

INSPECTION REPORT

**RICHMOND METHODIST VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Richmond

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121544

Headteacher: Mr Jos Huddleston

Reporting inspector: David Figures
10269

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 November 2000

Inspection number: 224817

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

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Darlington Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Pinning

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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		Music	How well are the pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Helen Barter OIN: 9052	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents and carers?
John Stevens OIN: 14806	Team inspector	Science	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Geography	
		History	
		Equality of opportunity	
Brenda Clarke OIN: 30823	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Physical education	
		Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	
		Special educational needs	
David Grimwood OIN: 29426	Team inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
		Art and design	
		Information and communication technology	
		Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary controlled primary school of above-average size catering for 333 boys and girls between four and eleven years of age, serving Richmond and nearby communities. English is the first language for all pupils, all of whom are white. Seventeen per cent of pupils have special educational needs; three have statements of special educational need. This is below average, as is the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, which is four per cent. The attainment of children on entry to the school is above-average in language development, average in number and well above average in personal and social development. The school population is very stable: almost all pupils start as infants and stay to transfer to the secondary school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Richmond Methodist School is an effective school. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are high because good, frequently very good and sometimes excellent teaching leads to effective learning. Strong leadership in depth creates a secure atmosphere in which pupils have the confidence to do well. At the same time the school meticulously monitors what is being taught and learned in English, mathematics and science as part of a programme of continuously raising standards. The cost per pupil is low and the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The high quality of management provided by the headteacher and key staff and the very good use of assessment information in English, mathematics and science to guide teachers' planning.
- Standards of pupils' attainment are good because they are well taught and consistently good learning opportunities are provided for them.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good because they are well supported by very good arrangements for their welfare.
- The quality of information for parents is very good.

What could be improved

- The role of the subject leader other than in English, mathematics, science, and information and communications technology, as a contribution to raising standards in these subjects.
- Accommodation and resources to support the physical development of pupils in the Foundation Stage.
- The number and quality of books in the library.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in June 1996. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and science and, most significantly, in information and communication technology. This is in large part because of the well-organised curriculum for these subjects and the increased sophistication with which assessment information is used to plan pupils' future work. Pupils and teachers now have access to good resources. Resources are very good for information and communication technology and mathematics, but the library remains insufficient to support the independent work of which the pupils are capable. Links with parents are better and the quality of information supplied is now very good. Leadership is now established in greater depth and is very good. The school is therefore well placed to secure further improvement.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	A	B
Mathematics	A	B	B	C
Science	B	A	A	A

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

Standards are above average when children leave the Foundation Stage. Test results in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently well above average at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, results maintain a trend which rises in line with national trends. They are well above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics. In mathematics, the pupils' results are average when compared with those of schools with a similar intake; in English they are above that average and in science well above. The school sets realistic targets for attainment. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with above-average results in English, mathematics and science. Standards are above average in information and communication technology. In history they are above average in Key Stage 2 and average in Key Stage 1. In both key stages, standards are average in religious education, art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Insufficient work was available to be seen in geography to enable a judgement on standards to be made.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most pupils work hard, greatly enjoying the activities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils are well behaved, work industriously and play happily. A small minority of pupils exhibits anti-social behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility in the day-to-day life of the school. They have good relationships with adults and each other.
Attendance	Very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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 good and caters well for all pupils. As a result, pupils learn effectively and achieve as expected. It was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen, and in seventy per cent it was good or better. In fourteen per cent the quality of teaching was very good or excellent. The best teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. The overall quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. The quality of teaching in the other subjects follows a similar pattern. The strengths lie in very good relationships, very good planning, clear learning objectives and high expectations of pupils' attention, diligence and commitment. Work is well matched to the needs of all pupils: this challenges them and maintains their interest; they work conscientiously and behave very well. The weaknesses occurred when the pace of lessons was too fast or too slow or when teachers expected too little of pupils' behaviour so that learning time was lost.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It is well planned with relevant activities and with good links between subjects. Effective links with other schools provide good additional learning opportunities for pupils. Although extra-curricular activities are very good at Key Stage 2 there are no opportunities for pupils at Key Stage 1.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Most individual education plans are well focused on manageable and achievable targets. However, some are insufficiently precise.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development. The provision made for pupils' moral development is very good and a strength of the school; that for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Arrangements are good. It is a caring school with effective systems which foster personal development and academic achievement.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school works well in partnership with parents and seeks to improve the relationship through consultation. Parents receive very good information about the work of the school and their child's progress. There is good support from the Friends of the School organisation. Parents make a good contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher's strong leadership sets a positive atmosphere for learning and he is well supported by highly professional leadership from other key staff. Management of the curriculum for English, maths, science and information and communication technology is good, but remains to be fully developed in the other subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. Governors are concerned, involved and supportive.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Analysis of assessment results at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is excellent, but the analysis of the assessment of pupils when they enter the school is not established.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending decisions follow the priorities identified in the school development plan. Principles of best value are well applied.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory. Good displays enhance the inside environment. Pupils in the Foundation Stage do not have a secure outside play area and large toys. Learning resources are good; they are very good for information and communication technology and mathematics, but the library stock is inadequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations of children and the progress they make. • A big improvement in communication with parents and in parental involvement. • Excellent induction programme for the youngest children. • Children are happy at school and proud to belong. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework provision. • Closer involvement of parents and more information on children's progress. • Extra curricular activities.

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive comments but not the main criticisms. Homework is effectively used to support pupils' learning in class. Information to parents is very good and parents' involvement in pupils' learning is good. The provision of extra-curricular activity for pupils in Key Stage 2 is very good; there are, however, no activities for pupils in Key Stage 1.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. For at least the past five years, seven-year-old pupils have reached high standards in the national tests of reading, writing and mathematics. The assessments made by teachers of pupils' attainment in science have also shown standards to be high. Test scores for 2000 show that, as in 1999 and earlier years, pupils reached standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were well above the national average and, with the exception of writing which was only in line, well above the average of similar schools. In the teachers' assessments in science, attainment was also well above both the national average and that of similar schools; in 2000 all pupils reached Level 2, the national expectation for pupils of this age. Boys and girls reach equally high standards in the national tests. Test results are generally consistent with the overall findings of the inspection, that at the age of seven:

- pupils reach above-average standards in English, mathematics and science;
- boys and girls reach equally good standards; and
- this high attainment has been maintained for several years.

2. In the national tests taken by eleven-year-olds in 2000, pupils reached standards that were well above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. In science their scores were well above the average seen in similar schools, in English above average and in mathematics in line with the scores of similar schools. These results show a good improvement on the 1999 results and confirm a trend of good standards since 1998. There was a big improvement in standards in 1998, which was the result of much better results by the boys whose performance in previous years had been significantly poorer than the girls. This improved performance by the boys was maintained in science in 1999 but not to the same extent in English and mathematics. The boys' lower results were masked in the school's overall scores by the continued high attainment of the girls. The 2000 results show that the performance of the boys, particularly in mathematics, has improved and matches that of the girls. The school is aware of the difference in the scores of boys and girls and is taking two measures to rectify the situation. First the employment of an extra teacher in an attempt to boost the performance of those pupils who are close to, but not reaching the level of national expectation in mathematics and English, is likely to be of more benefit to boys than girls since more boys fall into that category than girls. The relatively small amount of challenging behaviour by pupils at the school is almost entirely associated with boys and this has an adverse effect on their learning. By employing additional classroom support staff to assist teachers with the behaviour management of these pupils, the school is seeking to improve the learning of these pupils and to minimise any detrimental effects on the learning of others.

3. The more recent test results are consistent with the findings of the inspection, that at the age of eleven:

- attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average;

- whilst overall the attainment and behaviour of girls is better than boys, the school is taking steps to rectify the situation;
- high attainment has been maintained for the last three years.

4. High-attaining pupils make good progress and achieve high levels in national tests. The proportion of pupils who in 2000 attained at Level 5, the standard expected of 13-year-olds, was well above average in English, mathematics and science. The progress of high-attaining pupils in mathematics is assisted by arrangements for older pupils where they are taught the subject in groups chosen because of ability. The achievement, pace of working and general level of motivation of this high-attaining group is impressive.

5. The school sets targets for pupils' achievements in the national tests that are realistic in the sense that they are based on pupils' earlier achievements. The school exceeded its targets for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics in 2000, in English by eight per cent. In the light of this the school seems well on track to meet its targets for the next two years.

6. On entry to the school the majority of pupils have above-average language skills and average numeracy skills. Their behavioural attributes and learning skills are well above average. Pupils settle well to school, allowing teachers to build on these good foundations. Attainment in all areas: language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development and personal, social and emotional development improves well and by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage the pupils' attainment is at a standard above that generally expected of pupils when they move into Key Stage 1.

7. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are above average in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. This is because pupils' attainment - generally - is above average when they start the key stage and because they are well taught during their time in it. Homework is particularly well planned; it consolidates and extends work done in the classroom as well as helping to involve parents in the education of their children, thus fostering good progress. Attainment in information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection and is now above the nationally expected level, largely because of the improved level of teacher confidence and skill brought about by training and the vastly improved level of resources, including the provision of a computer suite. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education, pupils make satisfactory progress and reach the nationally expected standard. Insufficient geography was seen for a judgement to be made on standards. Pupils undertake much discussion work in religious education, enjoy visits to local places of worship and reach standards in line with the local agreed syllabus.

8. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. The good attainment in mathematics is assisted by the arrangements made for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to be taught in four groups selected by ability. Teachers plan activities for three or four groups within these classes so that the specific learning needs of pupils are very accurately met and this contributes well to their learning and the progress they make. Pupils' responses to questions in national tests in English, mathematics and science are very carefully analysed and areas of weakness noted. The results of this analysis help to inform the planning of the pupils' work and this process has been instrumental in improving attainment. Attainment in information and communication technology has improved and is now beyond the nationally expected level. Improved teaching, influenced by increased skill and resources, has been responsible for this and also the contribution of classroom support staff, most notably of a highly qualified and knowledgeable parent helper. Attainment in history is above the nationally expected level

because of enthusiastic, knowledgeable and imaginative teaching of the subject. Pupils make satisfactory progress in art, music, physical education and design and technology and reach the nationally expected standard. Pupils encouraged by committed and imaginative teaching, particularly in Years 3 and 4, make satisfactory progress in religious education and reach the standards set in the local agreed syllabus.

9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and, overall, achieve standards in line with those expected for their age and prior attainment. Progress is particularly good when pupils are provided with systematic programmes of specific literacy teaching by additional specialist support in order to help them improve their literacy skills. Additionally, the setting arrangement for mathematics and literacy in Years 5 and 6 allows pupils with special educational needs to be taught in a smaller group, and enables the teacher to provide challenging work closely related to their needs. Pupils make good progress in these lessons.

10. The national literacy and numeracy schemes have both been adopted by the school and successfully implemented. The adoption of these schemes means that the lack of continuity in schemes of work between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics, noted at the time of the previous inspection has been eradicated. These schemes have enhanced pupils' achievements. Improvements in standards in English and mathematics by eleven-year-olds coincided with the introduction of these schemes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have maintained the good attitudes and good standards of behaviour reported at the time of the last inspection. There is a happy atmosphere in the school and this contributes well to pupils' attitudes to school life and to their learning. Nearly all parents feel that the standard of behaviour in the school is good and that the school helps their child to become mature and responsible. They say that this helps pupils to be positive about their learning. Parents say that teachers promote good attitudes to work and that they are successful at involving pupils in accepting responsibility for themselves, for example through the 'Doing It Right' campaign.

12. Pupils' attendance at school has continued to improve since the last inspection. Levels of attendance are above the national expected minimum attendance level of 95 per cent and there is very little unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive in time for registration and the start of school. Pupils' very good attendance means that there is very little disruption to their learning.

13. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are very well settled into the routines of school and behave very well. They are keen to take part in the activities provided for them, are confident and get on well with others. They are developing good levels of independence and play happily with older pupils in the playground.

14. Pupils' good attitudes to school mean that most are keen to do well. Because they are provided with interesting work and activities they are very enthusiastic and involved in what they are doing. They are happy and confident in the classroom and around the school. There is a positive atmosphere which encourages pupils to work and behave well. In lessons, they concentrate on their tasks, maintain good levels of interest and listen well to their teacher. They are keen to participate in discussions and to answer questions. They are clear about what is expected of them and settle to their work, either independently or as groups, with a minimum of fuss. Many pupils are able to concentrate for extended periods even when they have to sit on the carpet for a long time and most pupils work hard and

show good levels of personal motivation to improve. This contributes well to their success and the progress that they make.

15. Overall, pupils behave well in school and in lessons. However, although most pupils behave well all the time, there is a small number of older pupils in Key Stage 2 who demonstrate anti-social behaviour towards other pupils and staff. In the past year the school has permanently excluded one pupil and there have been three fixed period exclusions relating to two pupils. During the inspection, two pupils were excluded for two days due to an incidence of bullying both before and during school. In lessons, most pupils are well behaved and work industriously without disturbing others. They do not respond to the few pupils who cause problems. Around the school, pupils are clear about the expected standards of behaviour and move sensibly from one part of the building to another. They are friendly and polite and make visitors to the school feel very welcome by greeting them, holding doors open and talking readily about their work and lives at school. In the dining hall, the good behaviour and manners of pupils makes lunchtime a sociable event. In the playground, their play is happy and lively and pupils enjoy playing with the small equipment and balls although some girls complain that boys tend to dominate the playground when playing football.

16. Pupils with special educational needs have ownership of their work because they are involved in making the targets which are set for them in their individual learning plans. Most pupils work hard in lessons and persevere. Overall, they have good attitudes to learning and make good progress. Classroom support is well used to support individual pupils with behavioural problems, ensuring that the pupil does not disturb others. However, in Years 5 and 6, where this support is not always available, a small minority of pupils displays loud, challenging behaviour and this has an effect on the overall learning environment for the rest of the class.

17. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and relationships because it is fostered through the caring atmosphere promoted by the school. Pupils and staff work well together and show a mutual respect for one another. Pupils respond well to opportunities for taking responsibility; for example, acting as helpers in the classroom. Older pupils are given the chance to carry out duties around the school. These include taking responsibility for answering the telephone in the school office at lunchtime, assisting teachers with preparation and, as Big Friends, looking after younger pupils at lunch and playtimes. Pupils as a result are confident and act responsibly and sensibly. Older pupils say that they are able to approach teachers with suggestions, for example, ideas for school and charity fundraising and that their ideas are listened to positively. They enjoy producing the 'FabMag' for other pupils. There is no school council in operation, but pupils say that it is easy for them to discuss concerns and ideas with their teachers and the headteacher.

18. Pupils are learning to appreciate the opinions and ideas of others. They participate well in team games and have a keen sense of fair play. They work well together in collaboration, for example when using the computers or the equipment in physical education. They are confident enough to discuss each other's work and to help each other make progress. Pupils are developing an understanding of their own learning. Older pupils say that their targets are helpful and they know at which levels they are working and what they need to achieve. Overall, pupils are enthusiastic about school life. They say that they are happy, have lots of friends and have very few dislikes. Older pupils feel that they are being prepared well for secondary school, particularly when organising themselves and ensuring that they get their homework done on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good in the Foundation Stage (the reception classes) and in Key Stages 1 and 2. All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. In fourteen per cent it was excellent or very good and in 56 per cent it was good. In the Foundation Stage, almost all teaching seen was at least good. In Key Stage 1, nearly 80 per cent of teaching was good or better in quality. In Key Stage 2, 62 per cent was good or better.

20. The quality of the teaching in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology is good; literacy and numeracy skills are well taught. In music, the quality of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is good and it is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. In art it is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. It is satisfactory in religious education, and physical education. Because not enough teaching was seen in design and technology, geography and history, no judgement is made of the quality of teaching in these subjects.

21. The best teaching was characterised by very good planning which drew on considerable teacher expertise in the subject, making clear precisely what pupils were going to learn but leaving space for responding to pupils' contributions. As a result, pupils felt closely involved in learning and so they achieved well. For example, in Key Stage 1, the exemplary planning is based on a good appreciation of the subject and pupils' learning needs. This ensures that time is well used, suitable ground is covered, with key concepts and skills being presented in a coherent and interesting way. High demands are made of pupils' abilities to work hard and make good progress.

22. More generally, teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects and their grasp of pupils' abilities are usually good, so that the activities they plan are well matched to pupils' learning needs, and pupils work hard and make progress. For example, in mathematics, teachers set clear objectives for groups of pupils of different abilities and so precisely target their individual needs. Teachers' planning is very good; this ensures that learning moves at a good pace and that effective use is made of the high-quality learning resources. Work that is individually planned for pupils in mathematics and English, and taught in small groups, ensures that higher-attaining pupils make good progress and reach high standards.

23. Throughout the school, teachers form warm and productive relationships with pupils and manage them and their learning well. This ensures that discipline is usually good and contributes substantially not only to academic achievement but also to pupils' personal, social and emotional development. Occasionally, however, teachers are so concerned with control that the pace of a lesson is reduced and pupils' learning falls below its potential.

24. Teachers successfully use a range of teaching strategies. Frequently the good use of questioning assesses pupils' understanding and enables them to focus on the topic of the lesson. In an excellent literacy lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils' contributions were always checked with the question: 'How do you know that?' and the point developed as explanation to other children. As a result pupils responded with enthusiasm, genuinely enjoyed working with words and volunteered ideas and observations on material on the board, eagerly correcting the teacher's 'mistakes'. In a very good Year 3/4 literacy lesson, thoughtful and challenging questioning, evenly distributed between boys and girls, involved pupils of all abilities, making them think carefully about the text and leading them on to a better understanding. Explanations, instructions and demonstrations are clear so that pupils know exactly where they stand and what is expected of them. As a result they settle quickly, work industriously and concentrate well, producing good work. Praise is very well used to bolster

pupils' self-esteem and encourage the more diffident, and pupils are manifestly pleased when they succeed.

25. Where lessons are less successful although satisfactory overall, it is sometimes because the pace is not managed well enough. This led in one instance to the teacher-led section of a lesson being too long, and in another, when time ran out, to pupils being hurried so that they did not have sufficient time to articulate their replies. Sometimes, for example in some art lessons, there is insufficient challenge. Occasionally, pupils' negative behaviour goes unchallenged. As a result, concentration is impaired, motivation dissipates and progress becomes unsatisfactory.

26. Classroom support assistants are deployed well and make effective contributions to pupils' progress; volunteer helpers also make positive contributions to progress, especially in literacy and numeracy.

27. Some of the inspection questionnaires indicated that the parents concerned felt that the school did not provide the right amount of work for children to do at home. The inspection findings are that the school provides a satisfactory amount of homework according to the pupils' age. Teachers make very good use of homework to support mathematics, particularly in the younger classes. Parents have been consulted and two levels of work, planned to extend work in the classroom, are set each week. Overall, homework makes a useful contribution to learning.

28. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers know pupils well and plan work that matches their learning needs. They effectively question pupils to assess their understanding, and ensure a good degree of challenge in their learning. For example, in a lower ability mathematics set, pupils were asked to explain the number operations they had used. Pupils found this hard to do, but gained good understanding from verbalising their ideas. Teachers work very effectively with support assistants. This ensures that pupils withdrawn from classes for additional teaching undertake similar activities to their peers. This ensures equal opportunities for all. The special educational needs teachers plan very detailed programmes of work for pupils which are delivered in small clear stages. This enables pupils to gain confidence because the work builds gradually on their prior learning.

29. Good use is made of opportunities presented in other subjects to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, information technology and citizenship.

30. The school has maintained, and in some respects improved, the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Homework is now used appropriately to extend work in the classroom and pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers provide each other with good support in the age-group bands as they plan and evaluate lessons, and so the school is well placed to improve further the quality of teaching.

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

31. The curricular provision is good for pupils in the Foundation Stage, and for pupils aged from five to eleven. The school provides all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The head teacher and staff take every opportunity to enrich the educational opportunities for pupils through visits, and by supporting a good range of activities in the local community and wider area. The school has effectively implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and there are also good strategies for teaching these subjects. The time allocated to teaching the subjects of the curriculum in Key Stage 2

is slightly below the recommended minimum. This results in some shortfalls in subject provision in this part of the school. For example, older pupils in the key stage have one physical education lesson per week. A small amount of additional time is allocated over a two-week period, but this is frequently used for other subjects such as art or information and communication technology. Whilst all teachers spend time developing confidence in pupils, and in promoting good relationships, there is no explicit time allocation for the personal and social education of pupils in Key Stage 2. As a result, the provision and time allocated to this subject varies between classes. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage covers all areas of learning, but there is insufficient provision for outdoor play. This limits the impact of the curriculum on pupils' physical and social development, by reducing opportunities for pupils to play cooperatively, and to develop skills through the use of a selection of large toys and wheeled vehicles.

32. The curriculum is well planned using a two-year rolling programme of topics, which effectively addresses the needs of mixed age-group classes. Comprehensive half-termly plans ensure that work is matched to the ages and abilities of pupils. A strength of this planning is the way in which teachers establish good links between subjects. For instance, pupils in lower Key Stage 2 used measurement skills acquired in mathematics to measure accurately the sections of their mice houses in design and technology lessons. Older pupils developed an awareness of other cultures in their geography study of the Caribbean. This approach gives relevance and purpose to pupils' learning, enabling them to apply the skills they have previously learnt in new situations.

33. Sex education is appropriately taught as part of the science curriculum, with specific teaching in upper Key Stage 2. The school's involvement in an anti-drugs programme organised by the local police, effectively informs pupils of the dangers of substance abuse, but importantly, also includes teaching about assertiveness. The provision for extra-curricular provision at Key Stage 2 is very good. The range of activities on offer is diverse, catering for many interests. Provision includes poetry and drama, music-making, gymnastics, sewing, and a comprehensive range of sporting activities. This very good provision enriches the curriculum for many pupils. The school acknowledges the lack of provision at Key Stage 1, having put its energy into extra-curricular provision at Key Stage 2 for a range of appropriate reasons.

34. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school's decision to organise pupils in a smaller set for literacy and numeracy in upper Key Stage 2 means that pupils are well supported by a specialist teacher. In a small number of instances, pupils are withdrawn from assembly at the same time each week. This reduces their overall curriculum entitlement. The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is fully in place. There are good systems that track the attainment of pupils, identifying those who require additional support. Once pupils are identified, the co-ordinator for special educational needs works with teachers to provide focused individual education plans for pupils and gives guidance to the teacher on their implementation. Many of the plans are of good quality with manageable and achievable targets. However, the individual education plans for a significant number of pupils contain targets which are insufficiently precise. They contain broad learning intentions such as 'Learn multiplication tables to 10', and do not break these down into achievable small steps. In these instances, pupils do not make sufficient progress against the targets set for them.

35. The school has made satisfactory progress in overcoming the weaknesses outlined in the last report. Effective links have been established with schools at the next stage of pupils' education, and the development of a cohesive long-term curriculum plan has ensured good progress in enabling continuity between age bands. One weakness still remains. The small hall restricts the scope of physical education lessons, and in some Key Stage 2 games activities, limited space results in half the class sitting out at some points in the lesson.

36. The school's provision for the spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. The head teacher has planned a very comprehensive range of assemblies which gradually build up pupils' abilities to reflect and respond to a variety of day-to-day experiences, values and concerns. The daily acts of collective worship led by the head teacher contain elements of awe and wonder such as appreciating the magnificence of a beautiful stained glass window. There are good opportunities for prayerful reflection in which pupils respond appropriately. Other assemblies seen during the inspection were not of this quality, and lacked opportunities for pupils to reflect or respond in a spiritual way. The school annually supports a children's charity and there are other more spontaneously adopted good causes. These give good opportunities for pupils to think of others less fortunate than themselves. Overall - more widely in the curriculum - there are too few planned opportunities to provide a spiritual dimension to pupils' learning.

37. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Assemblies play a significant role in setting the moral tone of the school. For instance, pupils are asked to consider how their actions affect others, or how to deal with disappointments. The *Doing It Right* aspect of the behaviour programme has a very positive effect on pupils' behaviour. Throughout the school pupils are reminded of the right things to do. Appropriate class rules also reinforce this. Pupils have a very good understanding about right and wrong. They help and support each other in lessons, and are respectful of everyone. Adults in the school, both teaching and support staff, provide good role models. Staff encourage and positively develop good relationships amongst pupils, and themselves. This makes for a welcoming environment in which all are friendly and courteous.

38. The good provision for pupils' social development contributes well to their understanding of citizenship. Good links are made in the local community which enable pupils to develop a wide range of social skills. For instance, pupils take part in all aspects of Education Sunday in the local church, and visit the Methodist Tuesday Fellowship at Christmas. Some have recently been involved in evaluating the educational opportunities available for children in the Civic Society Temple Grounds. Older pupils have very good opportunities to contribute to aspects of school management. They answer the telephone at lunchtimes, take on lunchtime jobs helping teachers, prepare the hall for assembly, or take responsibility for the small apparatus used at playtimes. Pupils are encouraged to show commitment to this work by undertaking a responsibility for one term. Year 5 pupils give valued support to pupils in the reception classes. They sit with them at lunchtime, help them dress into outdoor clothes, and play with them in the playground. Both older and younger children gain confidence from this activity. Year 4 pupils take part in a residential field weekend at Low Mill each year. This provides good opportunities for pupils' social development in a different setting. Year 6 pupils also learn skills such as co-operation and team building in a week's residential visit to Bewerley Park Outdoor Education Centre.

39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own culture through visits to facilities in Richmond. They visit the fire station, library and local shops as part of their geography syllabus. Visits further afield have involved Key Stage 2 pupils in a science fair and dressing in Victorian costume when visiting the Bradford Industrial Museum. Older pupils complete comprehensive studies of other places and times. For instance, in a Greek history topic, pupils also held a banquet, eating Greek food, and wearing Greek dress. There are planned visits by theatre groups. The school maximises any opportunities to develop multicultural links. Other curriculum subjects provide suitable links, such as the study of world faiths in religious education, listening and dancing to music from other countries in physical education, or examining the work of established artists. Nevertheless, there are too few planned opportunities to redress the school's relative geographical isolation by providing a range of experiences which promote the customs and beliefs of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school provides a caring and secure environment for pupils and has maintained the position reported at the last inspection. The school staff know their pupils well, have good knowledge of their physical, emotional and intellectual development and provide good support and guidance. Most pupils learn well and respond cheerfully to the challenging work they are given because the school helps them to form good, trusting relationships with each other, with their teachers and with the other adults who work in the school.

41. Pupil's health and safety is well looked after. A suitable policy is in place. Health and safety dimensions of the National Curriculum, for example, in science, physical education and design and technology, are carefully taught. Teachers, learning support assistants and midday support assistants have had first aid training. All are aware of pupils who have special allergies and medical problems. Child protection arrangements are in place.

42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Although the calling of the register is done efficiently, there is no time when the registers are officially closed and therefore the school is not in a position to monitor pupils' lateness. As a consequence, there is no information about patterns of late arrival or any view on whether lateness is affecting standards. Nevertheless there are good procedures for following up absentees, with an early phone call to a child's home in cases of concern.

43. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The very comprehensive policy for behaviour has a graduated scale of rewards and sanctions. Pupils are given individual achievement awards and there is also a group and class award system leading to the public award of certificates during Friday assembly. The 'Doing it right' scheme which the school promotes also benefits pupils' behaviour. Bullying is promptly dealt with. However, the procedures for supporting pupils' good behaviour, which are effective for most pupils, who are co-operative and well behaved, are less successful with those pupils with more serious difficulties, and whose behaviour is more seriously challenging. Consequently there are times when their progress is affected, along with that of other pupils in the class.

44. The last report noted that assessment procedures were not used sufficiently to support the planning of pupils' work. This has significantly improved, particularly in English, mathematics, and science and is now very good in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Assessment results are carefully and thoroughly analysed to reveal any differences between the performance of – for example – boys and girls and changes in trends. Information is well used to meet the curriculum needs of all pupils including those with special educational needs, the more able and those whose results are expected to be borderline. It is used to inform future planning so that pupils can build on previous knowledge and understanding. Information from the assessment of children when they enter and leave the Foundation Stage is not analysed in the same depth to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the age-group. Assessment in other subjects against National Curriculum criteria has yet to be systematically established.

45. Procedures for monitoring and supporting personal development are good. There are high expectations that are sometimes different for different children and there is a special programme for those needing extra support. Opportunities for discussion and reflection are provided in all classes in different ways – sometimes contributing also to personal, social and health education and citizenship. Many opportunities are given for pupils to serve the school in which the responsibilities grow as the pupils increase in maturity. The Big Friend

system gives Year 5 pupils the opportunity to help younger pupils, for example, and Year 6 pupils on telephone duty deal with telephone calls with the minimum of supervision.

46. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good. The effective liaison between all members of staff ensures that pupils receive appropriate support. The systematic analysis of pupils' attainment to track progress contributes significantly to the early identification of pupils with special educational needs. Six pupils with behaviour problems are receiving good support from a personal support assistant outside normal lessons. They spend time reviewing their actions, and think of ways they can modify their behaviour. Some are now developing positive attitudes about themselves, and in their relationships with others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school's good partnership with parents and the support that parents give to the school and to their child's learning benefit both the work of the school and the standards that pupils achieve. The improvement since the last inspection in the effectiveness of the school's links with parents has been good and in the quality of information that the school provides for them it has been very good.

48. At the parents' meeting before the inspection, most parents registered overall support for the school and its work. They are satisfied with pupils' academic and personal standards and are pleased with the standards of behaviour and their children's positive attitudes to school. Nearly all parents feel that they can approach the school with any questions or problems and say that staff try hard to address any concerns raised by parents, although a few parents feel that there is less easy contact with staff from Key Stage 2. Overall, parents say that the school is much improved particularly in the amount of parental involvement, the quality of communication and the support given to the school through the work of the Friends of Richmond Methodist School.

49. The questionnaires also reflected these positive views of the school although there were some disagreements in the areas of homework, information about progress, the closeness of the school's working with parents and the range of extra-curricular activities provided. The inspection team's view is that the provision for homework is good overall and is very good in Key Stage 1 and that parents are well informed about their child's progress through interim and end of year reports and regular consultation meetings with parents. The school has much improved its relationship with parents and there is no evidence that it does not work closely with them. However, the inspection team agrees that, although the range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in Key Stage 2 is very good, there is no provision at Key Stage 1.

50. The school has much improved its relationship with parents and the quality of information provided for parents is now very good and is a strength of the school. Since the last inspection, the quality of its prospectus has improved. Parents receive very good information through the parents' handbook which comprises a series of up-to-date fact sheets. Parents receive regular, well-presented newsletters about events and activities taking place in school. Letters from class and band teachers give parents good information about what pupils will be learning and encourage parents to be involved with their child's learning at home. The use of interim reports as a basis for discussion at parents' evenings is a very good feature and ensures that parents and teachers can have well-focused discussions on pupils' progress and what a child needs to do next to improve. Parents receive good quality information about their child's progress in the end-of-year reports which

set clear targets and which give pupils the opportunity to make comments on their own progress.

51. The school makes a good commitment to an open and positive relationship with parents through its home-school agreement, which most parents have signed to indicate their support. There is very good attendance by parents at consultation meetings to discuss their child's progress and at open evenings to view pupils' work and to learn about the school's strategies for numeracy and literacy. The school is keen that parents should feel that the school is open and that they should come to discuss any concerns. It seeks their views from time to time through questionnaires and acts positively on suggestions as it did when reviewing the behaviour management programme.

52. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their child's progress. They are invited to attend planning meetings each term and the annual review. Parents receive a completed copy of the individual learning plan. Many support their child's learning by carrying out work at home, for example, by hearing the child read for fifteen minutes each day. In some instances, parents agree to work with their child at home, but systems fall down and the impetus is lost. When this happens pupils make less progress than they should.

53. Other parents also give good support to the work of the school and to their children's learning through their involvement in pupils' homework activities. Many parents regularly hear their children read, help with activities such as spelling and project work and provide children with resources to bring into school to support work in the classroom. This has a very beneficial effect on the standards that pupils achieve. Some parents also support the school by helping in the classroom with many activities. Others help with swimming, library, clubs and visits. A small group of parents works with the support of staff on behalf of the Friends of the School. The association's events, which are well supported by parents and the local community, raise significant sums of money to improve the resources of the school and provide a good social setting in which families, pupils and staff can meet together.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The quality of the leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff is very good. It is energetic and strong; it provides a clear educational direction for the school, with a commitment to helping the pupils achieve high standards. The headteacher's effective leadership creates a purposeful atmosphere for learning, which supports and appreciates the contributions made by the teachers, other staff and pupils. It is based on clear values and contributes significantly to the pupils' positive experience of school and the progress they make. Good, highly professional leadership exists in depth through the contributions of the deputy head, the key stage leaders and the band leaders; this represents an improvement on the position recorded in the last inspection report.

55. The well-informed governing body is very supportive of the school and fulfils its statutory duties well. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and they are holding it increasingly to account. For example, they meet regularly with co-ordinators of the curriculum areas to discuss how the subjects are to develop. Individual governors are associated with specific areas of the school and carefully monitor developments in these areas.

56. The co-ordination of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is good. The practice of appointing two co-ordinators for these subjects is effective, not only because the co-ordinators provide support for each other and

are able to share the workload but because it also safeguards continuity of leadership, should one co-ordinator leave the school. The curriculum for these subjects is well organised and very effective arrangements are in place to support lesson planning and monitor the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the co-ordinators for mathematics and English analyse all available information and set targets for all the pupils with particular reference to groups of pupils in borderline areas. This is a strength of both subjects and, as a result, teachers are very clear about the goals they should achieve and the knowledge the pupils should acquire.

57. These arrangements have not yet been sufficiently extended to other areas of the curriculum, however. There is no systematic way that pupils' learning and achievements are assessed and monitored, and assessments are not backed up by a scrutiny of pupils' work to give an overview of pupils' learning and development over time. As a result, the development of these subjects is inhibited and this is reflected in the standards the pupils achieve.

58. This apart, the school evaluates its performance very well. Careful account is taken of all relevant data; systems for monitoring assessment results at key points in the school, analysing trends and using the information are very good. For example, national assessment results are studied question by question and skill by skill and the information thus obtained is used in planning the pupils' future programme and for setting group targets. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored by a regular observation programme.

59. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and gives effective guidance to teachers. The special educational needs teachers and support staff are managed effectively to ensure that time is well used. The school places much importance on good provision for pupils and has monitored its provision, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and devising a suitable action plan. However, the individual learning plans, once written, are not monitored to ensure consistency or to highlight any problems in delivery. The school has decided to support six pupils with behaviour problems in Years 5 and 6 by developing a small tutorial group in which pupils can begin to modify their behaviour. Whilst this system is working very effectively, there is insufficient support available for teachers in the classrooms at other times. The combination of large class sizes, mixed age groups, and the management of pupils with behaviour problems is presenting a challenging situation for some teachers.

60. There is a very well-established, detailed and effective school development plan which sets out a suitable hierarchy of priorities for the current and the forthcoming school years and provides the basis for financial planning.

61. The school gives good consideration to the principles of best value. It carefully makes a comparison with local schools, consults well with parents and receives good support from them. It seeks best value when making purchases of supplies and equipment or employing services. Funds received for specific purposes, such as those to support pupils with special educational needs, are efficiently and appropriately managed.

62. Good use is made of the resources available to the school. Governors carefully assess relative priorities, although they do not yet evaluate the effect of their expenditure decisions on pupils' attainment. Learning support assistants are well deployed to support the pupils who have special educational needs.

63. The effectiveness of staff is well supported by the good procedures in place for professional development and performance management. Professional development and training, including the induction of new teachers - which has a high status in the school and

is well managed by the deputy headteacher - contributes well to teachers' professional confidence and so enhances the pupils' experience of school.

64. There has been some improvement in the accommodation since the last inspection, particularly with the refurbishment of a mobile classroom as a learning support centre. The quality of resources has improved since the last inspection. This is particularly the case for information and communications technology and mathematics where resources are now very good, and for English where they are good; they contribute well to pupils' progress in these areas.

65. However, there has been no improvement in the way in which furniture and physical education equipment stored in the hall reduces the space available for physical education. The hall is too small for the number of pupils, particularly for the large classes of older pupils in Key Stage 2 although teachers effectively manage the situation by ensuring only half the class engages in activities at any one time. As the hall is used for many communal purposes there is some loss of curriculum time, particularly for physical education because the hall has to be cleared in time for the next activity. Because there is no secure outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage the school's ability to provide for their physical development is reduced. The provision of resources for the Foundation Stage is good, although there are no large wheeled toys to promote pupils' physical and social development in an outdoor environment.

66. Although the school library has been moved to an area within the information and communication technology suite, it is still inadequate. Its location means that it is not easily accessible for pupils for independent research. It is too small and the stock of books is both insufficient in quantity and unsatisfactory in quality.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. To build on the school's high achievement and improve standards further, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:

- (1) Improve the management of subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology as a contribution to higher standards in these areas, by:

Establishing more rigour in assessing, monitoring and evaluating what pupils are learning and in monitoring the quality of teaching.
(Paragraph 57)

Secure appropriate accommodation and resources to support the physical development of pupils in the Foundation Stage.
(Paragraphs 65, 69)

Improve the number and quality of books in the library.
(Paragraph 66)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- Improve the quality of the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs to ensure that targets are always appropriate, measurable and set within a time-scale. (Paragraph: 34)
- Review the school's procedures for managing the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils in the upper part of Key Stage 2. (Paragraph: 59)
- Reappraise the distribution of time to the different elements of the curriculum in Key Stage 2 and ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities. (Paragraph: 31)
- Review procedures for registration, so that the school is in a position to monitor pupils' patterns of attendance and lateness. (Paragraph: 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	10	57	29	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		333
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		56

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	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	nil
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
	2000	20	28	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	16	20
	Girls	27	28	28
	Total	46	44	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98(91)	91 (91)	100 (95)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	20	20
	Girls	28	27	28
	Total	47	47	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (91)	98 (91)	100 (91)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	88(87)

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
	2000	19	30	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	15	18
	Girls	28	24	29
	Total	45	39	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (80)	80 (74)	96 (94)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	28	25	26
	Total	44	40	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (80)	82 (74)	96 (94)
	National	70(68)	72(69)	79(75)

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	333
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	3	1
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)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	109

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	507292
Total expenditure	515508
Expenditure per pupil	1539
Balance brought forward from previous year	10997
Balance carried forward to next year	2781

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

333

Number of questionnaires returned

187

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	43	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	48	5	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	52	4	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	52	17	3	4
The teaching is good.	47	44	4	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	48	18	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	35	7	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	37	2	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	30	44	17	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	41	44	7	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	48	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	34	17	5	12

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

68. The Foundation Stage consists of the two reception classes. Children enter the Foundation Stage in the school year in which they are five. Those whose fifth birthdays occur in the last six months of the school year attend part time for the Autumn term. Initial assessments show that on entry to the reception classes the majority of pupils' speaking and listening skills and early phonic awareness are above those expected for children of their age. Pupils' early numeracy skills are similar to those expected. Their levels of personal development, such as independence and relationships, are well above.

69. The last inspection report did not report on attainment and progress of children under the age of five and it is not possible to assess changes since then. The judgement of this inspection, however, is that the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is consistently high. Pupils settle well and make good progress in all areas of their learning. The reception classes are very well organised and provide a comprehensive range of activities which are effectively planned to the nationally prescribed early learning goals. The teachers have established a very caring, secure and positive environment for learning in which children gain confidence and flourish. Most pupils, therefore, are on course to meet or exceed the national standards of the early learning goals in all areas of their learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Pupils make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and most exceed expectations for their age. Teachers place good emphasis on developing children's self-esteem. They greet them personally each day. They praise and encourage the children. This promotes a very good ethos for learning, and children begin each session eager to explore the activities provided for them. Accordingly they work purposefully on a range of tasks, taking decisions about where they will spend their time, and using the opportunities productively. Pupils persevere, spending a good amount of time on each task. They listen carefully to their teacher and to each other. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and their ability to care for themselves. As a result, all have settled well into school and already understand the conventions. For instance, they make an orderly line, dress and undress quickly and independently for physical education lessons, and respond immediately to their teachers' requests. Pupils are developing good inter-personal skills. They play cooperatively, taking turns. They support each other well, for example when they work with a partner on the computer.

Communication, language and literacy

71. Pupils achieve well in this area and reach above-average standards because overall provision, especially teaching, is good. All pupils know how to handle books appropriately, turning the pages one at a time. Most are making good progress in their early reading skills. They recognise the sounds made by letters and use this to identify words in books. They look for picture clues when reading. High-attaining pupils can decode simple words using phonic skills, and are developing a good sight vocabulary. Pupils are making good progress

in their early writing skills due to the good level of adult support they receive. Because children work in small numbers, adults are able to help them isolate the sounds in words, and pupils are gaining confidence in their ability to write. Pupils enter school with good speaking and listening skills. Many speak in full sentences, using a good range of vocabulary.

72. Teachers plan a range of structured activities that build well on pupils' prior learning. They place strong emphasis on the early acquisition of literacy skills and provide daily lessons in which skills are taught and consolidated. They use every opportunity to encourage pupils to practise their skills. For example, in one of the planned role-play experiences, the class tent, furnished with camping and walking equipment, enables pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in an enjoyable way. There are clipboards in each classroom area to encourage children to write about what they have done. Teachers provide very good role models for children. They speak clearly, and use correct terminology. For example, when sharing a class book, the teacher emphasised words such as *author*, *illustrator* and *contents list*, to extend pupils' knowledge about the structure of books. On another occasion, a class puppet theatre acquired added relevance when the teacher demonstrated a puppet speaking in different voices. As a result, pupils also used a range of voices as they worked with the puppets.

Mathematics

73. Although pupils' skills are similar to those of children of their age on entry to the Foundation Stage, many are now attaining in advance of their age, and they are making good progress helped by the good teaching. Teachers place due emphasis on the daily acquisition and consolidation of number recognition. They are well supported by parents who work with their children at home, and send in sets of items which add variety to pupils' counting activities. Learning is fun. Pupils play number games in small groups. They help *Teddy Tony* to learn his numbers, and show great enjoyment when he gets his sums wrong! Most pupils can count to 10, and many also recognise the numerals. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to add numbers together.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Most pupils attain above-average standards in this area of learning. Pupils enter school with a good understanding of their world. They make connections between their own experiences and those of others. For instance, they can explain their daytime and night-time routines and relate these to animals that sleep at night or which are nocturnal. They show they understand the passage of time by talking about their birthdays, what they did yesterday or at the weekend. Teachers provide a range of interesting activities which give relevance to this area of learning and enable pupils to make good progress. For instance, in the class tent, teachers interact well with pupils to extend their thinking. They discuss the purpose of the mobile phone in an emergency and explain the purpose of the exposure blanket. Pupils use the class computer, confidently handling the mouse to move items around the screen. They recognise the five senses and identify which sense they are using. They confidently handle a range of materials such as wet and dry sand or modelling clay, and recognise a range of colours.

Physical development

75. Pupils' standards are satisfactory in this area of learning but their progress is reduced, albeit to a small degree, by the lack of opportunities for physical development provided through outdoor play. Nevertheless, most pupils are on course to attain the learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage supported by the good teaching they receive. In a dance lesson, pupils skipped, side-stepped and galloped with gusto. They showed good agility and co-ordination for their age. Pupils use scissors confidently, and employ a range of materials appropriately when gluing and sticking. They pour water and sand with accuracy. When listening to music, many clap in time to the beat. Children develop good hand-eye co-ordination when drawing, printing and building with construction kits.

Creative development

76. Pupils enter the school with above-average skills in creative work. The school effectively builds on this by planning relevant activities and by providing materials and equipment of good quality. As a result, most pupils achieve well in relation to expectations for their age. They enjoy painting and drawing. They learn a range of skills, such as folding paper to make the arms and legs of *Humpty Dumpty*. They understand the notion of pattern and use this to good effect when making pasta tiles. Pupils learn to observe closely and to draw what they actually see. For example, they looked closely at daisies and used paint and fingers to replicate the flower. Many produce recognisable drawings of a person with legs, body, arms, and with good attention to facial features.

77. Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the Foundation Stage and teachers plan good learning opportunities for them.

78. Teachers organise their classrooms effectively and provide a comprehensive range of practical opportunities for pupils to develop new learning. This encourages pupils to make independent decisions about their choice of activity and enables them to work cooperatively with and alongside others. Teachers also effectively structure lessons to make the best use of time. For example, in a literacy lesson, the pupils shared a book as a class, reading the text and identifying the title and author. They then chose from a range of activities and were brought together in small groups for story writing. At the conclusion of the lesson they played a letter-pairing game and individual pupils shared their writing with the class. This good organisation, with pupils' learning organised in manageable units, enables them to maintain concentration and to come to each activity with continued enthusiasm. Teachers are clear about what is to be learned and give clear instructions. As a result, pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they carry out their work with confidence. The teachers effectively use the assessments made on entry to plan suitable work for pupils and to identify those with special educational needs. This ensures that all pupils make progress because they receive work that is directly related to their stage of development. There are good procedures for monitoring children's progress over time and for tracking pupils on a daily basis. A strong feature of the teaching is the good quality of work by support staff which gives children a good level of individual support.

79. The curriculum is well structured to ensure that young children are given a range of relevant experiences, closely linked, and appropriate to their age. For instance, pupils went on a *senses walk*, using their hearing, sight and smell to describe a range of experiences. Later, in their creative work, they drew and made imprints of the items found, counted them in numeracy, and wrote about them in literacy. This good organisation of the curriculum, giving relevance to pupils' learning, enables them to make connections between the different

areas of learning. Pupils have good opportunities to climb, jump and move with speed in physical education lessons. However, the lack of outdoor play provision means that there is no opportunity for children to use a range of outdoor equipment to steer, push and pull. This limits the development of pupils' gross motor skills and reduces opportunities for them to cooperate within a social setting.

ENGLISH

80. Standards in English are high and rising year by year in line with the national trend. As measured by the National Curriculum Assessments in May 2000, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the national average, with particularly strong results in reading, and also well above the average for schools with a similar intake. In reading, nearly two thirds of the pupils were attaining at Level 3, the expected level for nine-year-olds. In writing, about a quarter of the pupils achieved above-average results. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' results in 2000 were well above average in national terms and, when compared with those of similar schools, they were above average. A high proportion of pupils achieved above the level expected for eleven-year-olds.

81. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with these results. Standards of speaking and listening are good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully and effectively to the teacher and each other, responding confidently to the teacher's questions. They readily offer opinions on the books they have been reading,

82. Pupils are confident and accomplished speakers in Key Stage 2. In the earlier part of the key stage pupils listen carefully and reply thoughtfully. For example, in a hot-seating exercise where pupils were asked to adopt characters from the studied text, some of the replies to questions from members of the class were long and well constructed. By the end of the key stage, pupils speak clearly and the higher attainers make extended contributions to a discussion, offering evidence to support their opinion. They talk fluently about their reading and, in class or when describing their work to adults, they speak clearly and confidently in well-constructed sentences.

83. Standards of reading are good at the ages of seven and eleven, demonstrating pupils' sound achievement. By the age of seven, the highest-attaining pupils read accurately, confidently and fluently, using different ways of tackling unfamiliar words and making realistic predictions about what might come next. They talk intelligently about what they read. Average attainers read well, but with some inaccuracies. The lower-attaining pupils read a simple text accurately when they know the words, but do not always have the skills to tackle unknown words with confidence.

84. By the age of eleven, the highest-attaining pupils read accurately, in some cases with very good expression and characterisation. They draw appropriate inferences from their reading, which they support with evidence selected by skimming the text. Pupils of average attainment are reasonably confident and usually accurate, but need help to interpret the text. The lower attainers recognise many words and have satisfactory strategies for tackling the others, but sometimes need support. Pupils at this stage do not have satisfactory library and reference skills. Some of the most able pupils confidently use an index or contents page, for example, but others need help. Their knowledge of the standard library classification is not good enough to support their independent learning.

85. The standard of pupils' writing is good. In Key Stage 1 the highest-attaining pupils write well in a variety of styles. Their stories, such as 'Willy and Hugh's next adventure', are

well-conceived narratives, and display the beginnings of dialogue. Pupils choose words carefully. In a poem called 'I like', a Year 2 girl wrote, 'I like the smell of flowers drifting up my nose.' Their handwriting is accurate, legible and even in size. Full stops and capital letters are usually correctly employed. Pupils of average ability write legibly with a logical sequence of ideas, but with conventions of spelling and punctuation not always secure. The lowest-attaining pupils tell a story briefly but not always accurately, and their skills are less well-established.

86. The writing of pupils in Key Stage 2 is good; some is very good. Pupils work in a range of styles, among them, for example, narrative, playscripts, biographies and reports. With the oldest pupils in the key stage, the best work is outstanding. It is carefully and thoroughly planned. The writing is mature, vivid and rhythmic, engaging the reader and confidently employing an extensive vocabulary. Story openings are particularly striking: 'The warrior sheltered from the bitter weather in a cave and rested for a while.' Pupils write in ink; handwriting is joined-up, neat and legible and spelling almost faultless.

87. More typically, pupils have good ideas which they develop conscientiously. Careful planning identifies clear elements in a projected story, pupils habitually consider the words they use, and there are often enterprising choices. For example, when a pupil (in her imagination) approached Castle Drogo, 'The pebbles beneath her feet started to crunch and crack.' Another 'opened the cobwebbed castle doors. They were heavy and old with rusty hinges.'

89. Other styles of writing, such as persuasive argument and instructions are also well managed. The handwriting of these pupils is joined-up, clear and the spelling is usually right. For the less able pupils, good ideas are not matched by their skills. They attempt dialogue, but do not manage to divide their work into paragraphs. Their handwriting is legible, but comparatively immature and spelling is sometimes uncertain. Pupils with special educational needs choose words well, but handwriting is ill-formed and they cannot organise their ideas into paragraphs.

90. Pupils' well-established literacy skills are supported in other areas of the curriculum. There are good opportunities for extended writing in history: there are some lively newspaper reports of historical events, for example. Pupils practise note-taking in music, write reports and accurately record science experiments or design and technology projects. They learn an appropriate technical vocabulary in physical education. Pupils competently present their work using information and communication technology.

91. Pupils are enabled to succeed in English because of the good teaching they receive, particularly in Key Stage 1. Never less than satisfactory, the quality of teaching was good or better in three quarters of the lessons observed and very good or excellent in one third.

92. The most successful lessons, such as those in Key Stage 1, follow exemplary planning based on a good appreciation of the subject and pupils' learning needs. This ensures that time is well used, suitable ground is covered, with key concepts and skills being presented in a coherent and interesting way. Enthusiastic introductions and good questioning consolidate what the pupils have already learned and enable them to focus on the new work. There is an excellent use of suitable strategies to establish drills to help reading and writing through increased phonic awareness. Work is very well organised with different activities for different ages. It is pitched at exactly the right level so that pupils can work independently without the close supervision from the teacher. Very clear instructions ensure pupils know what they have to do and can start work with confidence. Praise is very well used to boost pupils' self-esteem and encourage the more diffident. Pupils' contributions are always checked: 'How do you know that?' and the point developed to explain to other children. As a result pupils respond with enthusiasm, genuinely enjoy working with words

and volunteer ideas and observations on material on the board, eagerly correcting the teacher's 'mistakes'. The excellent variety of methods and approaches ensures pupils' continued application and concentration. In one instance a pupil was so involved at the end of the hour that the teacher had to break in with, 'I am afraid, C_____, it is playtime.'

93. In Key Stage 2 also, good subject knowledge leads to very good planning which in its turn result in pupils working hard within their ability yet finding a challenge. Good, sometimes very good, class management in an atmosphere of mutual respect leads to good behaviour: pupils are involved, confident and work hard. Thoughtful and challenging questioning, evenly distributed between boys and girls, involves pupils of all abilities, making them think carefully about the text and leading them on to a better understanding. Explanations, instructions and demonstrations are clear so that pupils know exactly where they stand and what is expected of them. As a result they settle quickly, work industriously and concentrate well, producing good work. Work for pupils with special educational needs is presented at the right level with a good range of suitable activities, enabling them to make good progress. Ancillary staff are well used to support individuals and groups.

94. Where lessons are less successful although satisfactory overall, it is sometimes because the pace is not managed well enough. This led in one instance to the teacher-led section of a lesson being too long, and in another, when time ran out, to pupils being hurried so that they did not have sufficient time to articulate their replies. Occasionally there is insufficient challenge. Sometimes pupils' negative behaviour goes unchallenged. When this happens, motivation dissipates and progress becomes unsatisfactory.

95. Marking is supportive. Helpful comment assesses, corrects, supports and gives ideas for improvement, referring to existing targets or suggesting new ones. Homework is regularly set and supports the teaching well.

96. The subject is well organised, and all efforts are directed at improving standards. The practice of having two co-ordinators is good. Both teaching and learning are carefully monitored. The results of formal assessments are painstakingly analysed, and lessons drawn for the pupils' subsequent programmes. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked as they move through the school and both individual and group targets are set. Pupils thus know what is expected of them and conscientiously work to achieve the targets. In this way pupils are helped to do their best, and high standards are maintained. This maintains the position reported at the last inspection and puts the subject in a good position to improve further.

97. Resources for English (reported as satisfactory last time) are now good, except for the library where the size and content of the bookstock is not adequate to support the independent work that lies within the capability of the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

98. Standards in mathematics are good overall and have improved since the last inspection. Over the last five years the standards of pupils aged seven have been well above the national average. The standards for eleven-year-olds have been less consistent. Up until 1997 standards were only in line with national averages but there was a big jump in 1998 and these higher standards have been maintained since then. Overall this improvement is endorsed by the current inspection findings. Pupils' level of attainment is above-average when they enter Key Stage 1 and pupils achieve as expected, maintaining standards which are above the national average.

99. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 the school's results were:

- well above average compared to schools nationally;
- well above the scores of schools with a similar intake;
- very high compared with the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard;
- well above average for the percentage of pupils exceeding the nationally expected standard for seven-year-olds.

100. The 2000 results follow the pattern of the previous four years. Results follow the rising national trend but are consistently well above the national average. There has been no significant difference between the scores of boys and girls. Standards of work seen are high amongst the present Year 2 pupils, with most of them already working at the expected level, and are consistent with results that would match the performance of previous years.

101. Nearly all the Year 2 pupils are confident with addition and subtraction facts to 20 and above in many cases. They recognise odd and even numbers. They are able to recognise and name common three-dimensional shapes. They can measure lengths using standard units like centimetres.

102. In the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds the school's results were:

- above average compared with all schools nationally;
- similar to the scores of schools with similar intakes;
- above average for the percentage of pupils reaching the nationally expected standard for eleven-year-olds;
- well above average for the percentage of pupils exceeding the nationally expected standards for eleven-year-olds.

103. Over a period of four years to 1999 girls performed significantly better than the boys. A combination of the impact of an extra teacher employed to boost the performance of under-achieving pupils and additional classroom support to help counteract the relatively poor attitude of a small number of pupils, mostly boys, towards mathematics has brought about an improvement in the performance of the boys and the results of the 2000 national tests show there is now virtually no difference between the scores of boys and girls. Work seen was consistent with these high standards.

104. Older pupils, those in Years 5 and 6, are taught mathematics in groups organised by ability. Higher-attaining pupils form one group, there are two groups of middle-attaining pupils and a smaller group of lower-attaining pupils, largely those with special educational needs. Pupils in the higher-attaining group are working at a level higher than that expected nationally. They confidently interpret co-ordinates in all four quadrants and they are able to identify co-ordinates from verbal descriptions without needing to see grids. When asked, pupils could readily give accurate verbal descriptions, using correct mathematical terminology, of shapes like kites and trapeziums. Pupils are able to use their understanding of place value to multiply and divide by multiples of ten. They are able to multiply by two-digit numbers. The progress made by the pupils in this group is good. This progress is reflected in the school's results where for the last two years the percentage of pupils working

at higher levels has been relatively higher than the percentage reaching the level expected of eleven-year-olds. Pupils in the parallel groups show a wider range of abilities but higher-attaining pupils within the group know the angle sum of a triangle. They are able to find the perimeters of shapes measuring in decimal fractions of centimetres and can describe fractions of amounts using percentages. Pupils are not yet confident with negative numbers.

105. Pupils with special educational needs, helped by being taught in a small group and by being given carefully planned work, achieve well, making good progress relative to their ability.

106. The quality of teaching is good, being at least good in eighty per cent of the lessons seen, and very good in twenty per cent. The good and very good teaching is to be found in both key stages. Teachers plan their work thoroughly, setting clear objectives for groups of pupils of different abilities thereby helping all pupils to understand what they are doing and make progress. This careful planning for different ability groups is essential in classes which have two year-groups of pupils but teachers of classes where pupils are grouped by ability still provide work for different groups within these classes and so precisely target the needs of their pupils. Teachers manage pupils well, ensuring that their attention is engaged and is focused on their learning. In lessons which are not so successful teachers are so concerned with control of the lesson that the pace of lessons slows and the rate of learning is reduced. Teachers are careful to use a correct mathematical vocabulary and to instil correct mathematical thinking. For example, it is stressed to pupils in Year 3 and 4 classes that to multiply a number by ten, digits are moved one place to the left (rather than by putting a zero on the end of the number) thereby setting a secure basis for future learning. Teachers use support staff well to give pupils sustained help in small-group situations, a practice which is particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers make very good use of homework; this is particularly so in the younger classes. Parents have been consulted and two levels of homework, planned to extend work in the classroom, are set each week. This enables parents to become involved in the mathematical education of their children and provide individual help and encouragement. Homework for the older pupils is not quite so systematic but several examples of stimulating assignments, planned to consolidate and extend learning in lessons, were seen during the period of the inspection.

107. The result is that pupils' attitudes to mathematics are generally good. They are enthusiastic in lessons and even younger pupils are able to sustain concentration for good periods of time. An encouraging number of pupils, in conversation with inspectors, identified mathematics as their favourite subject.

108. Mathematics is very well led by two co-ordinators teaching in different stages at the school but working as a team and the quality of this leadership has been influential in achieving the steadily rising standards since the last inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy and the allied staff training has been well implemented bringing with it several benefits. The 'lack of coherence and continuity' between the two stages of education noted at the last inspection no longer exists. The quality of teaching and learning has been monitored through direct, focused observation in the classroom, scrutiny of teachers' planning and scrutiny of pupils' work. This has resulted in teachers' increased confidence and an improved quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' answers to national test questions have been very carefully analysed and the findings have been used to help teachers plan future work for their pupils. The quality of resources has been very much improved and these directly influence the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers are able to illustrate clearly teaching points using a variety of equipment as diverse as overhead projectors, a variety of grids and number squares and glove puppets. Every pupil has an individual whiteboard so that teachers can assess immediately pupils' responses and focus their teaching on what pupils know and do not know. The variety of approaches facilitated by the

very good resources means that pupils' attention is focused, lessons proceed at a good pace and the pupils are productively employed.

109. Opportunities to use information technology to support learning in mathematics are missed. Further, although some good examples of numeracy skills being used to support other areas of the curriculum were observed, measuring the change in size of ice cubes over time being one, this also remains an area for development.

SCIENCE

110. Standards of attainment in science are high. Teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 show all pupils attaining at Level 2 (the expected standard for seven-year-olds) a very high figure in comparison with the national average. Sixty per cent of seven-year-olds also reached Level 3 which is the expected standard for nine-year-olds. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 show similarly high standards with results well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching above the standard expected of eleven-year-olds was also high.

111. These results represent a trend rising in line with or better than the national picture and maintain the position reported at the time of the last inspection. In 1996, standards in science compared unfavourably with schools nationally but since 1997 the pupils' standards have risen faster than the national trend.

112. Work seen during the inspection was consistent with above-average results. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils distinguish between objects that can be pulled and pushed when creating a force. They understand the changes caused by pushing and pulling and demonstrate their knowledge with different objects such as pipe cleaners, plastic modelling material and tissue paper. They know that in a fair test only one variable is changed at a time and demonstrate this in an investigation involving toy vehicles on a ramp. Challenged by good teaching, pupils learn how electricity reaches the home. In groups, pupils work well together, describing the similarities and differences between electrical appliances, classifying them by their function as supplying heat, sound, light or movement and allocating them to the appropriate part of a house.

113. At the age of eleven, the majority of pupils know that the moon is the earth's only satellite and is kept in orbit by gravity. They know and understand that the earth moves round the sun and explain the change in the seasons in terms of the earth's attitude in relation to the sun. They conduct experiments successfully and investigate, for example, the different properties of heat insulation, predicting correctly which of fur, foil and newspaper is the best insulator. Year 6 pupils, led by good teaching and probing questions, devised an experiment to show that an elastic band stretches in proportion to the force acting on it. They knew that to ensure a fair test they must use the same elastic band for the whole experiment and recorded the results of their observation in a graph.

114. The quality of teaching is good in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The teachers have secure knowledge of their subject which is effectively directed at developing pupils' understanding and ideas. Good whole-class teaching sets high expectations and leads to challenging work for pupils of different attainment and ages. Lessons have good pace and through questioning teachers ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged. Pupils' learning and behaviour are well managed. Teachers make good use of resources, no time is wasted and pupils' learning and behaviour are well supported. This produces positive attitudes to the subject. Pupils are interested and stay on task throughout, and the majority

behave well and make good progress. The teachers in each age-band jointly plan lessons which ensures that there is parity between the different classes and equal opportunity for all pupils.

115. Pupils use their literacy skills to record experiments and their numeracy skills, in particular, to draw graphs. However, information and communication technology is not sufficiently used to support learning in science.

116. The subject is well led and the school is well placed to improve further. There is an agreed policy and scheme of work for science. The co-ordinator, together with the headteacher, is responsible for monitoring and evaluating pupils' attainment. Assessment takes place – once a term at Key Stage 2 and every half term at Key Stage 1 and the information used to plan the future curriculum. For example, the co-ordinator has produced an analysis and evaluation of the results of the national tests in 2000, noting the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. As a result, new group and individual targets are set. Good resources support pupils' achievement in science well.

ART AND DESIGN

117. Standards of pupils' work in art and design and their achievements at the ages of seven and eleven are in line with those expected of pupils the same age. Attitudes to art amongst pupils and staff are positive and individual pupils throughout the school produce work of good quality.

118. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Information and communication technology is now used to support learning in the subject, although this still remains to be further developed. For example, younger pupils studying the work of Georges Seurat produce pictures copying the pointillism technique. Art is also well used to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. This not only promotes the relevance of art as a subject but also ensures that a wide range of techniques is involved. In mathematics some older pupils produce very good pencil sketches of spheres, demonstrating good use of tone, light and shade. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have cross-stitched numbers which are joined together to make a number square. They also develop their stitching skills, using a minimum of three types of stitch, in producing fabric covers for topic work. Older pupils support their work in history by making a tapestry of Tudor times, paint portraits of Tudor monarchs and produce Second World War propaganda and information posters. Three-dimensional pictures of the planets illustrate work in science, and work in literacy throughout the school is illustrated.

119. Younger pupils make a thorough study of colour mixing and learn about complementary colours. They use this learning to help them as they try to produce pictures in the style of artists like Georges Seurat. They explore the use of different papers to create textured effects. Pupils use magazine pictures to produce collage pictures in the style of Picasso. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also study Picasso, copying his style. Individual examples of work are of good quality, for example a picture entitled *Storm* inspired by the work of Turner. Pupils use mixed media, and support their historical learning in producing illuminated letters, using water colour, crayon and pen. Older pupils work on fabric, producing tapestry pictures of Tudor scenes. While some efforts lack coherence, being merely a series of shapes stitched on to a hessian background, others show a tremendous sense of movement and attention to detail. Portraits of Tudor monarchs stimulated by the work of Holbein also show a variety of attainment amongst the artists, with the more successful demonstrating emergent individual styles.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good practice to be seen in Key Stage 1. In good lessons teachers prepare well to help consolidate learning and encourage pupils to adopt correct techniques. For example, in a lesson with younger pupils, paint palettes were arranged with adjacent pairs of complementary colours. Teachers use demonstration, often involving examples of good work by pupils, to show other pupils clearly what they have to do. They use the support staff well to help individual and small groups of pupils. This is often particularly helpful for pupils with special educational needs and allows them to make satisfactory progress. Teachers throughout the school take considerable care with the presentation and display of pupils' work. This has the effect of brightening the environment, raising the self-esteem of individual pupils and showing pupils that teachers think that art is an important part of the curriculum. Although there is no systematic approach to homework in art, there are examples of good practice, involving parents in helping children to plan and design pieces of work. Sometimes teachers' insistence on seeing pupils' work at various stages leads to lack of productivity and, occasionally, inappropriate behaviour. Teachers' expectations of pupils are not always high and they do not always challenge pupils to think deeply about and explore the possibilities of an exercise, accepting work which is neat but which has required little effort.

121. As a result of the teaching, pupils adopt attitudes to art which are satisfactory and often good and which have a beneficial effect on their learning. Older pupils work well on practical activities in quite cramped conditions, co-operating with each other and concentrating well on the task. A majority of pupils in a younger class chose to continue with their painting rather than go out to play when offered the choice.

122. The role of the subject leader is comparatively undeveloped. The subject leader has few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the subject directly, although she is able to monitor the quality of some of the pupils' work through her organisation of the displays of work throughout the school. Assessment arrangements for art are not fully established. The role of pupils' sketchbooks as a means of assessment and recording is not developed nor is the collection of individual or group portfolios of work which could be used for moderation purposes. The programme for art at the school is enriched by visits from local artists. Consumable resources for art are in good supply and of good quality but there is a shortage of good-quality prints and artefacts to stimulate learning and enliven the environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

123. Only one taught lesson was observed during the inspection and no overall judgement of the quality of teaching in the subject is possible. A scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work, however, enables a judgement on standards of attainment to be made. Standards in design and technology at Key Stages 1 and 2 meet national expectations and sometimes go beyond them. This is similar to the inspection findings of the last report. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory at all levels of ability. As a result, pupils are developing a sound understanding of the design process, and of how to plan and evaluate their work.

124. It is evident from examples of work seen at Key Stage 1 that the learning tasks undertaken are completed successfully. Pupils have disassembled a variety of wheeled vehicles to learn how they move. They have made drawings of their intentions, translating their ideas effectively into simple, two-dimensional plans. Beginning with boxes, they have added chassis and wheels, gaining a sound understanding of the importance of an axle. They have experimented with a range of methods for joining wheels to axles and have decorated their models appropriately using a variety of finishes such as paper and paint.

125. Pupils in the lower half of Key Stage 2 show good design consideration when making mice houses. They have successfully overcome a range of challenging design intentions such as strength, camouflage, water resistance, and comfort factors of warmth and bedding for the mouse! Choosing a range of materials for the structures, pupils have measured, cut and joined the sections accurately, using a range of tools and fixings. It is clear that pupils have refined and developed their technological skills, producing good quality finished work that has successfully met the design specification. Older pupils have designed buggies incorporating electric motors and switches, and capable of travel up an incline. They have experimented with a range of surface textures to develop their understanding of friction and have evaluated their work, highlighting changes they would make. As part of their topic on *The Tudors*, pupils have investigated the structure and make up of designer fans. They have examined a variety of flexible and stiff materials, successfully evaluating their strength and suitability. The finished fans demonstrate pupils' developing ability to measure accurately and to overcome problems such as smoothness of section joins and the identical size and shape of each component part.

126. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching or of the pupils' response to the subject. However, teachers' plans and pupils' work on display show that teachers are providing relevant activities which effectively enable pupils to learn the key features of the subject. For instance, they gain insight into the process by disassembling a finished product, learn how to plan and make with developing accuracy, or how to evaluate candidly the finished work. Teachers sometimes provide real-life introductory activities that realistically emphasise design solutions for young children. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class, the teacher posed the problem of transporting a heavy box of books across the playground. Pupils used rollers, then wheels, and were subsequently challenged with the question of how to attach the wheels to the cart. This good provision would stimulate pupils and give effective insight about the task and the problems associated with it. Another good feature of the teaching and learning is the way teachers plan activities that enable pupils to apply skills learnt in other subjects. For example, they used mathematical skills to measure and chart how quickly an ice cube melts in work on insulators and employed food technology skills in a literacy lesson where pupils practised writing lists for the order of events in making a jam sandwich.

127. Subject co-ordination is developing effectively. The subject leader is new to the subject, but suitable training needs have been identified, and a clear development plan for the subject has been written. This has given the co-ordinator a clear vision of her developing role and so the school is satisfactorily placed to improve. The quality and quantity of resources for design technology, now very good, are systematically evaluated. This gives good support to teachers, ensuring that they have the necessary materials to teach the subject effectively. Assessment procedures do not give sufficient information to assist in curriculum planning and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom has not been evaluated. There is a comprehensive scheme of work which enables pupils to build on their previous learning and to learn new skills in a consistent way, which represents an improvement since the last inspection report.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

128. Because most classes place their geography topics in the second half of the school year, insufficient evidence was available during the inspection to allow a secure judgement to be made of standards of pupils' attainment in geography at the ages of seven and eleven.

129. From their books it can be seen that in Key Stage 2 pupils draw plans of their classroom and its immediate vicinity and study the distribution of natural resources – coal, oil, diamonds, copper, wood, tin, gold and iron ore - indicating in which countries around the world these can be found. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have produced work on the Caribbean and understand the water cycle and its effects on rainforests. They know that if many rainforests are cut down, the natural balance is upset and there can be a change in world climate. They name some of the Caribbean islands. When studying local geography, they locate where they live in Richmond. They identify on a map the location of different types of farming in Britain. In the one lesson observed, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were able to identify changes that affect the lives of inhabitants of the West Indies and understood that people can damage their environment in a variety of ways.

130. By the age of seven, pupils' standards of attainment in history are in line with national expectations and their achievement is satisfactory. By the time pupils reach the age of eleven, their achievement is good and standards are above national expectations. Pupils' history skills and understanding develop as they move through the school. This is broadly in line with the position noted in the last inspection report.

131. Pupils in Key Stage 1, having undertaken research by asking their grandparents about their school-days know that some things were different in the past. After studying toys of different periods, they judge their parents' and grandparents' toys to be old fashioned. They have satisfactory recall of some of the events of the Great Fire of London and know, for example, that St Paul's Cathedral was re-built after the fire.

132. Pupils in Key Stage 2, studying the Tudors, have a good knowledge of the kings and queens of the period, and talk about the voyages of Drake. They understand the religious turmoil during the Tudor period, ending in the Elizabethan settlement. They know about the dissolution of the monasteries and the establishment of the Church of England and illustrate their knowledge by reference to local historical sites. They have an appreciation of the heritage of their own area, for example, talking cogently about Richmond Castle in terms of its origins and location. In talking about Britain since 1930, pupils talk knowledgeably about the causes of the Second World War, the Blitz and evacuation, and know that food was rationed.

133. Literacy and communication skills are reinforced well by the study of history, partly through opportunities of extended writing and partly through the opportunities for discussion which extend the pupils' vocabulary well.

134. No judgement is possible on the quality of teaching or pupils' attitudes in either subject because insufficient teaching was seen.

135. The geography co-ordinator is very new to the position but has good plans to revise the subject documentation in the forthcoming year. She monitors the planning which is undertaken jointly by staff. Resources in school are sufficient and good use is made of the local environment to help develop the pupils' geographical awareness. Teachers organise educational visits to limestone caves, gorges and the Yorkshire Dales as well as to the River Swale and Richmond.

136. The history co-ordinator plays a positive role. There is an up-to-date agreed policy and scheme of work based on the national model. Although some assessment is undertaken by individual teachers, assessment more generally is an area for improvement. Resources are good at Key Stage 2 but remain to be developed at Key Stage 1. Nevertheless, the locality is used well for local history study, through visits made to museums in York, the Captain Cook Museum, Hadrian's Wall, the Egyptian Museum in Durham, and Fountains Abbey as well as to Richmond town and Castle.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. The standards of learning in information and communication technology at the school are above those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and there is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls.

138. This is an improvement since the previous inspection which can be traced to the very good management of the subject, which in turn has been influential in bringing about considerable changes in provision for information and communication technology at the school. The subject is led by two co-ordinators teaching in different stages at the school but working together as a team. This is an effective approach, not only because the co-ordinators provide support for each other and are able to share the workload, but because it also safeguards continuity, should one co-ordinator leave the school.

139. The co-ordinators have acted on all the issues raised in the last report. They have introduced a full programme of training which has led to improved confidence and expertise amongst the staff, which in turn has led to improved teaching and therefore more effective learning. The policy has been reviewed and a scheme of work introduced which incorporates the wishes of the staff and a nationally recognised scheme of work. This ensures the systematic development of learning and the full coverage of the curriculum. The considerable improvement in resources has had a major impact on learning. The new computer suite stocked with personal computers allows whole-class groups to be taught together. The multi-media projector enables teachers to show pupils, as a group, exactly how an operation should be performed. Personal computers in the classrooms allow pupils to practise and develop skills they have learnt in the whole-class activities. A computer has been specifically designated to assist the learning of pupils with special educational needs but, because of various logistical problems, this has yet to have any impact on learning.

140. Older pupils are becoming confident with the use of spreadsheets, being able to enter data and formulae and interrogate the data. They have good word-processing skills and are able to produce journalistic style material, in columns, displaying various fonts, size of print and colour. They can insert illustrations and headlines. They use CD-ROM to research material on their study of the Tudors. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 draft work using the computer, can spell-check their work, use the 'find and replace' facility and introduce page breaks. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can word process, changing size of print and font. They save and retrieve their work. They use terms like *space bar*, *cursor* and *monitor* confidently and accurately.

141. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. The good lessons are well planned with clear objectives allowing teachers to focus on exactly what they want the children to learn. Teachers use the very good resources well to show whole classes of pupils exactly what they want them to do, helping to maintain the pace of lessons and making sure pupils are productive. They use their good subject knowledge to introduce pupils to the correct vocabulary and importantly are able to deal with situations when pupils make mistakes or equipment fails. They use questioning well to consolidate and extend learning, challenging pupils with questions like, "Does the formula change if you change the contents of a cell?" They manage pupils well, encouraging them to work co-operatively, helping each other in a considerate manner, building learning and confidence. They use classroom support staff well to help with the learning of individual pupils. Some classroom support is provided by a very well qualified parent and this has a positive impact on the learning of individuals of both high and low ability. Teachers of younger pupils adopt a most encouraging and supportive manner, pretending great delight as they discover each new technique with the pupils. This promotes the excitement and enthusiasm of their pupils.

142. As a result of the good teaching, pupils develop attitudes to information and communication technology which are generally very good. This contributes to their good achievement. Younger pupils show a genuine sense of awe as they dramatically change the size of print. They are quite happy to give up their afternoon break to have extra time in the computer suite. Older pupils behave well in the computer suite in warm and cramped conditions. They give up lunch times, practising and developing their desktop publishing skills to produce a good quality magazine called Fabmag several times a year. They sell copies of the magazine to raise money for a variety of charities.

143. The co-ordinators are actively involved in developing the subject. The school has e-mail but Internet and e-mail facilities are not yet available to the pupils, although its installation is imminent and plans are ready for each pupil to have his or her own address: use of the Internet for research is recognised as an area for development. Information and communication technology appropriately supports other areas of the curriculum. Older pupils use spreadsheets to calculate their ages on other planets and use their word processing skills to turn their fictional writing into a journalistic style. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 present their data-handling exercise on a recycling project undertaken as part of a geography project. Year 1 and 2 pupils create pictures in the pointillism style of Seurat. Nevertheless the use of information and communication technology to support learning across the full range of the curriculum remains to be developed. Video conferencing arrangements linked to the local secondary school allowing pupils to speak to schools worldwide are planned for the near future. Such plans add to the sense of excitement and progress that surrounds the subject at the school.

MUSIC

144. Standards of attainment are on course to accord with those expected of pupils by the ages of seven and eleven and pupils are achieving satisfactorily, thus maintaining the position reported at the time of the last inspection.

145. Pupils' singing is good. In assemblies and hymn practice they sing tunefully, with a good tone and with an accurate rhythm. With help from the teachers, they securely hold two parts.

146. Pupils in Key Stage 1 listen carefully to music and reproduce the rhythm they hear with reasonable accuracy. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoyed the strong rhythm of the song played to them and delighted in its surprise ending. In Key Stage 2, pupils listen carefully to different styles of music. They progress well in their ability to focus on the relationship between music and the image it creates for them. They handle instruments with skill, working in groups, recording their own compositions after rehearsing them carefully.

147. The quality of pupils' musical experience is enhanced by listening to well-chosen music before and after assembly. A large number of pupils belong to a recorder group; as many as fifty pupils in five groups practise the recorder on a Thursday morning. At its weekly practice an enthusiastic choir of over twenty pupils worked hard to learn new songs and improve their performance in material previously learned.

148. The quality of teaching in music depends on the confidence of the teacher with the subject but it is good overall and helps pupils extend their appreciation of the subject. In Key Stage 1 it is satisfactory. Suitably structured activities maintain pupils' interest. Instructions are clear and helpful to the pupils who know what they have to do. As a result, they enjoy the music presented to them and respond enthusiastically to it.

149. In Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress in listening to music and responding appropriately to it. Teachers manage the behaviour of pupils well so that activities progress briskly and pupils' attention is retained. Effective questioning challenges pupils to think carefully about what they hear and make suitable comparisons. For example, in a lesson on music and pictures pupils maintained their interest well, spontaneously discussed their ideas with their neighbours and made sensible contributions to a class discussion. This lesson also made good use of pupils' previous experience in English when pupils were asked to make notes on the music as they listened to it.

150. Subject leadership is comparatively undeveloped. There is, for example, no framework for teachers' planning, other than a commercial scheme, which relates a suitable programme of topics and skills development to the specific needs of the children in the school. Monitoring and evaluating what pupils are learning, together with how they are being taught, and assessing and recording pupils' achievement, are not yet fully in place. However, the newly-appointed co-ordinator has a firm grasp of the subject and a clear view of what is needed to raise the profile of music in the school and so the subject is very well placed to make rapid improvement.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

151. Pupils' attainment in physical education was judged to be above expectations at the last inspection. Evidence from those aspects observed during this inspection indicates that standards are in line with those expected nationally, with some high achieving pupils attaining above. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily at both key stages.

152. During Key Stage 1 pupils gain an understanding of what happens to their bodies during vigorous exercise. They show developing control over their actions. For instance, when jumping from a piece of apparatus, pupils land on their toes, bend knees appropriately and complete the jump with a good finish position. Pupils demonstrate appropriate skill and sound hand-eye co-ordination as they steer, send and receive a ball. They are learning a range of technical words with which to describe their work, for example, *retrieve*, and *dribble*, and know how to carry and handle apparatus safely. Pupils in the early years of Key Stage 2 effectively demonstrate how to join and repeat a sequence of movements in response to music. They evaluate the work of others and use this successfully to adapt their own performance. Older pupils can explain the effects of exercise on the heart. They have satisfactory skills of throwing and catching at different heights and at different speeds, and are developing a sound understanding of the skills necessary to play invasion games. For instance, they know how to pass a rugby ball correctly and to perform the *set up* and *high pass* in a game of volley ball. High-attaining pupils demonstrate good hand-eye co-ordination and move appropriately in anticipation of the ball.

153. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Supported by this, pupils enjoy physical education lessons and take part enthusiastically. They work with a sense of purpose. Pupils have good ideas and many are creative in their dance work. They take their work seriously and follow instructions well. Pupils enjoy the element of competition experienced in games lessons. They cooperate well and play fairly.

154. Where teaching is good, it is because behaviour management is very effective. As a result pupils work hard, listen carefully and persevere well. Good work is used as a model for class demonstration enabling pupils to revise their own work successfully. The teacher uses

technical terms when teaching and, as a result of this, pupils gain a good understanding of the subject. Lessons are well planned and they build upon the pupils' skill base, gradually developing the techniques through the lesson. For instance, in a rugby lesson, pupils learned to spin the ball to achieve a better line of flight, and practised *pick up* and *throw*. Pupils remember previous learning and develop and adapt their work during the lesson. However, where teaching is less successful, the pupils spend too much time observing the work of others, or waiting for their turn on a piece of apparatus. The pace of the lesson is slow and pupils lose the aerobic state they achieved during the *warm-up*. Pupils change in to appropriate clothing for physical education lessons. However, there is no dress code for teachers, and some wear inappropriate footwear for lessons.

155. There is a comprehensive scheme of work for most aspects of physical education and this provides good support for teachers' planning. In response to the new National Curriculum, *Curriculum 2000*, the school is currently devising a plan to incorporate athletics into the physical education curriculum. A small number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 have music lessons at the time when they should be attending their games lesson. This happens at the same time each week and so these pupils do not receive their full entitlement of physical education. The very good range of extra-curricular sport available for Key Stage 2 pupils makes a significant contribution to the subject. There is an extensive range of sports teams, which include netball, basketball, football and cricket. Committed teachers, with good subject knowledge, giving freely of their time, lead these. As a result, pupils participate in local fixtures with much success. The parents' contribution to this aspect of pupils' development is good: they provide transport for pupils and attend the matches to support them.

156. The leadership of the subject is under-developed. There is no formal procedure to assess pupils' work, or to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. A new co-ordinator with good subject knowledge and impressive enthusiasm has just been appointed. Her training needs have been effectively identified and the school is well placed to make progress in the subject. The hall is relatively small bearing in mind the size and number of pupils involved in some lessons, and the storage of dining furniture and other equipment reduces this space further. Teachers effectively manage the situation but do so by reducing the number of pupils involved in activities at any one time. The quality and quantity of resources is suitable overall, although the limited range of gymnastics equipment restricts the scope of some apparatus work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. Standards of attainment in religious education are in line with those expected of eleven-year-old pupils and their achievement is satisfactory. Because of the timing of the inspection, it was not possible to see any classes of seven-year-old pupils in action but a scrutiny of their work and discussions with pupils suggest that their achievement also is in line with the standards expected.

158. There have been relatively few changes in the position of religious education since the previous inspection. The weakness noted has however been rectified. Resources to support religious education, particularly those to support a study of other faiths, have been much improved and are now good. These are having a positive effect on learning but their impact will not be fully felt until the current round of staff training in the teaching of other faiths is completed. A new scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus but adapted to the two-year cycle necessary because of the class arrangements at the school, has been adopted since the last inspection.

159. Younger pupils think about the idea of belonging: to a family, a community and a church. They speak enthusiastically about a recent visit to the local church and can remember good detail, not just of physical features like the font and stained glass windows but one pupil said he remembered 'the quiet'. They speak accurately about Christian festivals.

160. Older pupils produce carefully presented work on a range of topics: responses to Jesus, including the meaning and reasons for his parables, the story of Zaccheus and celebratory meals, including the Passover, when they consider the symbolism of ingredients in the meal.

161. The written work is largely presented in cartoon form and there are few examples of extended writing. There is evidence of good work in Years 3 and 4, although the approach is not completely consistent across the classes. An example is the story of Noah. This is told in cartoon style but pupils consider and are challenged by some aspects of the story. Was Noah really 600 years old? Teachers' response to this work is not entirely consistent but good marking involves thoughtful comments, challenging pupils to extend their thinking and learning. Pupils in these classes show good knowledge of the Bible. Most pupils know how many books there are in the Bible, know what a gospel is and can readily distinguish between the New and Old Testaments. They are also able to distinguish between two versions of the same story, The Good Samaritan, noticing reasons for the difference.

162. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the Year 3 and 4 classes it is often good. In good lessons, teachers plan carefully with clear learning objectives so that they can focus on what they want their pupils to learn. They have good subject knowledge and are confident with Christian teaching, enabling them to be clear and positive in what they teach, engaging pupils' interest and encouraging them to think. They challenge pupils with questions, 'Why is Jesus telling this story?' 'What does the term neighbour mean in this story?' They further challenge pupils by using a variety of approaches, including drama, to encourage them to sustain concentration and to think about the subject from a different perspective.

163. Teachers throughout the school make good use of resources to bring the lessons alive. One example was the use of Seder food to give meaning to a lesson on Passover. Another was a display of christening gowns used to expand ideas for younger pupils about the functions of a church.

164. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are generally positive as a result and individual pupils often think deeply about the subject matter asking searching questions and making observations. 'Why didn't the Pharaoh just kill Moses?' asked an older pupil. 'You can't say God created houses' claimed another. Challenging behaviour from some of the older pupils does inhibit learning however. Some potentially disruptive pupils dominate the class conversations and teachers have to spend time correcting the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils. Classroom support staff are not always efficiently used in this role. The good attitudes of the majority usually prevail however and they are not unduly influenced by the minority. The behaviour of pupils in Years 3 and 4 is good and on one occasion, so pleased were they with an impromptu dramatic performance by some of their fellows, that they burst into spontaneous applause.

165. The co-ordinator has been able to monitor teachers' planning to ensure a full coverage of the subject and has been able to do some limited monitoring of teaching. A useful audit of staff confidence in the subject has highlighted the need for training in the teaching of other faiths. This process has been started. Work in each two-year band of classes is moderated each term to try to ensure equality of access of pupils to the curriculum. There are however no formal arrangements for assessment in the subject and

this is an area for development. Information and communication technology has had little impact on religious education at the school and this also is an area for development. Visits to local churches are very successful and enrich the provision for religious education but this does not extend to visits to places of worship of other faiths.