

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BRIMPTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brimpton, Reading

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109954

Headteacher: Mrs A Wheeler

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough  
8339

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 224991

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brimpton Lane Brimpton Reading Berkshire
Postcode:	RG7 4TL
Telephone number:	01189 712311
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Newman
Date of previous inspection:	April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Hugh Protherough, 8339	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information technology Physical education Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Christine Murray-Watson, 9510	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Beryl Rimmer, 20655	Team inspector	Special educational needs Under fives English Geography History Art Design and technology Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway,  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a very small primary school with 34 pupils on roll comprising 20 boys and 14 girls. Twelve pupils live in the village, the rest come from further afield. Almost all of the pupils are of white ethnicity. The background of the pupils is generally favourable. Only 8 per cent of the children are eligible for free school meals and less than 6 per cent are on the register for special educational needs, including one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. These figures are well below the national averages.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Brimpton School is a small, friendly, welcoming community where the pupils work hard and do their best. The quality of their work is improving across the curriculum because they are well taught. Consequently, standards are rising. The headteacher is increasingly effective in her leadership of the school and with the strong support of her staff and the governing body the school is moving forward with renewed vigour. Despite the high cost of educating pupils, the accelerating rate of improvement means that the school offers satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in science and art are above average at the end of both key stages.
- The headteacher and governing body have built a staff team that is working together effectively to raise standards and improve the quality of education.
- The teachers know the children very well. They plan interesting lessons that offer the pupils plenty of opportunities to get involved, think deeply and work practically.
- Relationships are harmonious and the pupils' behaviour is good.
- The governing body has a good oversight of the work of the school because it is actively involved from day to day and provides strong support for the teachers and pupils.
- The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural education is good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality and standard of the pupils' written work.
- The scope and depth of the school's plan for future improvement.
- The standard of pupils' work in information and communications technology.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

*The last inspection report judged that the school had serious weaknesses in many aspects of its work. This is no longer the case.*

The school now provides a much better quality of education. The teaching is far more consistent because there is a more coherent structure to the school's curriculum. Many lessons are lively and interesting and as a result the pupils' behaviour is good and they work hard. The teachers know their pupils very well and use this knowledge to modify activities in lessons to cater for the wide range of age and ability in each class. As a result, standards are rising, especially in science, mathematics, speaking and listening and reading. A significant number of pupils still has difficulty in writing neatly and accurately, but new arrangements ensure a more systematic approach that is building the pupils' skills in this area. There have also been good improvements to the school's provision for information and communications technology but the pupils' work still lags behind the expected levels. New staff

appointments to support the Foundation Curriculum [for pupils under the age of five], special educational needs and music have successfully extended the range of expertise within the school. The prudent management of the delegated budget has led to good improvement in resources and the creation of an attractive, secure outside area for the pupils under the age of five.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests. It is left blank because fewer than 10 pupils took the tests and the data generated would be unreliable.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	well above average A
mathematics	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	above average B
science	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The statistical analysis of the school's results in the national tests is unreliable because the number of pupils in each year group is very few and seldom more than eight. Nevertheless, when looking at the period 1996-99 it is clear that the standards have been very low. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have, on average, left the school almost two terms behind where they should be at the age of eleven in English, and a year behind in mathematics and science. However, over the past two years there has been some significant improvement because there has been less change amongst the teachers and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced. Thus in 2000 every Year 2 pupil entered for the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics reached the levels expected of seven-year-olds. The picture at the end of Key Stage 2 was more mixed. Although every pupil reached the expected level in science and the majority achieved this in mathematics, few managed this in English. This is because the pupils' writing skills had not developed fast enough. Nevertheless, the analysis of the pupils' work shows that they had worked extremely hard over the year and made good progress. Their achievements were appropriate, considering the quality of their work at the start of the year.

The inspection findings confirm that the improvement in standards continues. It is easy to see this because the headteacher has started to maintain a useful record of the results of tests and assessments that explains what each child has achieved. These data inform the useful and realistic targets set for each pupil that are stuck in the back of their exercise books. Consequently, the vast majority of the current Year 2 is on course to reach the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. A few pupils show signs of working at higher levels, for instance in their work on number. There are very few pupils in the current Year 6, but each is working at a level appropriate to their prior attainment. Throughout the school, the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in science and art are generally above average. However, the standard of their work in information and communications technology continues to be lower than expected.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The children are generally polite, helpful and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	The children thrive in the family atmosphere created by their positive relationships with the adults. The older pupils take good care of the younger ones.
Attendance	Broadly average.

## 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 much better than before. Forty four per cent of the lessons seen during the course of this inspection were very good, 22 per cent were good and 28 per cent were satisfactory. Six per cent [one lesson] was unsatisfactory.

The major reason why the teaching has improved is that the teachers are making effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the published guidance that supports the other subjects of the National Curriculum. They plan thoroughly and are clear about what they expect the children to learn. They often share these objectives with the class and as a result, most lessons set a brisk pace for learning. The teachers are shrewd in their questioning and the information that they gather about what the children understand is often reflected in the way they modify their planning for the next lesson. The lessons are often stimulating because the teachers encourage a good range of practical activities, especially in science and design technology. This motivates the pupils and encourages them to think more deeply about their work.

The appointment of an additional teacher to support the work in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 is paying off because it enables the teachers to organise the groups with narrower range of age and ability. Similarly, the weekly visit of a specialist teacher is improving the pupils' work in music. The ancillary staff, such as the nursery nurse and the learning support assistant, ensure that all pupils including those under the age of five and the few children with special educational needs, receive full access to the school's curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The statutory curriculum is more firmly established and is being supported by a good range of educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The needs of these pupils are clearly identified, and their progress regularly reviewed. They receive effective support that helps them to make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for moral and social development has had a significant impact in raising standards of behaviour and improving pupils' attitudes to work.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has secure systems for ensuring the health, safety and well being of its pupils.

The school's curriculum is far stronger than at the time of the last inspection. The teachers are making effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the guidance published for the other subjects of the National Curriculum. The school works closely with the parents and receives their strong support. Most parents hear their children read and help with homework. Many meet with the teachers informally at the end of the school day to find out how their children are getting on. However, the annual written reports on the pupils' progress lack sufficient detail about what each child knows, understands and can do in relation to each subject of the National Curriculum.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher continues to move the school forward. She receives strong support from a committed staff team who are increasingly effective in developing the curriculum, checking standards and managing resources.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a good oversight of the work of the school because each has a precise role and specific responsibilities. They visit classes regularly and get to know what's going on. With the exception of some omissions from their annual report to parents, the governors fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school can demonstrate good progress since the last inspection and knows what it needs to achieve in the next few months.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes full and effective use of its delegated budget and has improved considerably the level of educational resources provided.

The school currently sustains a good level of teaching and ancillary staff. The accommodation is compact, but sufficient for the number of children attending the school. The levels of educational resources are satisfactory. There are more computers than before and the school library contains a good range of fiction and reference materials.

The school's last Action Plan has run its course. Although the leadership has identified four targets areas for improvement over the course of the current school year, the headteacher, governing body and staff now need to take stock and create a new school development plan that can guide their work over the next two to three years. The governing body is prudent. It has repaid a substantial loan, restored the school's budget to the black and improved the levels of staffing and resources. Although there are simple procedures for checking the price of new purchases, the systems for ensuring best value in all financial decisions remain at an embryonic stage.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has made substantial improvement in the past couple of years.</li> <li>• There have been far fewer changes to the staff so that children and parents have got to know the teachers better.</li> <li>• As a result, there is much greater consistency in the way the children are treated. The children know what is expected and are encouraged to work hard and to do their best.</li> <li>• The teaching is good because the lessons are interesting. The good range of educational visits further supports the children's learning.</li> <li>• The headteacher provides effective leadership. She and her staff make themselves accessible to parents before and after school each day. It is easy for parents to find out how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Small class sizes and individual attention for their children</li> </ul>	<p>There were no significant issues raised by the parents at the pre inspection meeting and the questionnaire responses reveal a virtually unanimous satisfaction with the work of the school.</p>

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of the parents.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and achievements

1. The statistical analysis of the school's results in the national tests is unreliable because the number of pupils in each year group is very few and seldom more than eight. Nevertheless, when looking at the period 1996-99 it is clear that the standards have been very low. On average at the age of eleven, pupils have, left the school almost two terms behind where they should have been in English, and a year behind in mathematics and science. However, over the past two years there has been some significant improvement because there has been less change amongst the teachers and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced. For instance, in 2000 every Year 2 pupil entered for the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics reached the levels expected of seven-year-olds. The picture at the end of Key Stage 2 was more mixed. Although every pupil reached the expected level in science and the majority achieved this in mathematics, few managed this in English. This is because the pupils' writing skills had not developed fast enough. Nevertheless, the analysis of the pupils' work showed that they had worked extremely hard over the year and made good progress. Their achievements were appropriate, considering the quality of their work at the start of the year.
2. The inspection findings confirm that the improvement in standards continues. It is easy to see this because the headteacher has started to maintain a useful record of the results of tests and assessments that explains what each child has achieved. These data inform the useful and realistic targets set for each pupil that are kept in the back of their exercise books. As a result, the vast majority of the current Year 2 is on course to reach the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. A few show signs of working at higher levels, for instance in their work on number. There are very few pupils in the current Year 6, but each is working at a level appropriate to their prior attainment.
3. The strength of the pupils' work in English lies in the effective way that the teachers are developing the pupils' skills of speaking, listening and reading. Teachers are careful to encourage discussion during lessons and provide good role models through their careful questioning and accurate use of technical language. Thus by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are speaking clearly and using an increasingly wide vocabulary. The teaching in Key Stage 2 builds on this good start, for instance in the recent discussions about what it must have been like to go to school during the reign of Queen Victoria when pupils listened hard to each others' point of view. Most pupils enjoy reading and make steady gains in acquiring this important skill. In Key Stage 1 in particular the teaching of the sounds of letters is helping the pupils to tackle unfamiliar words. By the age of eleven most pupils are reading a good range of texts and literature with accuracy, but few read with fluency or lively expression.
4. The weakness in the pupils' work in English lies in their writing. Although standards are rising, especially in Key Stage 1, few exceed the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2. **This is a key issue for action.** A significant proportion of the pupils in the Key Stage 2 class still has difficulty in holding a pencil properly. This is sometimes exacerbated by the pupils' choice of writing implements that are difficult to control because they are too short or blunt. Since the introduction of the national literacy strategy there has been major improvement to the range of writing opportunities offered to the pupils and this has increased

both the volume of the pupils' work and improved their motivation. Throughout the inspection the pupils' demonstrated positive approaches to each new writing task. However, in order to improve still further the quality of their work they require more opportunities to polish their first attempts by editing and re-drafting.

5. The pupils' work in mathematics has benefited clearly from the teachers' effective response to the introduction of the national numeracy strategy. As a result, the pupils' grasp of number is rapidly established within Key Stage 1 and by the age of seven they have a secure grasp of number facts to ten and the order of numbers to a hundred. They are also beginning to appreciate the place value of digits in these larger numbers. Standards are above average. By the end of Key Stage 2, many of the pupils are confident in their knowledge of numbers to two decimal places. Their written work shows that they have a good ability to look at a range of data and extract relevant information. A further strength is the way that most pupils understand the practical application of mathematics in their day to day lives when measuring, estimating and converting different units of measurement.
6. Throughout the school, the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in science and art are generally above average. Their work in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education meets the expected levels. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with those described in locally agreed syllabus. However, the standard of their work in information and communications technology continues to be lower than expected because there is insufficient regular and systematic use of the school's computers in all subject of the National Curriculum. **This is a key issue for action.**

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7. The pupils are prompt to arrive at the start of the school day and settle quickly to their work. Both in lessons and in extra curricular activities, such as the football club, they show considerable enthusiasm and rapidly become involved in what they are doing. Much of this stems from the good quality of the teaching they generally receive. In particular, they respond well to the clear and well -focussed instructions they are given at the start of many lessons. With a precise goal and a good idea how to proceed, the pupils remain on task and show satisfaction with what they are achieving.
8. Standards of behaviour, both in class and around the school, are good. There is a clear expectation from all the staff that the pupils are to be courteous, prompt to obey instructions and careful with their books and equipment. The pupils comply well with what is expected of them and this good behaviour has a positive effect on the standards being achieved. Relationships between the pupils, and with adults, are similarly good. The small number of pupils and the wide age range in each class gives the school community a "family feel." Several instances were observed of older pupils showing practical care for younger ones. On the playground, the different ages mix well and co-operate in sharing the play equipment provided. The pupils are polite to the supervisory staff to whom they confidently refer to resolve any minor disputes.
9. Pupils of all ages undertake routine jobs within class and around the school and fulfil their responsibilities sensibly. During lessons, they are able to find the books and equipment they need without undue fuss and tidy up at the end of lessons as a matter of course. All the parents who returned the questionnaires are in agreement that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals.

10. The levels of attendance are in line with those found in primary schools nationally and the level of unauthorised absence is low.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. At the time of last inspection, all the teachers were new to the school and few were there as permanent additions to the staff. Previous regimes had paid scant regard to the introduction of the National Curriculum and as a result there was very little evidence of any guidance devised by the school to inform the teachers when deciding what to include in their lessons. The report indicated that the new teachers were increasingly effective in getting to grips with a legacy of poor behaviour. In some instances they had rapidly assessed the pupils so that there was a very good match of task to their abilities. However, the overall picture was very mixed and reflected a small, but significant, proportion of unsatisfactory lessons.
12. Since that time the acting headteacher has taken up her post on a permanent basis and the turbulence in staffing has subsided. There has been a sharp focus on establishing consistent approaches to teaching and learning. This is reflected in the positive approaches to work displayed by the children and the unanimous agreement amongst the parents that teaching at the school is good.
13. The inspection findings confirm that the quality of teaching is much better than before. Forty four per cent of the lessons seen during the course of this inspection were very good, 22 per cent were good and 28 per cent satisfactory. Only one lesson (6 per cent) was unsatisfactory.
14. The teaching has improved because the teachers are making effective use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the published guidance that supports the other subjects of the National Curriculum. The teachers plan thoroughly and are clear about what they expect the children to learn and often share these objectives with the class. Consequently, most lessons set a brisk pace for learning. For instance, at each stage of a mathematics lesson with Years 4-6, the teacher got the pupils to read aloud the objectives she had written onto caption cards. What followed was closely related to the stated aims so that by the end of the lesson the pupils were for the most part secure in their knowledge of how to identify acute and obtuse angles. The pupils exceeded the teacher's second objective because she explained the use of a protractor with great clarity and inspired the pupils' enthusiasm for this new skill. As a result, most of the class managed to measure a series of angles to the nearest degree, rather than the nearest five degrees as suggested by the lesson plan.
15. Standards of literacy are improving because the teachers have accurately identified the need to develop all aspects of the pupils' language, including their skills of speaking and listening. In many lessons, the teachers effectively extend the pupils' vocabulary by using correct technical terms. For instance, in the Key Stage 1 class [including one pupil under the age of five] the pupils love to hear and master the language of science because the teacher is not afraid to use words like "constellation." As a result, they can explain to a visitor that stars are "suns that are a long, long way away," and that a sun "is a burning ball of gases." These pupils were observed revelling in the language of astronomy and took great delight in finding out about constellations such as "The Plough." Imaginative and entertaining teaching enlivens their learning. For instance, consideration of the patterns of different constellations is supported by role-play in the class "space rocket with a view through the window of a black sky across which sparkles a series of stars [carefully arranged Christmas tree lights]. The children make good use of this resource in acting out their own adventures and missions into space. The teacher prepares her own visual aids, such as pictures of the different constellations. As homework, she suggested popping outside with mummy or daddy in order

to view the night sky, and the next day was rewarded for this sensible suggestion when several children returned with books, sketches and “notes” about the stars.

16. The teachers are shrewd in their questioning and skilful in checking what the pupils have understood. In a Key Stage 2 science lesson on evaporation, for example, the teacher was getting the children to explain key learning points from the previous lesson to two pupils who had been absent. They tried to explain why the volume of water in a kettle decreased after five minutes boiling until one girl piped up, “The molecules [of water] started to wriggle and went into the atmosphere.” This developed into a useful discussion about water, water vapour and led to sensible predictions about what might have happened to the water samples left around the school over the past week. The pupils learn rapidly because the teacher is secure in her own subject knowledge, and knows how to get the pupils’ to explain what they understand.
17. The information that the teachers gather during every lesson and in their marking of the pupils’ work is often reflected in the way they modify their planning for subsequent lessons. Similarly, this very good knowledge of each pupil is used to provide targets for improvement that are pasted into the front of each child’s exercise books. These targets are specific to individual needs and the children often refer to them. The pupils know that the teachers want them to work hard and to succeed. They find many of their lessons interesting and respond positively to the consistent approaches adopted by their teachers in managing behaviour and recognising and rewarding hard work and achievement. As a result, relationships are harmonious. The teachers have been successful in developing a culture in which the pupils are increasingly prepared to “have a go.” There appears to be no fear of failure, and an increasing appreciation that we can learn from our mistakes.
18. The lessons are often stimulating because the teachers encourage a good range of practical activities, especially in science and design technology. This motivates the pupils and encourages them to think more deeply about their work. For instance in Key Stage 1 design and technology, the teacher made effective links with work in science when asking that the pupils to design and construct a model torch. They designed carefully and showed good knowledge about the materials they incorporated into their plans because many recognised that foil might be important, as it will reflect light. When constructing their models, the pupils benefited from the good range of materials and equipment provided by the teacher. They worked carefully at all times and tested sensibly to decide which types of glue had the best adhesion for joining foil, fabric and card.
19. The appointment of an additional teacher to support literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 2 is paying off because it enables the teachers to organise the groups on a narrower range of age and ability. Similarly, the weekly visit of a specialist teacher is improving the pupils’ work in music. The ancillary staff, such as the nursery nurse and the learning support assistant, work effectively to ensure that all pupils (including those under the age of five and the few children with special educational needs) receive full access to the school’s curriculum.

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

20. At the time of the last inspection, the school’s curriculum was wholly unsatisfactory because many aspects of the National Curriculum were not being taught. Since then the teachers have brought about good improvements and there is now a far more systematic approach to ensuring that the children’s learning is developed in a coherent fashion in each subject of the National Curriculum. They have responded positively to the national guidance that supports

curriculum planning and in particular to the initiatives for planning the teaching of literacy and numeracy. For example, the analysis of the pupils' past work reveals that there is now thorough coverage of the many different styles of writing suggested for the literacy hour. Equally, as a result of the regular teaching of grammar, the pupils are acquiring a better grounding in their knowledge of the structure of language.

21. There are many difficulties inherent in planning the curriculum for the wide range of age and ability within a two-class school. However, the school's well considered two year rolling programme of work is providing a helpful framework from which the teachers can develop more detailed plans for each half-term, Their subsequent lesson planning reflects a good grasp of the skills and knowledge that the pupils need to master in each subject. The teachers successfully modify the content and tasks within lessons so that pupils of all abilities, including the few with special educational needs, receive equal access to the full breadth of the curriculum. The weakness of the current provision is that the teachers do not always plan to ensure that full use is made of the class computers to support the pupils' learning across all the subjects of the National Curriculum. **This is a key issue for action.**
22. A particular strength of the current curriculum is the good range of educational visits provided to support the children's learning. They range from informal local trips to observe the work of a beekeeper to full blown residential experiences to the Isle of Wight.
23. Thus the school's curriculum reflects a far greater breadth and balance than at the time of the last inspection and now meets the statutory requirements. There are informal, satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the pupils receive regular personal and social education including appropriate opportunities for sex education and raising the pupils' awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
24. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is a strength of the school and reflects the continuing improvements that have been developed since the last inspection. The school aims set out high expectations for the pupils' personal development and the clear and appropriate policy for managing behaviour is consistently applied. In particular, the adults at the school provide good role models for the pupils. They take a keen interest in their pupils and during lessons are swift to draw attention to those children who are polite, attentive and listen hard. On the rare occasions when a pupil's behaviour falls beneath the expected level, the teachers are careful to criticise the behaviour, not the child. The teachers also provide regular opportunities for the children to assume responsibility for small tasks around the school such as tidying the library or getting out resources for lessons. As a result, most pupils are developing a good understanding of right and wrong actions and speak sensibly about their roles and responsibilities whilst at school.
25. The provision for the pupils' cultural development has improved and is now good. Art is a strong feature within the work of the school. The children have regular opportunities to look at the work of famous artists and to develop their own skills and techniques to a good level. The recent appointment of a part-time, visiting specialist has lifted the profile of music and has led to the children experiencing a much wider range of music. For example, those in Key Stage 2 are currently being introduced to Traditional Jazz. There is strong commitment amongst the staff to broadening the pupils' horizons. The visit to France is a good example of this. The preparatory work spread across the curriculum with pupils looking at maps in geography and creating their own currency converters in mathematics. The teachers have made a sound start to raising the pupils' awareness of other, non-western cultures by involving them in such events as an Asian dance day.

26. The school makes satisfactory provision for developing the pupils' spiritual awareness. Occasional moments of reflection outside of the daily act of worship were observed, but these are seldom planned for in any great depth. The teachers may sometimes say a prayer at the end of the school day, but this not yet an established feature of the school's culture. The pace and bustle of many lessons seldom provides the children with opportunities to reflect upon life's fundamental questions. However, the Key Stage 1 science lesson on stars came very close to helping the children to appreciate who we are and our comparative insignificance within the vast spaces of the universe.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

27. Within a small, caring community, where the teachers know each child well, the school makes good provision for the welfare and support of its pupils. Due regard is paid to maintaining a safe learning environment and the pupils are taught safe practice in the use of equipment in design technology lessons, for example. Since the last inspection report, a child protection policy has been put in place and all the teachers have received training on the identification of child protection issues and the procedures to be followed. The school liaises with outside agencies as required.
28. Since the last inspection, the school has also achieved greater consistency in the assessment and monitoring of the pupils' academic performance. Good use is being made of the information gained to adapt successive lessons so that the pupils can make good progress. Individual targets, which are appropriate and challenging, are being set and are also having a positive impact on what the pupils are achieving. The levels of attendance are closely monitored, informed by the class teacher's knowledge of each individual family. The good knowledge that the staff has of the pupils in their care enables a close watch to be kept on their personal development so that extra support can be given where needed.
29. The small class sizes, together with a good level of support from learning support assistants and other adults in school, enable the pupils to make good progress, despite the difficulties of having a wide age range in each class. The parents feel that the school takes good care of their children.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

30. The school maintains strong and supportive links with parents. All the parents who returned the questionnaires agree that the school works closely with them; nearly all feel that they are kept well informed about their child's progress and that it is easy to approach the staff. They appreciate the support their children are being given and the progress they are able to make.
31. There is a good range of information provided for parents, both about the day to day life of the school and the work the pupils are doing. Regular letters, parents' evenings and informal contact with class teachers all help the parents to be well informed about the progress their child is making and the topics that are being covered. The annual reports on each pupil were identified in the previous report as an area for improvement. This remains the case. They do not contain enough specific information on what pupils know and can do in each subject and so do not provide a good enough written record of progress over time. **This remains an area for improvement for inclusion in the governors' action plan.**

32. The parents contribute in a range of ways, both practical and financial, to the work of the school. Fund raising is shared with the local village and school association and has contributed to the purchase of extra equipment and amenities for the pupils. The school makes good use of homework and the parents are very supportive of this. The regular practice in reading, mathematics and spelling, as well as occasional work on current topics, has a positive effect on the standards being achieved. The school is very much at the heart of its local community and the pupils benefit from many opportunities to visit places of interest within the village and surrounding area.

### HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

33. At the time of the last inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for a few weeks and the other staff had arrived a matter of four days before the inspection. She had a good appreciation of the school's many weaknesses, but had had too little time to begin to address them. Since then the headteacher, governors and staff have responded positively to the last report and have successfully addressed the vast majority of issues that were raised in its findings.
34. At the heart of the school's improvement lie the shared aims and values that have been established between staff, governors, parents and children. Everyone was fed up by the frequent changes of personnel that led to a lack of consistency of expectations and approaches with the children. The school brochure now sets out clearly what the school is about and the staff team applies these principles consistently, especially so in their increasingly effective approaches to teaching and learning that are bringing about a rise in standards.
35. The school's action plan that guided its work in response to the last inspection report has run its course. Although there are a series of "task sheets" that set out important activities for the current financial year the school currently lacks a sufficiently coherent view of its long-term development. The leadership should set out the likely needs and priorities for improving the school over the next two to three years. It should determine the order in which these priorities are to be attacked, specify what needs to be achieved and identify who is to be responsible. It should set time scales, costs and the criteria against which success can be measured. **This is a key issue for action.**
36. The small staff team works well together, sharing knowledge and expertise to good effect. They plan the school's curriculum together and adopt a similarly effective, collaborative approach to lesson planning. With the assistance of the local authority, they are starting to develop more robust approaches to monitoring the quality of each other's teaching. Each member of staff carries wide-ranging responsibilities. Although each is clear about their day to day roles and duties, the introduction of a more coherent approach to development planning and the onset of Performance Management provide good opportunities for the leadership to manage in a more systematic fashion the heavy workload placed on all staff.
37. At the time of the last inspection, the governors knew that things could be better, but did not fully realise the severity of the weaknesses within the school. Since then they have worked tirelessly to bring about improvement and secure the future viability of their school. The major strength is the way that governors are regular visitors to the school. They come in to observe lessons, catch up on news and information, discuss current issues and find out what's going on. As a result, they are well -informed about the work of the school. With the exception of some omissions from their annual report [i.e. details of the arrangements for

the admission and support of pupils with disabilities] they fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities.

38. A further improvement since the last inspection is the greater rigour applied to the management of the school's delegated budget. Last time the school was carrying a substantial debt, created by a loan that had been taken out some years previously. Through the prudent management of the headteacher and her finance governors this debt has now been paid back and a healthy carry forward balance established. As a result, the headteacher and governors have been able to improve the levels of staffing so that this year there is a qualified nursery nurse supporting the Foundation Curriculum, an extra teacher in Key Stage 2 to support the literacy and numeracy hours, and a part-time visiting music teacher. This represents a considerable improvement to the range of skills and expertise now offered by the school and the quality of education provided.
39. These improvements are underpinned by the effective work of the part-time school secretary/finance officer. The recent introduction of a computerised accounting package has been accomplished smoothly. This means that she can now provide the headteacher and governors with good quality, up to date information about how the budget is being spent. A recent audit by the local education authority raised no major issues and the few minor points have been satisfactorily addressed.
40. The one area where the governors might improve their practice is in devising more coherent approaches when deciding whether or not they are getting best value from all their purchases. There are satisfactory arrangements for establishing value in terms of price and quality for items such as paper and books. The levels of educational resources have improved considerably since the last inspection, especially in the provision for books and information and communications technology. However, consideration now needs to be given to deciding what value will be added to the school when, for example, appointing new staff or purchasing other services.
41. The school's accommodation is compact, but adequate for the effective delivery of the National Curriculum. The small hall that enables physical education to be taught throughout the year is a valuable addition for a school of this type.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

42. In order to support further the big improvements in the quality of education provided by the school; the headteacher, governors and staff should now;

- Raise the standard and quality of the pupils' writing by;

Continuing the regular practice of the school's chosen handwriting style and ensuring that the pupils use adequate writing tools and adopt a proper grip and correct posture. (Paragraphs 4, 53)

Sustaining the good breadth of the writing activities introduced over the past two years and continuing to increase the opportunities for the pupils to write at greater length – editing and re-drafting their work.. (Paragraph 73)

- Raise the standard and quality of the pupils' work in information and communications technology [ICT] by;

Identifying more opportunities in lessons for the pupils to make greater use the school's improved

supply of computers across the entire National Curriculum. (Paragraphs 6, 21)

- Review arrangements for the planning of school improvement by extending the scope and depth of the school development plan. (Paragraphs 35)

*The following minor issue should also be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan;*

- Improvement in the depth and detail of the annual written reports provided for parents about the pupils' progress in each subject of the National Curriculum. (Paragraph 31)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	9

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	44	22	28	6	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	Y/Rec – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	34
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y/Rec – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.2	School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Girls	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Total	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Girls	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Total	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Girls	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Total	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Girls	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
	Total	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Percentage of pupils	School	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])	[ ] ([ ])

at NC level 4 or above	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)
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*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	33
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y/Rec – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Average class size	17

#### **Education support staff: Y/Rec – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	31

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	116119
Total expenditure	108143
Expenditure per pupil	2704
Balance brought forward from previous year	5297
Balance carried forward to next year	13273

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

34

Number of questionnaires returned

17

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	0	0	6
My child is making good progress in school.	53	41	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	47	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	59	12	0	0
The teaching is good.	88	12	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	35	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	18	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	35	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	53	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	29	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	41	12	0	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**

43. The teachers carry out initial assessments shortly after the children start school. The results indicate that the pupils' abilities on entry are generally slightly below average. This year there is only one child in the Foundation Stage and this pupil is working happily and productively alongside the other nine children who make up the Key Stage 1 class. Given the small numbers of pupils involved and the short duration of the inspection, it was not possible to make a detailed analysis of every aspect of the school's provision for the Foundation Stage. However, the school has responded positively to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report and as a result the provision for this stage of the children's education has improved considerably. For example, the governors have appointed a qualified nursery nurse who works in the class each morning. She plans carefully with the teacher and together they ensure that the lessons and activities are successfully modified in order that the needs of the youngest pupil are met.
44. Considerable time and effort has been put into the development of an attractive, safe and secure outside play area. This long, narrow and potentially unattractive paved area outside the classroom has been transformed by the addition of a large brightly coloured mural. It rained for most of the inspection, but in better weather, such as when the Registered Inspector made his first visit, the children make good use of the outside sand and water trays. They use them purposefully, for instance, when comparing the volume of different containers or checking which objects sink or float. Others have access to the range of wheeled vehicles that are safely stored in the shed containing larger equipment. This helps them to develop good control when pushing prams or propelling themselves on toy cars and bikes. The pupils are safe at all times because there is secure fence and gate.
45. There is a sharp focus upon the development of the pupils' skills in speaking and listening and the teacher recognises the need to encourage this in a wide variety of settings. For example, with the assistance of the nursery nurse the children have enjoyed helping to create their own moon rocket. This provides a useful stimulus for the pupils' imaginative play as well as a valuable resource for science when the teacher contrasts a dark sky with one that has stars in it.
46. There are sensible arrangements that enable pupils from the Foundation Stage to join in key parts of the literacy hour each day. As a result, they rapidly acquire a love of stories and rhymes because they listen hard to the texts that are shared with the rest of the class each day. After watching the older children, they soon understand that print conveys meaning and that each group of letters makes up a word. Once group work begins, a range of strategies is employed to extend the learning of the Foundation Stage. For instance, the nursery nurse makes good use of the class computer to encourage these pupils to "read" along with a simple text that tells a story based upon characters from a published reading scheme. This approach provides strong motivation and it is clear that the children are already beginning to recognise a few simple words. Good attention is also being paid to ensuring that the youngest pupils establish a proper grip of writing tools and that once they are confident in making marks and patterns that they start to learn the correct formation of their letters. For instance, all write their own name accurately.
47. Similar approaches are used in the development of the pupils' mathematical skills and

knowledge. In particular, the teacher is highly skilled in ensuring that part of each numeracy lesson is focused upon counting in order to establish a secure grasp of the order of numbers and their comparative values. As a result, the youngest pupils already recognise the numerals one to nine and can count up to ten objects competently. Once again the effective deployment of the nursery nurse helps to enhance their learning. For instance, during one lesson a Foundation Stage pupil used a computer simulation game to identify the missing numbers in a series. He showed good mouse control to click on the “rabbits’ hats” which displayed the numbers, before clicking on the correct rabbit to receive the hat. The continuing conversation between pupil and “teacher” helped establish just how much the pupil understood as well as ensuring that concentrated hard work was sustained for a good ten minutes.

48. The involvement of foundation aged pupils in Key Stage 1 lessons such as science, art, music, history, geography and design technology also makes a valuable contribution to their knowledge and understanding of the world, their creative and physical development. The youngest pupils are currently fascinated by the patterns made by stars at night and the careful diagrams prepared by the teacher. In conversation they wonder how big a space rocket might be, “Is it as long as this classroom?” When the inspector told them it would probably reach from the classroom to the end of the school field they were amazed and were swift to share this new “information” with their friends. They take delight in painting carefully and in designing, cutting and fixing card and fabric models of torches. They revel in the story that forms the basis for their dance lessons and show good levels of co-ordination and control and when moving rhythmically to music.
49. This is a very small class that is well taught by an experienced teacher. The additional support of the nursery nurse, and the frequent adult visitors who pop in to help, means that all the children receive good levels of individual help. Relationships within the class are extremely good because there are clear class rules that have been agreed with the children. The staff provides very good role models so that all the children feel secure and valued. As a result, they approach each other, adults and visitors to the school politely and with confidence.

## **ENGLISH**

50. The analysis of the results of the national tests for each year is unreliable because each cohort contains few pupils. Nevertheless, all the available evidence indicates that standards in English have been low for several years. On average, the pupils leaving the school at the end of Key Stage 2 have been operating almost two terms behind where they should be by age eleven. However, over the past two years there has been some significant improvement because there have been far fewer changes of teacher and the school has made a good job of introducing the national strategy for teaching literacy. Consequently, in the national tests for 2000 every pupil at the end of Key Stage 1 reached the expected levels in reading and writing. Only a small proportion of the children reached the level expected of eleven-year-olds, but their individual achievements were all appropriate when measured against their previous levels of attainment.
51. In speaking and listening, by the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils show high levels of skill for their age. They listen with close attention to their teachers’ instructions, so they know what is expected of them. Across the curriculum, they are eager and confident to ask and answer questions in response to the careful questioning of the teachers. In a religious education lesson, for example, one boy expressed himself with very good command of spoken English when he described the lectern as ‘an eagle soaring up into heaven with God’s words.’ In

another carefully planned lesson, pairs of pupils talked to one another for exactly one minute, about a party they had been to. They listened carefully to one another, concentrating hard and then related to the rest of the group what their partner had told them. The pupils speak clearly and confidently and successfully communicate their thoughts. They remember details of one another's talk and recall these with real interest. The pupils in Key Stage 2 are encouraged to listen carefully and have frequent opportunities for speaking in pairs and in class groups. There is a broad range of ability but most adapt their speech appropriately for different circumstances. Whilst some pupils understand the main points of discussion well and contribute effectively, there are others who have a more limited vocabulary to meet the needs of the occasion.

52. Most pupils enjoy reading and make steady gains in acquiring this important skill. In Key Stage 1 in particular the teaching of the sounds of letters is helping the pupils to tackle unfamiliar words. A previous weakness identified in the visit of an Additional Inspector was the pupils' limited ability to use contextual clues to help them work out the meaning of words and phrases. This aspect of the pupils' work is improving because the teachers are careful to check the pupils' understanding and are making effective use of the improved range of texts and materials purchased in recent years. For instance, in Years 3 and 4, a group of pupils talked intelligently whilst reading 'Mog and the Vee Ee Tee.' They worked out unfamiliar words by making sensible guesses combining both knowledge of the sounds of letters and what was happening in the story. By the age of eleven, most pupils are reading accurately, but few read fluently with the lively expression that is required. Nevertheless, it is clear from the way that the pupils use their dictionaries that they have a thorough grasp of alphabetical order and that they appreciate using this skill when locating the meaning of unfamiliar words. Many good examples of lively teaching were discovered in the pupils' work that had obviously had a positive effect upon the pupils' reading. For instance, when they researched the meaning and derivation of words in history, such as Anglo-Saxon place names. The improved level of book provision now gives the children plenty of choice. The pupils in Key Stage 2 share the national fascination with the Harry Potter books of J.K. Rowling, but they also read a good range of other fiction including authors such as Dahl and King-Smith.
53. The weakness in the pupils' work in English lies in their writing. Although standards are rising, especially in Key Stage 1, few pupils exceed the expected level at the end of Key Stage 2. **This is a key issue for action.**
54. By the age of seven most pupils are writing neatly and with reasonable accuracy for a good range of purposes across the curriculum. A particular strength is the way that the children are being taught how to structure their writing. For instance, when writing stories they know they have to identify a setting, the main characters and key events before arriving at a resolution. They know this because they have talked about favourite stories such as "The Gingerbread Man" before writing their own versions. Most are now writing at increasing length and beginning to use capital letters and full stops correctly. Their spelling remains erratic, but is generally understandable because the pupils have a good awareness of the sounds of letters.
55. A significant proportion of the pupils in the Key Stage 2 class still has difficulty in holding a pencil properly. This is sometimes exacerbated by their pupils' choice of writing implements that they are too short or blunt and, therefore, difficult to control. Since the last inspection, there has been major improvement to the range of writing opportunities offered to the pupils and this has increased both their motivation and the volume of their work. For example,

when the children wrote letters home as if they were evacuees billeted in the countryside during World War 2 their writing reflected both a good knowledge of the period and a genuine sense of the feelings of children a long way from home.

56. Throughout the inspection the pupils' demonstrated positive approaches to each new writing task. During literacy hour, effective use is made of the individual whiteboards that enable pupils to note down key words and phrases. Once again a significant minority encounters difficulty in spelling simple words correctly. Some Year 3 and 4 pupils are still writing "seb" for "said" and "woc" for "walk." However, these pupils, attempts at spelling are beginning to reflect their knowledge of the sounds of letters. The writing "stamina" of the older pupils is also beginning to increase. However, the pace of the literacy hour often results in new units of work being started before the maximum benefit has been gained from the previous one. The pupils now require more opportunities to polish their first attempts by editing and re-drafting in order to improve still further the quality of their work.
57. The teaching of literacy clearly benefits from the current stable staffing situation and the secure subject knowledge and expertise of the teachers. Over the past two years the staff has planned, and evaluated the literacy hour with rigour. As a result, it was decided to increase staffing levels so that the Key Stage 2 class might be split in two. This is working well because closer attention is given to the different needs of the older, more able pupils as well as those who find reading and writing harder work. The close collaboration between the teachers means that ideas are shared, lesson objectives are precise and the maximum use is made of books and resources. A further strength of the teaching is that each child has individual targets for improvement that are stuck in the back of their exercise books. Not only does this illustrate the teachers' good knowledge of the range of needs within each class, but it also provides an important reference point when they mark the children's work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

58. Although the very small cohorts within each year group makes the statistical analysis of the results of individual years unreliable, the analysis of the pupils' results in the national tests between 1996 to 1999 reveals that standards at the school have been low for a considerable time. On average, by the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have been about one and a half terms behind the expected levels. By the time they left the school at the age of eleven, they were nearly a year behind.
59. However, there were clear signs of improvement in the results of the tests for the year 2000 and in the work seen during the course of this inspection. For example, every seven-year-old pupil taking last year's tests reached the expected level and the achievements of the small group of eleven-year-olds reflected good gains in comparison with where they were at the start of school year. The work of the current Year 2 shows that higher levels of attainment have been sustained with every pupil on course to reach the expected level this year. One or two might even exceed this. Thus standards are now above average. The very small cohort in Year 6 contains a wide range of ability. The pupils' work indicates that although some will struggle to reach the expected level there are others who are working beyond this.
60. The reasons why standards are rising are two-fold. Firstly, the teachers have made a success of introducing the national strategy for teaching numeracy and secondly they are establishing regular opportunities for the pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge across the curriculum. In Key Stage 1, the teacher has high expectations of her class because she knows each pupil well and matches the work closely to their individual abilities in order to ensure that consistent and realistic levels of challenge are sustained. For example, she is currently trying to establish greater confidence amongst the Year 2 pupils when they handle larger numbers. The learning of all the class is enlivened by the use of enjoyable games, such as counting in hundreds until the pupil who says "a thousand" has to stand up. This

helps all the pupils to listen hard and concentrate. Good attention is also paid to seeking pattern in numbers. Once again, the pupils respond positively to “Skeleton George” as they attempt to position him correctly on a blank number line representing a range of larger numbers. The skill of the teacher is clearly evident in the group work activities. Whilst she works with Year 1 to check that they can identify and record the larger and smaller of two numbers thrown on two dice, the Year 2 pupils work extremely hard in assembling number squares. One by one they draw out numbers from 0 - 99 at random from an envelope before locating their position on a blank hundred square grid. These pupils are already demonstrating a good awareness of the value and order of numbers. For instance, they checked with the teacher whether the grid started with a zero or at one. Once they had located the first number they unerringly used the information of column or row to locate the position of other numbers with an identical value of tens or ones. They work hard, show good concentration and derive satisfaction from seeing the grid fill up as they stick each number carefully in place.

61. In Key Stage 2 the division of the class into two sets has had a positive effect, because it enables the work in each lesson to be more closely matched to the pupils’ ages and abilities. The set containing the oldest pupils is making very good progress in its work on shape and angles because the teacher has a secure knowledge of the subject, tells the children what they are going to learn and sets about this in a way that interests them. Thus in the course of one lesson the pupils mastered the use of a protractor and proceeded to measure a range of different angles. Whilst talking to them about this work it became evident that they had a secure grasp of the order of number because they found no difficulty in reading the scale of the protractor. They soon worked out whether they needed to use the inner or outer ring of numbers when measuring. In their warm-up activities, this group also showed increasing confidence in working with numbers up to two decimal places. For instance, they understand that 0.09 is less than 0.18 and can explain why. The teaching of the set with the younger pupils is less consistent. Although their work shows steady progress, their learning is sometimes sluggish because the teacher is not always clear about her objectives and this has a negative impact upon the pupils’ concentration and their commitment to their work.
62. Throughout the school the pupils are encouraged to use their mathematical knowledge in a wide variety of contexts. For example, they refer to time lines in history to see how long ago it was that Queen Victoria died. They prepare for visits to France by making their own currency converters. When they construct graphs, they write and answer questions about the data they have collected. They are encouraged to read timetables to work out times of arrival and departure and to calculate the length of journeys. As a result, the children not only enjoy mathematics and are reaching higher standards, but also increasingly see its fun and relevance to their lives.

## **SCIENCE**

63. Between 1996 and 1999 the results achieved by pupils in the national tests and teachers’ assessments indicate that standards in science were low. However, in 2000 every pupil reached the expected levels at the end of both keys stages. The inspection findings and the analysis of the pupils’ work indicate that standards this year continue to be above average.
64. Standards have improved because the lessons are frequently lively, imaginative and inspire the pupils to concentrate and work hard. For instance, the teachers are particularly skilled in questioning the children to get them to explain what they have learnt or to predict what they think might be the outcome of an investigation. For instance, the Key Stage 2 work on evaporation gained rapid impetus because the pupils’ hypothesis that water vapour from a

boiling kettle is absorbed into the atmosphere led to a sensible experiment to test this theory. The pupils believed that heat increases the rate of evaporation and so left ten dishes containing 250 millilitres of coloured water in different parts of the school. A week later they measured how much water is left in each dish and then successfully analysed their results to “prove” their hypothesis. Throughout this process the teacher got the children to check the accuracy of their measurements and reinforced the correct use of scientific and mathematical language such as “solids,” “liquid,” “gas” and “volume.”

65. The younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have become fascinated by their work on light. Through practical experiment they are developing a keen awareness that various light sources offer different strengths of brightness. They recognise that the sun is a star comprised of burning gases and that other stars are distributed in patterns in the sky that can be described as constellations. Although some of the work is difficult for the pupils to grasp, the teacher’s approach sparks a genuine enthusiasm. For instance, following discussion about stars she helped the pupils to construct a simple model of their own “constellation.” The pupils covered one end of a tube with black paper. The teacher drew their attention to how dark it is when viewed from the open end, “Pitchy black,” as one put it. Several suggested that they might draw “stars” onto the black paper; but this did not work. The teacher then pierced each star with a pin and to the amazement of the children, their constellations came alive when they viewed their tubes towards the light. On its own, this marked a small step in scientific thinking, but its importance was clearly observed in the homework task. The teacher suggested the pupils might like to view the night sky with their parents. The next morning several pupils returned to school with books and sketches, clearly fired by what they had learnt during the lesson.
66. The science curriculum was strongly criticised in the last report and since then the school has sought the guidance of local authority advisers. As a result, the teachers are much better equipped and have devised a sensible approach to curriculum planning that ensures more rigorous coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. The analysis of the pupils’ work reveals that at Key Stage 2 in particular the depth and quality of the pupils’ work across each of the programmes of study is building steadily in demand and complexity. There is particular strength throughout the school in the way that the teachers are encouraging the development of the practical skills of investigative work. Even though the majority of experiments are strongly guided by the teachers, the pupils understand the need for fair testing and the accurate measurement and recording of their results. As a result, there are frequent examples of the way that key mathematical skills are being reinforced during science lessons. For instance, when the pupils dropped dough balls from increasing heights in order to measure the effect on the profile of malleable materials and when recording temperature changes in boiling/tepid/cold water over the course of an hour.

## **ART, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY, MUSIC, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

67. At the time of the last inspection, the pupils in Key Stage 2 were making unsatisfactory progress in all of these subjects. The quality of their work ranged from “just satisfactory” to “poor.” The main reason was that no one had previously managed to establish a proper curriculum framework to help the teachers to plan their lessons.
68. Although it was only possible to sample a small proportion of lessons in these subjects, the discussions with the pupils, teachers and parents, and the analysis of the pupils’ work reveal good improvement in all areas. The teachers are making effective use of the recent national

guidance on curriculum planning to ensure a more balanced and systematic approach to the coverage of these subjects within a two year rolling programme of core “themes” or “topics.” A significant strength is emerging in the way that the teachers now establish effective links between each subject of the National Curriculum in order to deepen the pupils’ understanding.

69. The pupils’ work in art is now a strength of the school because the knowledge and enthusiasm of a teacher with particular skills in this area is helping the pupils to develop their skills and techniques in a systematic fashion. By the age of seven, the children are working confidently in both two and three dimensions. They have learnt how to mix paint in order to make secondary colours from the primaries. They apply this knowledge in a good range of activities, for instance when using imaginative and energetic brushstrokes in their paintings of peacocks. Their printing shows good links with work in literacy, maths and history. The classroom displays encourage the pupils to explore the texture of the objects used for printing, and draw their attention to adjectives such as “hard,” “grainy” and “rough.” Most children are getting used to the idea of establishing ways of linking up the images created by their printing. In Key Stage 2, this technique is taken a bit further when the pupils are encouraged to ensure that the repeated printing of their block designs joins up to create a “wallpaper effect.” The learning here has been extremely effective because the pupils have studied the work of the celebrated artist, William Morris. They used good measuring skills in designing their printing blocks and subsequently scanned their printed image into the computer in order that they might use new technology to “print out” their design in the style of a William Morris wallpaper.
70. The evidence from the one design and technology lesson seen in Key Stage 1 shows that the children are well taught and achieve the expected level in their work. In this instance, the pupils were motivated to work hard because there was a clear link between the task of designing a torch and their work in science where they had been comparing different light sources. The lesson was carefully planned and a range of different torches supplied in order that the pupils could see how they work and then make informed decisions about their own designs. As a result, the pupils drew carefully and often annotated their plans. They willingly explained to the inspector their decisions about the materials chosen and the ways in which different materials might be joined. Throughout the lesson, the teacher provide very good support, questioning pupils about their work and encouraging them to accept responsibility for safe and careful working.
71. The pupils’ knowledge and understanding of geography and history are in line with the expected levels. However, the limited writing skills of a significant minority often hinders their ability to record their learning neatly and accurately. In history, the pupils are developing a sound appreciation of the chronology of key civilisations and events. In Key Stage 1, the pupils learn about the difference between their own toys and those of their parents and grandparents. In Key Stage 2, there is good evidence that the pupils have enjoyed learning about the lifestyle of Ancient Egyptians and Anglo-Saxons. They are currently studying the Victorians and have a good knowledge of some important figures of that time, such as Florence Nightingale, Rudyard Kipling and William Morris. More significantly they have learnt about what schools were like in those times and made effective comparisons with their own experiences to-day. The pupils are encouraged to pose questions and research for answers. A strength of both the history and geography curricula is the regular use of visits in the local area and further afield to museums and other places of interest. For instance, the pupils’ research on Ancient Egypt was considerably assisted by a visit to an exhibition at Highclere Castle where they found out more about Howard Carter who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun.

72. The work in history frequently makes strong links with that in geography. Thus, when studying river systems the teacher referred the pupils back to their Egyptian work and the significance of the river Nile. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a secure grasp of river features such as source, waterfall, tributaries, meander and mouth. They demonstrate a good knowledge of direction and use maps to work out the direction of flow; for instance they understand that the Nile flows from South to North. The visit to France was a major event in the life of the school and made a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. They learnt a great deal about the life and geography of the country including the locations of key mountains, rivers and towns, as well as the significance of viticulture to local economies. The contrasting culture of Kenya is an appropriate focus for the pupils' current work in geography.
73. At the time of the last inspection the school made virtually no provision for the teaching of information and communications technology. The situation is much improved because the leadership has set about the purchase of new equipment in a systematic way. Although the teachers still lack confidence in many areas of this work, they will shortly receive additional training through the school's involvement with the National Grid for Learning and New Opportunities Funding. They have also enlisted the assistance of a parent who is knowledgeable about information and communication. As a result, it is possible to observe the pupils making more use of the new technologies in their work. For instance, the pupils are starting to develop familiarity with the keyboard and mouse from an early age. Using a word-processing program unaided, Year 2 pupils can compose two to three lines of text and then print out their work. They also use a variety of games and simulations to support their work in mathematics. By the age of eleven, most pupils are capable of altering the fonts, colour and typeface of their written work. With assistance they scan printed images into the memory of the computer and incorporate these with their text. The Year 3 and 4 pupils are currently learning how to program an electronic toy in order to control its movements. The lessons, such as one that introduced a published dictionary and thesaurus, provide a satisfactory background to key skills and techniques, but would benefit from the use of a larger screen so that pupils can see more easily. However, in many lessons the computers remain unused. Although the teaching and development of the key knowledge, skills and techniques is improving, it still lacks coherence. Consequently, the pupils' achievements remain below the expected levels at the end of both key stages. **This is a key issue for action.**
74. The school has made a significant investment in a part-time music teacher to raise both the status of the subject and the quality of the pupils' work. This works very well because the teacher is well qualified, has a secure subject knowledge and a very good range of teaching techniques that involve the pupils, stimulates their enthusiasm and helps them to progress. Her expectations are extremely high, and the children cover a lot of ground in a short space of time. For instance, the Key Stage 1 class is currently being introduced to singing two part rounds. They find this difficult to start with, but persevere and eventually succeed. They enjoy using instruments and do so carefully. Once again the teacher succeeds in helping the children to beat out a steady rhythm and keep in time by introducing the use of a conductor. The attention of the Key Stage 2 class is held in a similar manner. For example, from as they entered the hall the teacher was playing a jazz version of "Three Blind Mice." She then proceeded to give an authoritative talk about how American music came to Britain successfully interweaving both historical and musical knowledge. The interest and motivation of the pupils was sustained in the next part of the lesson, which offered a good practical introduction to the skills described in the first part. She had previously prepared the

instruments so that the necessary chime bars were readily available. The pupils quickly picked up the melody, eventually mastered the rhythm and then attempted some simple improvisation. A significant strength of this lesson was the way that a pupil with special educational needs was successfully integrated, worked hard and achieved well throughout without any additional support. Thus the pupils' achievements in music are continuing to improve and in these lessons exceeded the expected levels. However, it is noticeable that without the leadership of a confident teacher important aspects of the school's musical life, such as the singing during worship, are less dynamic.

75. The one lesson of dance observed, involving the pupils in Key Stage 1, shows that the teachers make effective use of pre-recorded lessons from the BBC. The strength of this approach is that the teacher stops the tape at regular intervals in order to discuss the work with the pupils and so improve their performance. She changes into appropriate clothing and joins in with gusto. This helps the pupils to grow in confidence and encourages them to experiment with new rhythms and movements. The end of the lesson was well managed, because the cooling down period also focussed the pupils' attention on considering what might happen next in the story. The teachers' records reveal that the school's arrangements for teaching swimming are very effective. Every eleven-year-old leaves the school able to swim a minimum of twenty-five yards. Most swim much further. A qualified FA coach offers a football club each week. The pupils also have regular opportunities to compete in sports events arranged by the local cluster of village schools.
76. At the end of both key stages, the pupils' work in religious education is broadly in line with the levels described in the locally agreed syllabus. Most recently, the pupils have visited their parish church and learnt a little about key features such as the altar, lectern and font. The subsequent teaching was satisfactory and focused upon developing the pupils' understanding of why the church is a significant building for Christians. Although the idea of getting the Key Stage 2 pupils to write a guidebook for the church was a good one, the task was too broad and undefined for much headway to be made during the lesson. Nevertheless, the quality of discussion about the church revealed that many pupils have a reasonably secure understanding of the life of Jesus and the importance of prayer.