents say that their children enjoy coming to school but, unusually for a primary school, around 10 per cent of those who returned the questionnaires do not agree. In the morning, most pupils go to their classrooms and settle quickly. In the better lessons, they are interested in their tasks and work hard because they enjoy doing so. Pupils are open and join perceptively in discussions. Most are proud of their work and enjoy showing it to others. Occasionally, pupils do not listen carefully to the teacher's instructions or sustain their

concentration until tasks are complete.

13. The pupils' behaviour seen during the inspection was generally unsatisfactory, largely because about seven per cent of pupils behaved badly for short periods in approximately 17 per cent of lessons, particularly at the start of the week. In some lessons, behaviour was good and, in all lessons, most pupils clearly wanted to behave well. However, where a few were inattentive or downright disobedient, their behaviour affected the learning of others for part of the lesson. When discipline was tightened up later in the inspection week, pupils showed by their demeanour that they were unsure of what was required and one or two continued occasionally to be defiant. For pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties, they were reacting to the presence of strangers, which they found difficult. Nevertheless, others were beginning to copy their examples and this was upsetting those who wished to get on with their work. Although parents had expressed concern about behaviour at break times, this was generally good, with pupils of all ages, and boys and girls, playing well together. No incidents of bullying were seen and pupils spoken to said that they were rare and promptly dealt with. There was one, fixed-term exclusion last year, a punishment appropriate to the offence.

14. Relationships within the school are satisfactory and often good between pupils. Some teachers have a good rapport with their class, which allows the maximum contribution of pupils to discussions. However, in other classes, uneasy relationships create an uncomfortable atmosphere, which interferes with learning. In discussion with pupils, there was a clear understanding of right and wrong and most have a good awareness of the impact of actions on others as a rationale for rule making. These pupils understood well that others may have different beliefs to them and were tolerant of diversity. They willingly accept the limited responsibilities offered and show initiative, for example when organising fund raising events for charities. Attendance is good and above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low and few pupils are late. This has a good impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Overall, teaching is satisfactory and a significant factor in the pupils' attainments and rate of progress. There is little difference in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons, just one lesson being unsatisfactory. Forty-four per cent of lessons were good, including 15 per cent that were very good. The proportion of good teaching is lower than found nationally but one member of staff was on sick leave and a supply teacher had stepped in at short notice and so all the junior classes have teachers new to their roles this term; two being in temporary posts. Some pupils have found the number of new staff difficult to cope with. The school has the monitoring and development of teaching as one of its priorities, recognising the lack of inspirational teaching that interests and stimulates pupils so that they are eager to learn.

16. The very good lessons were in English and mathematics with infant and junior pupils and in the Foundation Stage. These English lessons and the Foundation Stage lesson were taught by the headteacher and special educational needs staff who are secure in their understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. The activities were varied and moved along at a good pace that sustained pupils' interest, and in return they sustained their concentration and made every effort to succeed. This was particularly noticeable with a group of Year 4 pupils with special educational needs who were working on improving their spelling and persevered when first attempts were inaccurate. The very good lessons in mathematics were firmly based on the lesson structure in the National Numeracy Strategy. The introductory sessions were lively, challenging and required pupils to use their knowledge and skills to answer a wide range of mental questions. The pupils enjoyed the challenge and rose to it. These sessions set the tone for the rest of the lesson. In the Year 4 and 5 class, the teacher had high expectations that all pupils would work hard and try to complete the task set in the time allowed. They were expected to work independently and did so. This enabled the teacher to focus on a group of pupils and take their learning onto the next stage. The teaching of a small group whilst others work independently was not seen often enough and as a result, there is unnecessary repetition of work which hinders the pace of learning as seen in Year 2.

17. The unsatisfactory lesson was in art in a junior class. The planning lacked sufficient detail to support the teaching and the task was too difficult for a small group of pupils who lost interest and made no progress. A disproportionate amount of time was spent on discipline before the lesson could proceed.

18. Overall, teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and this helps pupils acquire knowledge, understanding and skills at a satisfactory rate. The teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy in the Foundation Stage is good. The children soon gain confidence in their ability to read, write and count accurately and their rate of learning is good. In other classes, teachers are competent in teaching the basic skills, but there is a lack of vitality in the teaching in some classes and some weaknesses in teaching writing skills in general. Through the EAZ, the school has received good support and training in information and communication technology. As a result, most teachers are more confident in their teaching than at the time of the previous inspection and this is evident in the pupils' skills, achievements and independence. Teachers' subject knowledge in science is good and enables pupils to gain a good body of knowledge and skills and attain high standards where they are capable of doing

so. Teachers use a range of teaching methods, appropriate to the task being undertaken and the large majority of lessons interest pupils and they sustain their concentration.

19. In general, teachers' planning is satisfactory. The purposes of lessons are clearly identified and provide a focus for teaching. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and effort are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage, but are not always high enough in the infant and junior classes, particularly for higher attaining pupils. Too often the scrutiny of last year's work showed all pupils in a class had been given the same worksheets regardless of their prior attainment. This resulted in more able pupils completing them quickly and accurately with little effort, whilst lower attaining pupils rarely managed to finish them. This is improving, for example, in the very good lesson seen on fractions in the Year 4 and 5 class, activities were planned at three levels of complexity which sufficiently challenged all pupils, built on their prior attainment and could be completed by all pupils if they worked hard. Pupils responded by doing their best and they made very good progress in deepening their understanding of fractions of numbers. However, there is further work to be done on improving the match of the tasks to pupils' prior attainments in Year 2. Teachers often use time towards the end of lessons, for example in listening to what pupils have written, to judge the rate of learning in order to plan the next stage. This information is not always used effectively to plan activities at different levels in order to meet the needs of all pupils. Consequently, higher attaining pupils do not always have to put effort into their work in order to complete their tasks in the time allowed.

20. The management of pupils is inconsistent between classes. It is good in the Foundation Stage where routines and expectations are clearly established from an early stage. This helps to make the children feel secure and willing to try. In the other infant class the management of pupils is satisfactory and enables pupils to complete their tasks undisturbed and so make progress. However, in all the junior classes there are a few pupils, mostly boys, who are less interested in their work and who interrupt the learning for others for short periods. There is a lack of a consistent, whole-school approach to coping with these pupils to remedy the situation.

21. The scrutiny of work showed pupils' work in junior classes was not always marked and this is unsatisfactory and does not inform pupils how to improve their work. Pupils know how well they are doing in some aspects of their learning from their progress towards the individual targets set. Homework is set regularly and is effective in supporting pupils' learning and progress. In the Foundation Stage, reading diaries provide a good means of dialogue between home and school. Where parents do not offer comments about their child's reading habits, the teacher encourages them to do so. Any problems can be shared at an early stage and parents and teachers work together in support of the child. Where parents co-operate, their children make good progress. The mathematics games provided as homework activities for all pupils successfully promote enjoyment of the subject.

22. There is good support for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress towards their targets. The activities planned and the way in which the learning support assistants work are very closely aligned to the recommendations in the individual education plans or formal statements. There is good liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator, the learning support assistants and class teachers so everyone is well informed of the progress made so the next stage can be planned for each individual.

23. The quality of teaching is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection, although the proportion of very good teaching has increased. The weakness in the teaching in Year 2, found in the previous inspection, has improved and the weaknesses in discipline and teachers' expectations in junior classes have been identified. From the beginning of the current term, the headteacher has not had responsibility for a class of pupils and one of her priorities is to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school.

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

24. The school has been successful in addressing some of the curricular weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. Standards in reading by the age of seven have risen as a result of changes, but are not yet high enough for pupils that are more able. An appropriate scheme of work has been implemented for design and technology.

25. The curriculum is organised satisfactorily into a balance of discrete subjects and a two-year cycle of topics in order to meet the needs of mixed age classes. All National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal, social and health education are taught and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. It includes the areas of learning for four and five year olds. The school has considered the allocation of time and provides a broad and balanced curriculum within its framework. For instance, science, design and technology, geography and history are integrated into a topic approach and the time is analysed carefully to cater for all subjects appropriately. There are difficulties in accurately building on what pupils already know and can do, when subjects are revisited after a lapse of time, but these have been overcome in science, as national test results at age eleven testify. There has been good improvement in the ICT curriculum and the missing elements are now included in this year's planning. The school decided to allocate more time for physical education to compensate for a lack of facilities in a rural community, but this has not

resulted in higher standards in aspects other than swimming. Although the locally agreed syllabus for religious education has been adopted, the organisation of this subject's time does not meet the requirements of the syllabus, which has an adverse effect on standards and quality. The school uses information on entry to plan a curriculum to meet pupils' needs, but the curriculum for the foundation years provides too few opportunities for the children to make choices about the activities they undertake. Now that the headteacher has been relieved of teaching responsibilities, she has the time to monitor plans more effectively.

26. Pupils are well prepared for secondary transfer through the opportunities provided within the pyramid of local schools. The governors are actively involved in curriculum matters via the curriculum committee and have regularly observed lessons and reported to the full governing body. There are plans to extend their involvement in literacy and numeracy and by taking a closer look at science.

27. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support. The school meets the curricular and other requirements of pupils on the special needs register, including those who have a formal statement. Individual education plans are relevant to their needs and are adapted well, where possible, in many subjects of the curriculum. Provision is conscientiously and effectively monitored by the co-ordinator for special needs and classroom assistants make a positive impact on progress.

28. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented. The school has adapted the National Literacy Strategy sensibly to meet its needs. Guided reading is taught separately and is being successful in raising standards. Extended writing sessions have been added in an attempt to improve standards in writing, which the school has rightly identified as an area of weakness. These have not yet had time to make a significant impact. Opportunities to use literacy and numeracy across the whole curriculum are satisfactory, for instance in science and history.

29. The curriculum is enriched by the school's active participation in activities organised within the pyramid of local schools. These include sport and the arts. The curriculum is also well supported by the sharing of expertise, resources and training provided by this group. The school itself organises a wide range of visits and visitors, which enhance the pupils' understanding and appreciation of the curriculum. These include visits, for example to the Hartlebury Museum, involving role-play and one to Old House, Hereford. Residential visits give pupils the opportunity to develop both intellectually and socially. Pupils study the local environment and this is made more relevant by talks from inhabitants of the village. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning, therefore, is good. Opportunities are available for pupils to learn musical instruments. Developments as a result of being in an EAZ have also improved the quality of the curriculum and experiences on offer. The development of the school library and the provision of computers are examples of these. The provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory, as the school has problems resulting from a small staff and pupils having to be bussed home at the end of the teaching day.

30. The school follows a policy of equal opportunities and inclusion successfully. Assessment data is analysed to determine the respective performance of girls and boys, but the use of this information requires further development. There is a satisfactory programme of personal and social education, which includes sex education and drug education.

31. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The taught curriculum includes religious education for all pupils. Aspects of the religious education syllabus are included in assemblies, which is the main source of spirituality in the school. The local vicar provides an added dimension to these experiences in his regular assembly. The acts of collective worship fulfil statutory requirements. Visits to local churches also give pupils a spiritual awareness in places of worship. Pupils respond to works of art and literature throughout the taught curriculum. Examples of work on display include pupils' ideas of an ideal world. Although some of these are concerned with improving the world for mankind in general, many concentrate on improvements solely for the writer.

32. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory. Teachers emphasise the difference between right and wrong to pupils and they acquire a clear understanding. Hence, they conduct themselves well in relation to each other in the playground, where boys and girls of all ages mix well together. There are opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons but there are too few for pupils to work and research independently and make their own decisions about their learning. Although pupils assume responsibilities in the school, such as when acting as monitors, they have few opportunities to show initiative. The school encourages good behaviour and pupils are involved in setting their own rules and codes of conduct within their own classrooms. However, this approach is not effective with a small number of pupils who sometimes misbehave. Pupils show concern for others less fortunate by fund raising for good causes. In this respect, they do show initiative in that the events, which they subsequently organise, are often the results of their own ideas.

33. The provision for cultural development is good. Involvement in the pyramid of local schools provides many opportunities for participating in cultural, as well as social activities. These make a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teachers provide opportunities for cultural development throughout the whole curriculum. Examples include using

artists, both male and female, as a focus for learning. Local artists also visit the school and share their knowledge and understanding, which is an effective stimulus. Visiting puppeteers give pupils an insight into traditional crafts. Visits to Hereford Cathedral and other places emphasise their cultural heritage. The curriculum widens pupils' understanding of their own cultural heritage, as well as the heritage of others who share their society. The 'home corner', (Sirdar's house), is a good way of introducing an inter-cultural element. An understanding of other faiths is fostered effectively in religious education and assemblies. The library has a satisfactory range of books, including some with multi-cultural themes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. Pupils are well looked after and feel secure in a school with a caring environment. Appropriately trained staff look after pupils who are ill or who have accidents at school. The school has adopted local child protection procedures and the designated teacher and all other staff are well trained. Good support is given by external agencies such as social services. Procedures for checking electrical and fire equipment are good and formal health and safety risk assessment is carried out thoroughly.

35. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Pupils are assessed on entry to the school and this information is used effectively in forming teaching groups and designing a suitable curriculum. All pupils from Year 2 onwards are tested according to national criteria. This data is analysed and used effectively to project anticipated levels in national tests at age eleven. Data is analysed and used to plot the progress of individuals. Although it is also analysed to identify general areas of weakness, for example in writing, it is not yet analysed to determine particular areas of weakness within a subject, so that planned improvements can be more specific. Good pupil records are kept by teachers, which provide increasing knowledge of each child. Consequently, teachers get to know the pupils and their needs well. Parents play a useful part in this, in that they, too, complete reading diaries conscientiously. Pupils gain some insight of their own learning by setting themselves targets for improvement. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed early and from then on their progress is regularly reviewed and monitored, providing these pupils with good support. Day to day assessments are made in lessons and some adjustments are made to planned activities. Marking is not consistent, is unsatisfactory in some subjects and does not set pupils targets for improvement. The ongoing log of academic and personal development helps teachers to provide good support for pupils' personal development. This information is used well to determine 'booster' groups for learning.

36. Procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Registers are completed correctly and parents are contacted immediately if their child is absent without a reason being given. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory. There is no consistent approach to dealing with unacceptable behaviour and eliminating the interruption that this causes for others. The school followed correct procedures when a pupil was excluded last year and took appropriate steps to re-integrate the pupil back into school life.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The majority of parents are generally satisfied with the education provided but a higher than average number has significant concerns. Thirty-two parents attended the meeting before the inspection and their views were generally positive. There were some concerns over behaviour at lunchtime, bad language at playtimes and about the small number of activities for pupils after school. A high proportion of questionnaires issued by the school before the inspection was returned. Again, the majority of parents held supportive views: the most positive being that children achieve well and that leadership is good. An unusually high percentage, (11 per cent), disagreed that their child liked school and there were significant minorities who had concerns about behaviour, information on progress and how well the school works with parents. A majority were dissatisfied with the range of out-of-lesson activities. The questionnaire details can be seen in the table in Part C of this report.

38. The inspection generally supports the positive views of parents, although many aspects are found to be satisfactory rather than good. However, the team also supports some of their concerns. Pupils make satisfactory progress helped by sound teaching. They are well cared for. Whilst behaviour seen outside lessons was often good, in junior classes this was not always the case. Many parents are very supportive of the school's work but others are not. Extra-curricular activities are very limited and unsatisfactory due to the small number of staff and the need for some pupils to catch buses home at the end of the school day.

39. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is currently satisfactory but requires further development. Admission arrangements are good; parents are given helpful advice on how to help their child settle into school and with their early learning. A well-stocked library is available for parents to borrow books to encourage a love of literature. The school has held meetings for all parents to discuss developments, such as the national literacy and numeracy

strategies, which effectively helps them understand these changes. Some parents were concerned that they did not know sufficient about current work to enable them to give their child help at home. Whilst the topic schedule is included in the prospectus, this is not sufficient for that purpose. The school is open to approach by parents but it does insufficient to seek parental views and bring into the open their concerns. Neither does it consult parents in a formal manner on the further development of the school or how, in application of best value principles, it can best meet the wishes of parents.

40. Written reports on pupils' progress meet statutory requirements. The best give good detail, particularly in the main subjects of English and mathematics, and show that each pupil is valued as an individual. Pupils are given the opportunity, in discussion with their teacher, to set targets for themselves and this helps them understand how well they are doing. Some reports give an appropriate indication of how well the pupil is performing in comparison with national expectations. The school gives parents suitable opportunities to discuss progress with teachers or they can be approached informally. The governors' annual report to parents does not give all the information required relating to national test results. The school consulted parents appropriately about the content of the home-school agreement; this has now been issued and returned by many, but by no means all, parents. The school feels that it has little additional impact.

41. The impact of parents on the education of their children is generally satisfactory but has strengths and weaknesses. Many parents hear their child read at home and use the reading diary as a means of dialogue with the school; many also help play the mathematics game that is sent home each week. However, too many parents do not do this or attend parents' meetings with the teacher. Partly, as a consequence, standards in reading are not as high as they could be for these pupils. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend all the discussions and reviews of their child's progress, but some choose not to do so. Several parents are used as volunteer helpers within the lessons and give valuable support. Others help as additional adult supervision on school trips and swimming. The Parent Teacher Association enthusiastically organises social events, raises funds and helps make school events social occasions.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and are having a positive impact on standards overall. The teaching commitment of the headteacher, since the previous inspection, has led to a satisfactory, but slower, rate of improvement than found in other schools. This situation has now improved and she is taking a much higher profile in improving teaching and learning and raising standards. The headteacher gives clear direction to the school, works hard in tracking the progress of individual pupils over time and leads by example. She is well supported by the governors and deputy headteacher. The curriculum leaders' roles have been extended as far as possible, within a small school, but mainly cover support, guidance and purchasing resources. The special educational needs co-ordinator is having good impact and influence on standards and provision. The testing of pupils' reading and mathematical skills as part of the work of the Education Action Zone has been effective in identifying pupils not previously noted as being in need of support. Appropriate action has been taken to meet the needs of these pupils and is having a positive impact on their learning. The headteacher and deputy headteacher as co-ordinators for mathematics and English respectively have monitored teaching, identified weaknesses and given verbal feedback. The priority is to implement a more rigorous programme for monitoring and developing teaching to increase the proportion of very good lessons which inspire pupils so they are eager to learn.

43. The school development plan is a good document for driving improvement and is closely aligned to the priorities contained in Herefordshire's key areas for improvement in order to raise standards. The school's priorities are effectively linked to the financial planning and the school's aim of encouraging pupils to develop to their full potential. However, the teaching and lack of a consistent whole school approach to behaviour management are currently preventing the school from meeting this important aim. The success of the action taken, in terms of pupils' attainment, is clearly stated in the plans for English and mathematics, and this provides governors with clear indicators by which to measure its effectiveness. The wealth of data available is being used effectively to check pupils are making at least satisfactory progress and the value added to pupils' learning over time. The next step has, rightly, been identified as checking pupils' performance to highlight any gaps in teaching or the curricular provision.

44. The governors work well together and are totally committed to supporting the school. They meet their statutory responsibilities, although there are minor discrepancies in the information in their annual report to parents and in the prospectus. Individual governors visit the school frequently to monitor standards and the implementation of their policies and they report their findings to the full governing body. As a result they have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The monitoring of the action plan from the last inspection lacked rigour in ensuring action stated was carried out. The governors rely on teachers, as the professionals, to write the draft school development plan, which is then discussed at length and amendments made where deemed necessary. The strategic planning for the longer term is weaker. The school development beyond one year is given in outline, but not prioritised.

Consequently, when additional funding becomes available during the course of a year, the school is not well placed to make best use of the funding to secure improvement. The conscious decision to use the carry forward from the last financial year release the headteacher from class responsibility is a wise one. This will give her time to focus on the areas for improvement with more rigour and to check that all pupils are making good progress. The school is well placed to implement the new procedures for performance management as good systems for teacher appraisal have been maintained.

45. The budget planning and day to day financial administration are carried out manually. Whilst the day-to-day administration is good, it is not efficient in the time taken to carry out the different tasks. This is not an effective use of modern technology. The governors' decision not to opt into a computerised system, as recommended in a recent audit report, is leading to some inefficient use of secretarial time. Funding to support pupils with special educational needs is used efficiently and some of these pupils are successful in reaching national standards at the age of eleven. The income per pupil is high as this includes some funding for the pyramid schools and over £10,000 from the EAZ. The principles of best value are being applied satisfactorily. The school makes satisfactory use of all its resources, is enabling pupils to make progress from below and, in some years well below, average attainment on entry to average and in some subjects above average attainment at age eleven and is deemed to provide sound value for money.

46. The number of teachers and support staff is sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is good, especially facilities for outdoor games and swimming. The school pond and the bird garden are added features, which are used well to support pupils' learning. The quality and range of resources for learning are good overall, particularly in ICT, science, design and technology and religious education. The library is well stocked and open to all pupils as well as young children in the local community. However, there is a lack of wheeled toys and other large outdoor equipment for children in the Foundation Stage.

47. At the time of the previous inspection, the leadership and management of the school were judged to be good. The caring and supportive atmosphere has been maintained, but the standards of behaviour have slipped for a small number of pupils. The procedures for monitoring teaching, noted in the previous report have been successful in improving teaching in Year 2, with further developments planned to provide a closer match of tasks to pupils prior attainment in all lessons. The school continues to be an active member of Pyramid group of local schools and this provides effective, mutual support for planning, for example the curriculum topics are being updated to Curriculum 2000 within the pyramid, to provide additional expertise and a wider professional view to guide decisions. This helps to keep the workload for teachers within reason and allows for the update to be completed in a reasonable timescale.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. In order to build on the improvements and continue to raise standards in the school the headteacher and governors need to:

- ❑ Raise standards in English by:
 - placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' skills in independent writing;
 - teaching skills of redrafting work to improve on the content of the writing and the accuracy of spelling;
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and of the accuracy and presentation of their work.(Discussed in paragraphs 60 and 62)

- ❑ Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - placing greater emphasis on the development of mental recall and strategies for calculation;
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving by the age of seven and eleven;
 - providing sufficient challenge for all pupils in lessons.(Discussed in paragraphs 19, 67-74)

- ❑ Raise standards in science by the age of seven by:
 - placing greater emphasis on teaching the specific skills and knowledge to enable more able pupils to exceed the national standard.(Discussed in paragraphs 19, 75-80)

- ❑ Improve the behaviour of a small number of pupils in junior classes by implementing a consistent whole school policy for behaviour management.
(Discussed in paragraphs 17, 65 and 72)

49. In addition to the issues above, the governors should consider including the following minor issues in the action plan.

- ❑ Implement a programme for the monitoring of teaching designed to increase the proportion of very good teaching.
(Discussed in paragraph 15 and 42)
- ❑ Implement a marking policy designed to inform pupils how they can improve their work and make better progress.
(Discussed in paragraphs 35, 66 and 78)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15	29	53	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	116
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	41

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	11	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	9
	Girls	3	5	4
	Total	10	14	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (78)	82 (78)	76 (84)
	National	82 (78)	83 (80)	87 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	9	10
	Girls	3	4	4
	Total	10	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (59)	76 (77)	82 (83)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	3	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	9	9	12
	Total	12	12	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (79)	71 (68)	88 (79)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	11	7	13
	Total	14	10	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (79)	59 (74)	94 (84)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	109
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	1	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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.8
Average class size	23.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	79

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	255,835
Total expenditure	248,937
Expenditure per pupil	2,128
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,467
Balance carried forward to next year	24,365

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	119
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.	46	42	11	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	47	9	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	56	16	5	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	47	14	4	7
The teaching is good.	42	49	5	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	33	19	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	40	9	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	18	54	21	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	42	4	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	51	9	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	18	35	18	11

Other issues raised by parents

Nine letters were received from parents showing very diverse views of the work of the school. A view expressed by several concerned lack of communication with parents over individual incidents concerning their child, for example illness in school and behavioural problems.

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

50. There are nine children in the Foundation Stage, all being accommodated in Class 1 alongside the Year 1 pupils. Three children attend full-time as they are five before 31 December. The other six are part-time; attending afternoon sessions only and are not five until the spring or summer term. They attend full-time from the beginning of the term in which they become five.

51. Overall provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, The curriculum for all of the children is based securely on the six areas of learning, and leads into the National Curriculum as the pupils reach the end of this stage of their education. Whilst the curriculum includes a wide range of experiences and opportunities, priority is clearly given to the development of skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematics and children make good progress in these areas of learning. The part-time pupils, who attend afternoons only, are fully involved in literacy and numeracy lessons and make good progress. The curricular experiences include insufficient opportunities for the children to learn through well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, partly due to a lack of resources for outdoor play. There are very few opportunities for the children to choose what they do although they can make decisions, for example, about the materials they use. There is no separate planning for children in the Foundation Stage and most activities are planned to meet the needs of Year 1 pupils, with amendments for the younger children. This works satisfactorily in most lessons, however, other adults, who work within the class, are not always deployed effectively to provide more appropriate activities for the younger children through play.

52. Attainment on entry to the school is consistently below the average for the local education authority and for similar schools nationally. Up until the last two years, attainment on entry has been well below average. There are signs, however, that the support for pre-school playgroups from inclusion in the Education Action Zone is raising the level of attainment on entry to the school as most children attend one of the local playgroups. There is the full ability range evident amongst the children on entry but the proportion of higher attaining children is lower than usually found in most schools, partly due to children attending independent schools. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most of the children will attain the level expected for pupils of similar age in all areas of learning, as a result of the good progress in developing basic skills. This is an improvement on attainment at this stage in previous years, when despite the good progress, attainment was still below average. The children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. Most of the children make good progress in developing personal and social skills. All adults give positive encouragement to the children, act as good role models and the children soon learn to work and play together well and co-operate successfully in informal, imaginative play situations such as in the chalet house. They enthusiastically explore, for instance, the sand or water tray and create their own games when playing out of doors. They are beginning to be sensitive to the needs of others and are able to share and take turns. None of the children are highly dependent upon adult support for personal care. The children are confident to try new activities, for example when using a new computer program and persevere in trying to work out what to do, whilst knowing when they need to ask for help in order to make progress. The older pupils willingly help where they can. When a range of activities are available, the children are directed where to start and when to move as a group to the next activity. This does not always allow children to finish their work or to learn how many can work in a group at any one time. When using play dough they use their imagination well to make their own shapes and not copying the work of adults with each one being different; for example, one made a flower, another a snake. When undressing for swimming, they show an increasing awareness of class routines. The children join in whole school assemblies and understand that they are expected to behave respectfully, which they do. The teacher and support staff work closely together to provide a welcoming, yet secure atmosphere where personal, social and emotional development is fostered through appropriate praise and encouragement. The children's ideas are valued and their work shared in assemblies. This teaching successfully increases the children's self-esteem and encourages them to become confident in their learning.

Communications, language and literacy

54. Most of the children make good progress in developing communication, language and literacy skills. They enjoy the texts chosen for Year 1 literacy hours, for example a poem about a pirate. They anticipate refrains and join in with enthusiasm. They show understanding and follow instructions with care. They are gaining confidence in talking about their experiences to the class and in imaginative play they communicate clearly with each other. Almost all of the children are interested in books and are beginning to read the early books from the school scheme; lower attaining children share books with adults and confidently tell the story from the pictures. All children take books home each

week to share with adults and the reading diaries are a good means of communication about children's reading habits and progress. This has a positive impact on the good rate of progress made by most children. This aspect has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The majority of the children recognise their first name and make good attempts at writing it, although letters are not always formed correctly as yet. Higher and average attaining children recognise some letters of the alphabet by shape and sound. A systematic approach to the teaching of letter shapes and their sounds supports progress well. The weekly visit to the school library where a good range of books is attractively displayed encourages a love of literature. During the literacy hours photocopies of poems were used which are not as attractive as large books. The children take words home to learn and this helps their rate of progress in learning to read. The teacher is very competent in teaching literacy skills and this is the major factor in the children's good rate of progress.

Mathematics

55. The children make good progress in mathematical development. Through number rhymes they soon learn to count to five, then ten and most are beginning to recognise numerals, with higher attaining pupils recognising numbers to 9 accurately. They use comparative language such as 'longer' or 'shorter' accurately. They join in whole class activities involving ordering numbers and demonstrate their understanding of continuing number patterns. When involved in practical activities in the sand and water trays, they show understanding of mathematical concepts such as full and empty. Most children recognise and name simple shapes accurately, such as squares and circles. Through the use of computer programs they are attempting to continue sequencing patterns using shapes, but as yet are not always successful. The teacher plans the introductory activities well to include the children in the Foundation Stage as well as the Year 1 pupils. The younger children enjoy joining in making a number line to 20 with support from the Year 1 pupils. Again other adults could be deployed more effectively to lead number activities which are closely matched to these young children whilst the teacher works with the Year 1 pupils. Mathematics games are taken home as part of homework and they successfully help the children reinforce the understanding of numbers, shapes and patterns and make learning fun. The teaching is good, mainly involves practical activities and makes mathematics fun thereby fostering good attitudes to the subject.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

56. Most children make satisfactory progress. They are keen and interested to explore the world around them. They talk about family life in the past and what their parents enjoyed when they went to school. The class museum helps them to acquire knowledge by asking questions about clothing, toys and everyday appliances, such as flat irons, of the past. They are beginning to recognise the importance of the harvest festival in an area dominated by farming. When cooking, they successfully design the decoration for their biscuits. Little direct teaching in this area of learning was observed, but the scrutiny of teachers' plans, work on display and conversations with children indicate that teaching is satisfactory. Adults frequently pose questions to reinforce previous learning, for example when asking which colours make purple when mixed.

Physical development

57. Most children make satisfactory progress in this area. The outdoor play area is small and so children use the main playground, mixing with all other pupils on three days each week and having the playground to themselves at other times. There are no wheeled toys or climbing apparatus to develop the children's physical skills, but the school hall is used where there is a suitable range of equipment. All children go swimming twice a week until the October half term and virtually all are confident in water and make good attempts at learning to swim. Teachers' plans show that over the year the children experience dance and activities to develop skills in throwing and catching. Parents help the children to dress and undress for swimming which keeps the time taken to the minimum. The children show an increasing ability to grip pencils, paintbrushes and glue spreaders and to mould play dough. The teaching is satisfactory and makes best use of the facilities available to develop the children's skills.

Creative development

58. The children make satisfactory progress in developing their creativity. They have opportunities for free painting where they show an increasing ability to apply paint without mixing colours. Their paintings of people show close observation of facial features. They are developing a sound sense of rhythm through copying and counting in time to a set rhythm. The children explore and experiment with colour and a wide range of techniques, using paints, crayon and collage materials to achieve their desired effect. They are aware of the work of Andy Goldsworthy and have experienced making pictures with natural materials. They show good imagination and enter wholeheartedly into role-play outside, when pretending to be firemen, using the model fire engines they had made from construction apparatus. There are indications that fewer opportunities are available in this area of learning than in all other areas.

59. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and is good in relation to developing basic skills of literacy and

numeracy and most children in return make every effort to succeed. The pace of lessons is satisfactory and most activities are interesting for the children. The new curriculum for under fives is not yet fully implemented and the school is receiving advice on how best to meet the needs of all the children in the class. Teachers have a sound knowledge of how young children learn across all curricular areas, but the balance between choice and direction by adults is currently inappropriate and not helping the children to become independent. There are insufficient resources for outdoor provision, otherwise resources are adequate.

ENGLISH

60. In the 1999, national tests for seven-year olds, standards were well below the national average in both reading and writing. They were also well below average in comparison with similar schools. At age eleven, standards in 1999 were close to the national average, but below the average of similar schools. A high score in reading compensated for a low one in writing. Since 1996, standards at age seven have improved, but not in line with the national trend and not for more able pupils. At age eleven, standards overall have improved since 1997, but have not reached the level of 1996. Levels have fluctuated over the years, which can happen when year groups are small. Results in 2000 showed an improvement for seven and eleven year olds. However, whereas overall standards at age seven improved, this was not so for more able pupils. At age eleven, standards overall are better. In most years, girls have done better than boys which is in keeping with the national picture.

61. The evidence from the inspection shows that standards in speaking and listening by the age of seven are average. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and answer questions confidently. There are times when the questions posed do not encourage the development of spoken language. At these times, opportunities to extend thinking and modify ideas are missed. The range of known and used vocabulary is average for the more able pupils, but is narrow for the others. This is evident when discussing their reading preferences. Teachers need to create more opportunities for pupils to speak to an audience. For instance, although the sharing assembly is a pleasant occasion, teachers do most of the speaking, so that pupils' own contributions are limited. By the age of eleven, pupils' speaking and listening skills overall are also average. However, there are significant weaknesses. Pupils can listen well, but there are a small number of pupils who do not always pay attention and make it very difficult for their peers to sustain concentration. When engaged in individual conversations, pupils acquit themselves satisfactorily. When general discussions begin, too many pupils lack self-discipline and the ability to listen to others' points of view. This is frustrating for those who wish to develop their lines of thought. It is important that the conventions of social discussion are introduced from an early age.

62. Inspection findings are that standards in reading are below average by the age of seven. Targets for improving the more able pupils have not been met during the last three years. Pupils like reading and recall stories quite well. Reading the set text is usually accurate, which indicates a good match to ability. Pupils that are more able discuss their likes and dislikes of books, but other pupils are reticent. Familiar words are read confidently, but pupils are insecure in applying word-building skills when encountering unfamiliar words. Pupils do not yet know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and library and research skills are unsatisfactory. By the age of eleven pupils' reading skills have made good improvement. Recent results have compensated for low attainment in writing. Pupils that are more able discuss text with enthusiasm, but have a limited range of vocabulary when describing plot and characters. Other pupils also have limited expression when recounting story lines, although they remember favourite books and authors. Pupils can describe the skills necessary for retrieving information from library books. They are given the opportunity to analyse text in lessons, such as when studying the Ancient Greeks, but have few opportunities to follow their own lines of enquiry. Most pupils are supported well by their families as evident in their home/school diaries. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

63. Current standards in writing are below average both for seven and eleven-year olds. Pupils experience a reasonable range of writing activities, but there is insufficient rigour and expectation of higher standards. By the age of seven, pupils write in sentences but the use of capital letters and full stops is inconsistent. Common words are usually spelt accurately but words that are more complex cause problems. The written task is usually the same for all pupils and so the more able are not necessarily challenged sufficiently. This is evident when the extension task is merely to do more of the same thing, instead of sufficiently demanding work at a higher level. By eleven, pupils write complex sentences but the use of punctuation remains inconsistent. Hence, although pupils have been taught how to use speech marks, colons, semi-colons, question marks and commas, they are not used accurately. Spelling is also below that expected for pupils' ages and many common words are spelt incorrectly when they should not be. There is little evidence that pupils fully understand and apply the conventions of the writing process, such as drafting, editing and redrafting. The quality of handwriting varies and, although pupils are capable of a neat and legible style, there is no obvious expectation of this.

64. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. This has resulted in improved planning and is promoting better progress in some aspects of English, notably in the breadth of

reading experiences. There has also been development in the quantity and quality of books available, particularly large texts for whole class work. The support of the EAZ in supplementing and improving the use of the school library is also a good initiative, and appears to be having a positive impact on standards on entry and in the school. Pupils now take part in national assessments at the end of every year from Year 2 onwards. Additional data is provided by the EAZ's use of standardised tests. The school has begun to analyse assessment data and to tailor the timetable to meet its needs. Hence, guided reading is done at a separate time and extended writing lessons have been introduced in order to improve standards. The latter initiative has not yet had time to impact on results. Pupils use their literacy skills to promote their learning in other subjects, for instance when writing accounts in history or writing up experiments in science.

65. The quality of teaching and learning in infant classes during the inspection was good and was satisfactory in junior classes. This picture is inconsistent with the pattern of teaching and learning over a longer period, when a good improvement in reading for junior pupils is evident. This is partly due to the good and sometimes very good teaching for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to reach the national standard by the age of eleven. Teachers understand the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy and plan lessons well. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils, which gives them a clear understanding of what is expected. Teachers revise previous work and engage pupils in useful question and answer sessions. Sometimes pupils do not respond well in these sessions, which adversely affects their progress. At such times they call out and show little regard for either their peers or the teacher. On other occasions, they fully contribute to meaningful discussions. Although teachers plan to meet the needs of all levels of ability, the required tasks do not always stretch the more able. At these times, pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Good work results from imaginative teaching such as when Year 2 pupils write the instructions for playing a 78 rpm record. The most effective teaching seen in junior classes involved a close examination of text, and pupils learn much about structure and characterisation. Pupils respond to these sessions by remaining interested and involved with the task. A worthy effort to develop biographical and autobiographical skills in Year 6 floundered on some pupils' inability to sustain interest, despite a suitable subject matter. Difficulty in understanding the requirements of the planning sheet also adversely affected progress. Teachers end lessons by revising lesson content and assessing understanding. There are times when the focus of a lesson is lost for a short time when pupils misbehave and are inattentive. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support by teachers, classroom assistants and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Drama is an integral part of the curriculum, which is appropriate.

66. Teachers keep conscientious records of pupils' performance. They use this to monitor individuals as well as to detect trends. The use of this data is improving and accurate target setting and forecasting is beginning to emerge. Teachers' marking, however, is inconsistent and rarely tells pupils what they have to do to improve. The co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and the school has given an appropriate emphasis to raising standards in its school development plan.

MATHEMATICS

67. The 1999 results of national tests for seven-year olds showed standards were well below the national average, although the proportion reaching the higher level was above the national average. The 2000 results show a higher proportion of pupils reached the national standard, but fewer pupils exceeded it. The 1999 results of national tests for eleven-year olds showed standards were close to the national average, but were below the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was below the national average. The 2000 results showed improvement, both at the level expected and at the higher level. Eighty per cent of the pupils reached the national standard and twenty per cent exceeded it. Standards at the age of eleven have improved from the below average standards found in 1997. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented fully and is improving pupils' skills in mental recall and calculation throughout the school, but there is further work to be done. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls although over the last four years girls have done slightly better, as their attitudes are generally more positive.

68. Inspection findings are that current standards are below average at the age of seven and average by the age of eleven. Just over 80 per cent of seven-year olds are likely to reach the national standard at the end of the current year, including just below 20 per cent who are expected to exceed it. Of the current Year 6 pupils, approximately 75 per cent are expected to achieve the national standard, including 25 per cent who are likely to exceed it. Pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress, with good progress evident for pupils in Year 6, who attend classes designed to boost their performance before taking the national tests. These classes have been successful in raising standards for eleven-year olds. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as the provision is closely matched to their statements of need or individual education plans.

69. In Year 1, pupils gain confidence in ordering and recognising numbers to 10 and 20 and begin to add and subtract numbers up to 10 accurately. They build well on their knowledge and skills in mental calculation in Year 2 when

introductory sessions move at pace and cover many aspects of pupils' prior learning. For example, one such session included addition of two digit and one digit numbers to 99, subtraction up to 99, making amounts of money, ordering days of the week and months of the year. Most pupils are confident in recognising and naming two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to recognise and name a wide range of three-dimensional shapes such as cones, cubes and pyramids. When applying their knowledge of the properties of these shapes, some average attaining pupils have to think hard. For example, a cuboid with two square faces was thought to be a cube. This led to further teaching of the properties of cubes and cuboids and pupils learning the difference. Pupils in Year 1 begin to understand how data can be presented in block graphs and can be interpreted. For example, they presented data collected from questionnaires to show what their parents enjoyed when at school. Too often in Year 2 all pupils are given the same worksheets to complete and they are too difficult for lower attaining pupils and not challenging enough for the more able pupils, requiring little effort in completing them accurately. This is hindering the rate of learning for pupils that are more able. Lower attaining pupils cope because of the level of adult support available.

70. In the junior classes, pupils continue to build on their prior learning at a satisfactory rate until Years 5 and 6 when it improves. Four of the more able pupils from Year 5, all boys, are currently working with the Year 6 pupils as this best meets their needs by providing sufficient challenge in lessons. They are working hard, enjoying the challenge and succeeding in completing their tasks accurately.

71. On entry to Year 3 there is evidence of repetition of work on addition and subtraction up to 20 which was too easy for higher attaining pupils. They are soon moved on to understanding place value with numbers up to 999. Most pupils develop their problem solving skills satisfactorily, for example when measuring the growth of sunflowers and determining which has grown the most over the course of a week. They acquire further knowledge on measuring time and distance and can tell the time using digital and analogue clocks. When given a range of measures from which to select the correct one for measuring the weight of a parcel, average and lower attaining pupils struggle, as they are not secure in their knowledge of kilometres and kilograms. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty in applying their skills to solving problems. By the age of eleven, most pupils are confident in applying the four rules of number to different situations in written activities, but are less secure in the strategies they can use to solve problems mentally, or by jotting their working out down on paper. For example, a group of Year 6 pupils were asked to complete the calculation 27×15 . They multiplied 20×10 and then 7×5 and added the two numbers together. All felt this was the correct answer. They estimated their answer to be reasonable. Only when asked to calculate 27×10 did they decide the answer could not be correct. The school is aware of the weakness in mental calculation and encouraging pupils to say how they have arrived at their answers to help to remedy the weaknesses. Most pupils are secure in their understanding of fractions, percentages and decimals to two decimal places. They can draw acute and obtuse angles accurately. They have a sound understanding of the scale of probability and understand how to present data in line and bar graphs. Pupils make good use of their skills to support their work in other subjects, for instance in science and design and technology.

72. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard, but a small number, usually boys, in junior classes behave in an unacceptable manner in occasional lessons. This disrupts learning for others and time is wasted on discipline. All pupils work on loose sheets of paper and their work is not always stored carefully so they can refer back to previous work when necessary.

73. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with good features in lessons throughout the school. There are examples of very good lessons in both infant and junior classes where introductory activities are conducted at a brisk pace, involve all pupils in displaying their answers to questions and reinforce previous learning in different aspects of the subject. These are followed by group tasks that are planned at three levels of difficulty and with one group being the focus of the teacher's attention to give further teaching where pupils have not understood, or to move learning onto the next stage. The use of computers is integrated well in most classes, with programs carefully selected, for example, to reinforce number skills and shape recognition. The scrutiny of work showed teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils are not high enough in too many lessons as all pupils are given the same tasks to complete. All pupils receive mathematical games for homework each week, which promote the enjoyment of the subject and support pupils' learning. Good records are kept to ensure pupils experience all games available.

74. The curriculum co-ordinator has monitored the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy in all classes and feedback has been given to teachers. The monitoring to date has lacked rigour and this is a priority area for development. Good use is made of assessment data to track the progress of individual pupils from year to year.

SCIENCE

75. Teachers' assessments of seven-year olds showed standards were below the national average in 1999. The 2000 teacher assessments showed the proportion of pupils reaching the national standard had fallen. No pupils are attaining the higher level due to the teaching and this is leading to the below average standards. The 1999 results of national tests for eleven-year olds showed standards were well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was 47 per cent; well above the national average. The results in the 2000 tests were very similar, although the proportion reaching the higher level was slightly lower. The school's results in 2000 have not kept pace with the improvement found nationally; this does not reflect a fall in standards but reflects the higher proportion of pupils in the year group with special educational needs. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

76. No science was taught during the inspection week as subjects are grouped under topics and science was not included in the current topic. Judgements are, therefore, based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff and pupils. Inspection findings show current standards are below average for seven year olds and are above average for eleven-year olds. The attainment on entry to school, of the current Year 2 pupils, was well below average and so these standards do not indicate unsatisfactory progress. However, standards could be higher for a small number of more able infant pupils if they were taught the specific skills and knowledge to be able to achieve higher levels. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the infant classes and good progress in the junior classes where teachers have secure subject knowledge. The teachers' subject knowledge has been the key factor in the improvement in standards since 1997 when they were below the national average. The scrutiny of all work for junior pupils over the last year showed pupils gained a good body of knowledge from the full and in-depth coverage of the programme of study.

77. Over time in the infant classes, pupils acquire satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. They know, for example, that all animals move, eat, use their senses, reproduce and grow. They begin to understand the need for a healthy diet and foods that are good for their bodies. They begin to understand how to make a simple electrical circuit and can name a good range of everyday appliances which require electricity to make them work. They understand that pushes and pulls are forces that cause objects to move faster or slow down. They begin to develop skills in experimental and investigative science satisfactorily when planting sunflower seeds and observing their growth.

78. In the junior classes, there is more emphasis on developing pupils' investigative skills and, by the age of eleven, their skills are good. They can devise their own experiments, for example, when deciding how to test the solubility of different substances. They know it is important to use the same amount of each substance and of water, and to stir each solution the same number of times. Pupils have a good understanding of the principles of fair testing and use correct terminology by the age of eleven. They acquire good levels of knowledge over time, but this varies between the classes. In Years 3 and 4, pupils gain knowledge and sound understanding of solids, liquids and gases, that forces applied to materials can result in squashing or stretching and that some materials are natural whereas others are man-made. The tasks set for Year 3 and 4 pupils are the same regardless of their prior attainment and this leads to some underachievement for a small number of higher attaining pupils. There is no evidence to show that Year 4 pupils are expected to produce work of a higher standard. Whilst coverage of the programme of study is good, there is no systematic approach to developing pupils' skills in recording their work and presenting their findings. There are examples of unmarked work, which is unacceptable and poor presentation of work is too readily accepted.

79. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have acquired sound knowledge about their bodies and the function of the main organs, for example, how smoking can affect people's lungs and the effect of exercise on heart rates. They know that plants produce food through photosynthesis. They have a good understanding of the effects of applying heat or cold to materials and know that some changes are reversible whereas others are not. They can explain physical processes, for example how sound reaches the ear, although lower attaining pupils struggle to explain how vibrations produce sound. The rate of progress is better for Year 5 and 6 pupils and they acquire a good body of knowledge over the year. Again there is evidence of unmarked work, covering a period of five weeks in the second half of the autumn term, which is unacceptable as future tasks cannot be closely matched to pupils' needs to ensure that all make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils enjoy the practical investigations and the more able pupils wrote clear explanations of why objects float or sink, showing good understanding. The work in Years 5 and 6 is well presented, reflecting the interest and pride pupils have in their work.

80. Indications from pupils' work are that teaching is satisfactory in the infant classes and good in Years 5 and 6 where teachers are secure in their subject knowledge. The weakness is in marking. The curricular planning leads to pupils not having science lessons each week, and some time is spent on revising aspects before moving on. There is no evidence to show that this has a negative impact on standards. The science aspects within topics are already being updated to fulfil the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The curriculum co-ordinator has a clear action plan for further improvement and monitors the subject through closely scrutinising the samples to be included in the school portfolio.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Standards are average by the age of seven and eleven and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. A scrutiny of pupils' work on display and of examples kept in the school's portfolio of work shows that all pupils systematically develop their skills in line and pattern, tone, form, shape, space and colour. Hence, pupils have satisfactory skills in drawing, painting, making patterns using a range of media, including the computer, model making and printing. Tonal exercises in black and white as well as colour show a growing sense of light and shade. Sketches of Peterchurch make a useful link with geography and history. Sketchbooks are well used throughout the school and in these pupils practise initial designs and ideas before deciding on the final course of action.

82. The school has maintained its standards well since the previous inspection. The development of a useful and comprehensive scheme of work is an improvement on the previous report. This has enabled teachers to plan a programme that is well integrated with other subjects. Care has been taken to include female and living artists in those chosen as influences on style and technique. The development of ICT in the school has resulted in innovations in a good use of art packages throughout the age groups.

83. Teaching and learning are of a generally satisfactory standard. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection and, in these, there was good use of works by established artists to influence pupils' designs. Lessons are well organised and resourced. Teachers refer well to the works of Escher and Bridget Riley in order to make relevant teaching points. They use appropriate vocabulary, for example, shape, line, symmetry and image. In both lessons, the efforts of the teachers were somewhat negated by pupils' unacceptable behaviour. Although pupils eventually produced work of a satisfactory standard in one lesson, they did so in an atmosphere that was not conducive to calm and patient development. Consequently, not all pupils produced their best work. In the other lesson, which was unsatisfactory overall, the required task was not well devised and pupils were frustrated in their attempts to succeed. The outcomes lacked precision and accuracy. Pupils are given good opportunities to produce designs on the computer. Repeat patterns produced in class 4, show promise as pupils' experiment with shape and colour. The monitoring of standards is carried out satisfactorily by comparing pupils' work with the examples in the school portfolio.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. No lessons took place during the inspection period as the emphasis in topic work for the current half term is on art and design. The only evidence of work in the infant classes involved the exploration of joining materials together using staplers, paper clips and punched holes and thread. No photographic evidence was available. Consequently no secure judgements on standards or teaching can be made. Discussions with pupils and examination of teachers' planning shows pupils in Year 6 have made Greek temples which they designed giving exact measurements for the length, breadth and height of the finished models. There is no evidence to show the pupils evaluated the success of their designs or of the finished models to help them in their work in the future. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have designed and made musical instruments based on Egyptian instruments, for example, bronze cymbals, a sistrum and a long necked lute. Pupils decided on the materials to be used in making their instruments and then had the opportunity to test the success of their efforts when performing their desert music. Some were very successful, with materials selected with thought and care, others less so, but pupils knew why. This was a good activity carefully planned to reinforce pupils' knowledge of the ancient Egyptians as well as developing their skills in making objects for a specific purpose.

85. The pyramid group of schools is in the process of updating the programme of work to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. This is an effective arrangement for these small schools, which involves the sharing of subject expertise and ideas. The planning completed to date shows good links are being made with other subjects, for example science and history, to continue the existing good practice.

86. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been remedied. There is a good range and quantity of tools available; stored for ease of access by pupils and staff. There is a satisfactory scheme of work that includes food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

87. There was no geography taught during the inspection and too few samples of work on which to base a secure judgement on standards. Teachers' planning shows satisfactory coverage of the programme of study, with the topics being updated to include Curriculum 2000. There is a clear policy, which along with the planning should support teaching.

HISTORY

88. Standards are average for pupils aged seven and eleven. Most pupils make satisfactory progress; pupils with special educational needs often make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. A scrutiny of work and discussion with pupils, as well as lesson observations, indicate that standards have been maintained since the last inspection, during which time the school has focused its energies on national strategies in English and mathematics. Understanding chronology is encouraged by regular reinforcement of tracking time lines, for instance of the family, of the Ancient Greeks and of ways of recording music. Learning through looking at evidence takes place from an early age as pupils examine artefacts and record similarities, differences and change. Knowledge and understanding of periods studied are satisfactory and are enhanced by visits and role-play at such venues as Hartlebury Museum. By the age of eleven, pupils discuss, with some authority, aspects of Ancient Greece society, such as religion, government, leisure and daily life.

89. The school has already adjusted its curriculum to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The quality of teaching and learning during the inspection was satisfactory. In the infant classes, pupils learn by examining artefacts from early last century and identify developments and changes. A good display incorporates books, artefacts and visual information, which acts as a constant reminder and stimulus. The teacher enhances understanding by building a time line with pupils, which is based on their own families. Year 2 pupils create a time line based on transport and fulfil the requirements enthusiastically, as they work in a very pleasant atmosphere. Opportunities to extend the challenge for pupils are missed in this lesson, when major decisions are made by the teacher. This prevents pupils from experiencing negotiation, compromise and collaborative choice. In Year 6, pupils are encouraged to develop study skills in their work on the Ancient Greeks. They show interest in the approach employed, but by being guided totally by a recorded programme and the teacher, the opportunity to design and conduct their own lines of enquiry is missed. The time allocated would be better organised into shorter sessions with a tighter focus. This would hold pupils' attention more readily. Lessons throughout the school are well planned and resourced but too often one activity is planned for all levels of ability. This compromises the opportunities of all pupils to develop at the pace and level of their understanding. Learning is further enhanced by the school's good use of visits and visitors. These experiences make history real, exciting and relevant. Photographs of recent visits, taken on the school's digital camera, provide evidence of worthwhile experiences. History is effectively linked to other subjects of the curriculum, especially art and design, dance and design and technology. Teachers mount interesting, interactive displays, which further enhance learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

90. Standards are average for seven and eleven year olds and have been sustained since the previous inspection. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress through the range of experiences and opportunities available. At seven, pupils demonstrate satisfactory control of the mouse as they move objects around the screen. They use a word processing package to write simple text and the more able demonstrate developing editing skills. In Year 1, all pupils have experimented with an art program and produced pleasing pictures related to their families. The effective use of ICT in supporting mathematics is evident in Year 2 with the production of a visual representation of tens and units. Pupils that are more able can print their work with some assistance. By eleven, many pupils can edit their written work, save it and retrieve it when required. They are then able to print their work. Pupils collect evidence and produce graphs of their results. They are adept at using art packages to produce patterns of an increasing sophistication. Pupils that are more able interrogate CD-ROM and the Internet in order to gather information and extend their studies. Pupils throughout the school can discuss satisfactorily the use of computers in the wider world.

91. The school has made considerable improvements in provision since the previous inspection. This has been supported by initiatives that are part of the Education Action Zone. The school now has a good pupil/computer ratio, as well as sufficient printers. The recently acquired digital camera is being put to good use, as photographs of a visit to Hartlebury testify. Access to the Internet has encouraged the school, with assistance, to produce its own web site, which has extended its communication with schools and people throughout the country. The use of e-mail is developing and there are plans to link with, among other things, a school in Alaska. The co-ordinator has worked hard to produce a relevant action plan for improvement. This includes a systematic development of all the required experiences, including control and modelling, which are currently underdeveloped. A significant improvement since the previous report is the increased enthusiasm and competence of all staff.

92. There was no direct teaching of ICT skills observed during the inspection. However, there were numerous examples of ICT being used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. In these lessons, teachers plan meaningful experiences to develop both ICT skills and the relevant subject. In class 2, for example, pupils make tessellated shapes by using the toolbar and then dragging shapes to the appropriate position. Some type their own names, thus combining pattern with words. In class 4, pupils produce repeat patterns of increasing complexity. The use of ICT in literacy is demonstrated in class 5 as pupils prepare a chart of relevant vocabulary and definitions. Pupils also change font and print size during this activity. On all of these occasions pupils show interest and enthusiasm. Sometimes when not directly supervised, behaviour deteriorates and pupils produce little work. Work on display shows that progress is satisfactory as skills are systematically developed.

MUSIC

93. Standards are average for pupils by the age of seven and eleven and have been sustained since the previous inspection. For pupils involved in extra-curricular music tuition, standards are higher. This is approximately 20 per cent of pupils in the junior classes and, for these pupils, progress is good. For all other pupils, including those with special educational needs, progress is satisfactory, although it is hindered for short periods in lessons by a small number of pupils who behave in an unacceptable manner and interrupt learning for others.

94. All lessons are taught by a subject specialist, and this is a major factor in enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge of different types of music, the musical elements and in developing understanding of notation. The work in lessons, for example in recognising the sounds of different instruments, is reinforced through listening to music at the beginning and end of daily assemblies.

95. In the infant classes, pupils develop a good sense of rhythm. They recognise a rhythm and respond by clapping it. They build up a repertoire of songs and hymns they enjoy singing and begin to sing unaccompanied and in tune. In the junior classes, pupils continue to build on their knowledge of musical instruments, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated their secure knowledge of string instruments when discussing mandolins and lutes. They use graphic notation confidently to record their compositions and having performed them, they evaluate whether they have captured the intended mood and effect in their music. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in class performances. In Years 4 and 5, pupils show their secure understanding of dynamics, tempo and pitch in their singing, which is lively. Occasionally, the enthusiasm leads to shouting rather than singing.

96. Most pupils enjoy their music lessons, but a small number in the junior classes are less responsive. This was noted at the time of the previous inspection and has not been remedied. Often those who receive music tuition are eager to perform for the teacher and are encouraged to do so for their class. This is effective in building confidence in their ability to play for others. They are eager to play instruments when performing class compositions and take care of the instruments.

97. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. The secure subject knowledge led to confident teaching. Lesson planning is good; includes an appropriate balance between listening and performing in all lessons, with a variety of activities involving all pupils. Potentially good lessons were spoilt by the behaviour of a few, which caused the pace to slow down. The music co-ordinator works throughout the pyramid of schools and organises events to which all pupils are invited. This extends the range of experiences and opportunities for music making and increases pupils' confidence in playing as part of a larger group.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

98. Standards are average for seven and eleven-year olds and have been sustained since the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the age of seven, pupils are well balanced and co-ordinated. They show an awareness of space when running in the hall and are mindful of safety factors when dodging and weaving. Games skills observed indicate ball control is of an average standard. All pupils pass, trap and control sponge footballs using the correct parts of the foot. Swimming standards in Year 2 are good as pupils benefit from regular lessons in the school's own pool. Ball skills are further developed by the age of eleven and include the use of rugby balls, which pupils can catch and pass satisfactorily, both in a stationary position and on the move. In the latter activity, pupils side step and avoid oncoming participants with commendable agility. Pupils in junior classes also demonstrate a good level of attainment in swimming, with most nine and ten year olds able to swim ten metres or more unaided. In dance, junior pupils show an increasing awareness of how to use body movements and facial expressions to convey action and associated emotion. In this work, pupils that are more able demonstrate a good level of imagination when working out sequences. Although standards are satisfactory, given

the extra time devoted to physical education in the curriculum, the school should be concentrating on quality and not just quantity of experience to raise standards.

99. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Resources have improved as the school has availed itself of 'Top Sport' and 'Top Play' equipment. Teachers have been trained in the use of this equipment, which has had a positive effect on standards. The use of the local education authority Sports Council to develop particular games in schools, as well as training teachers, is a good initiative. This has introduced new activities to the school and both teachers and pupils have benefited.

100. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan carefully and deliver lessons with the required structure. Hence, all lessons include activities for warming up and cooling down. Teachers remind pupils of necessary safety factors, which not only keeps pupils safe, but also contributes to their mobility skills. Explanations are given clearly and pupils generally listen carefully and respond appropriately. The use of a whistle indoors, especially when pupils are working quietly, is an unnecessary method of command. Teachers make good use of demonstration to highlight good practice and encourage pupils' involvement in evaluation. This increases pupils' awareness of good technique but would be more effective if discussion included how that practice could be made even better. When teacher expectation is high, pupils work hard and practise assiduously to improve. The systematic development of dance sequences in class 4, where the teacher uses appropriate terminology, such as conflict, interact and react, is a good example of how practise and thoughtful teacher intervention results in more imaginative, dramatic performances during which poise, rhythm and self confidence grow. Swimming lessons are conducted carefully in a safe environment. A systematic development of skills enhances pupils' own prowess as well as their enjoyment. All pupils seen were confident in the water. Adult supervision by volunteer parents is an essential part of this. Lessons are well organised so that the changeover is well managed and pupils are well supervised and gainfully employed when not swimming.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. Standards are in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven and eleven. The time the school gives to teaching the subject, in order to cover the locally agreed syllabus, includes part of the assembly time each day. This is not effective in teaching the programme of study for each year group and has led to the above average standards, found at the time of the previous inspection, not being sustained. In all classes, pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs.

102. It was only possible to observe one lesson in Year 2 and one in Year 6. Judgements are, therefore, based on these lessons, scrutinising pupils' work from the current and, for Year 6 pupils, the previous year, talking to teachers and pupils and examining the planning documents. In the infant classes, pupils gain satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christians and Jews. They know, for example, that Christians celebrate Christmas and harvest and that Jews celebrate Shabbat and Hannukah. They are beginning to make comparisons between the religions, for example that Christians worship in a church and Jews worship in a synagogue. They increase their understanding of the impact of religions on people's daily lives by the age of seven. Pupils in Year 2 are currently gaining a good understanding of people who help them in their lives, for example, the emergency services and can relate, with confidence, personal experiences of how they have been helped and how they felt at the time.

103. In the junior classes, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of major world religions. They can recollect stories heard from the Bible, for example the parables, and have some understanding of the messages from the stories for life today. Through Bible stories such as Adam and Eve and discussion of how they might have felt after eating the forbidden fruit they deepen their understanding of good and evil. Discussions with Year 6 pupils demonstrated they have sound knowledge of the main beliefs and symbols of major world religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism and how people's religious beliefs can impact on their daily lives. Although their written work showed no evidence of studying Islam, the pupils know that Muslims believe in Allah, that the Qur'an gives them guidance and that they pray daily. They know the significance of the Hajj and Makkah as being at the centre of Muslim life and pilgrimage.

104. Pupils are interested in learning about major world religions and show respect for the beliefs of others. There is little written work, but they obviously learn much from their discussions in this subject. They found it difficult to begin to record the main events in the story of Joseph and his brother in a comic strip, although with encouragement they made a good effort. There was an example of particular interest in the subject in Year 4 where research work had been carried out on different Christian churches.

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their experiences and opinions and so begin to express their beliefs and values. In the Year 6 lesson, some time was used

to reflect on an incident which happened at play time and this was effective in helping pupils understand the impact of their actions on others. In the Year 2 lesson, effective use was made of material brought in by a pupil, when discussing how a variety of people help in the community; their role and importance. The relationships in this lesson were good and pupils were confident in asking specific questions to gain new knowledge.

106. The range of artefacts has been improved since the previous inspection and is now good. The curriculum co-ordinator is aware of a new draft syllabus to be implemented later in the year. This will be an opportunity to consider whether the time allocated to teaching the subject is sufficient and used to best effect to promote pupils' learning.