

INSPECTION REPORT

SUCKLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Suckley

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116741

Headteacher: Ms S James

Reporting inspector: Mr D Gwinnett
16548

Dates of inspection: December 4th – 6th 2000

Inspection number: 225007

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary

School category: LEA

Age range of pupils: 5-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane
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Worcestershire
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Proctor

Date of previous inspection: 27th – 30th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Don Gwinnett 16548	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art Design and technology Music Religious education	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
Ian Adams 13336	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
Margaret Burslem 22746	Team inspector	Special educational needs Foundation Stage Equality of opportunity English Science Geography History Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Suckley Primary School is a smaller than average school situated in the village of Suckley nine miles from Worcester. It contains 35 pupils from the reception class to Year 5. There are currently no pupils in Year 6. There are more boys than girls in the school. There has been a decline in numbers during the last two years (almost 50 per cent). This is because many parents were dissatisfied with the declining standards of work and behaviour in the upper part of the school. The area served by the school is rural with an average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (19 percent). The proportion with special educational needs is average, although none are statemented. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Although standards in science, mathematics and information and communication technology are below expectations by the time pupils leave the school, because work and behaviour deteriorated following the last inspection, there are signs of considerable improvement following the appointment of a new headteacher and new staff. Whilst pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was poor, the headteacher's decisive response has arrested this decline creating improvement to pupils' attitudes and the quality of their work. Pupils' attitudes to work are improving as a result of teachers' very good management of behaviour. The quality of teaching is good overall with a high proportion of very good teaching. This provides motivation for pupils, the majority of whom learn well. Following a recent audit, the curriculum is now relevant and challenging. There is improving provision for the care and guidance of pupils, and improving arrangements for assessing their progress. However, the school recognises that the results of assessments are not sufficiently used to improve the curriculum and teaching. Parents and carers are informed about progress and actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. Reports to parents are evaluative containing a good balance of positive comments and things to improve. Whilst the previous decline in numbers prevents the school providing satisfactory value for money, parents who attended the meeting before the inspection were adamant that the situation is rapidly improving. Inspectors agree with their views.

What the school does well

- Pupils make increasingly good progress, irrespective of their individual starting point, as a result of recent improvements.
- The good quality of teaching has a major impact on the culture for learning. The caring atmosphere in all classes and the very good management of behaviour is having a positive impact on standards.
- The headteacher's very good leadership and management skills are uniting staff, pupils, parents and governors in the push for further improvement.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of effective use of classroom assistants, early identification of their needs and relevant Individual Education Plans.
- The good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps them to develop strong values.
- Attendance is well above the national average.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment is below expectations in science in Year 5 and information and communication technology in both key stages.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils in Year 5 adversely affects their progress.
- Assessment data is not sufficiently analysed or used to set medium and long term individual learning targets.
- There is a lack of suitable outside facilities and equipment for the youngest children.
- Some items of information are missing from the prospectus and the governors do not comply with all legal requirements.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In its previous inspection of January 1997, the school was found to provide a satisfactory education. Since then, there has been deterioration in standards in Key Stage 2. The key issues of the previous inspection report were not rectified satisfactorily until the arrival of the new headteacher in May 2000. The quality of school development planning, which was a key issue, has begun to improve following an audit of the curriculum and general provisions in the school. There have also been improvements since the last inspection to standards in physical education and in defining the aims of the school. Most importantly, the low standards of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 are being reversed through the concerted efforts of all teachers and classroom assistants. As a result of recent efforts, the school has a very good capacity to improve further. The headteacher is successfully building new bridges with parents and the local community following a period when many parents removed their children. Parents spoke warmly of all these changes at the meeting before the inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	E	E*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	E*	E	E*	
Science	E	E	E*	E*	

This information shows that standards in the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds were well below the national average in English and mathematics and were far below the national average in science, where pupils' results were in the bottom five per cent in the country. Standards in all three subjects were far below schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. There have been poor results for the last three years because of the recent turnover of teachers and low expectations of pupils. These poor results are recognised by the school who have taken decisive action to improve standards. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been above or well above the national average over the last four years.

In work seen during the inspection in Year 5, pupils' attainment in English is in line with national expectations. In mathematics, attainment is just below national expectations but improving rapidly as a result of well-organised teaching and very good management of behaviour. Attainment in science is below expectations but is only improving slowly because of pupils' lack of focus in practical sessions. Whilst Year 5 pupils will match national expectations in English and mathematics when they take the national tests in Year 6, if their current progress continues, there is less certainty about them meeting national expectations in science. Standards in information and communication technology are below expectations. This is because there is a shortage of suitable software and some aspects of learning are not covered in sufficient depth. Standards in art in Key Stage 1 are above national expectations. In all other subjects, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils in Key Stage 2 did not meet their 2000 targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. Most pupils enjoy school and work well with teachers.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A decreasing minority of older pupils still cause occasional disruption.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Generally harmonious relationships with each other and teachers contribute positively to pupils' learning.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average and most enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

For children in the Foundation Stage, (the reception), the quality of teaching is good. All lessons seen were graded good and none were graded unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1 the overall quality of teaching is very good, with an equal number of good and very good lessons. In Key Stage 2, teaching is overall good with an equal number of satisfactory, good and very good lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. Across the school, 15 per cent of lessons were satisfactory, 54 per cent were good and 31 per cent were very good. This is a high proportion of good and very good teaching. Literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily taught across subjects, although some opportunities are lost because there is insufficient formal planning for this. Teaching successfully meets the needs of all pupils irrespective of their age or prior attainment. A particular strength is the very good management of pupils' behaviour. This is particularly apparent in teachers' skilled dealings with boisterous pupils in Year 5.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The quality and range of learning opportunities, including extra-curricular activities, provide suitable practical and intellectual experiences that extend pupils' understanding.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual Education Plans contain clear targets, which are effectively used by class teachers to help pupils to improve.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The good provision in each of these four areas helps pupils to acquire strong values.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school is happy and caring. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory, although results of assessments are not sufficiently well used to target future learning. There is good monitoring of pupils' attendance and excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.

The school's links with parents are now good, although there is still some way to go before full confidence is restored. The curriculum is improving and all areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, including Child

Protection. However, there are no formal procedures for allowing pupils to contribute their own ideas about how the school could be improved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The new headteacher has a strategic vision for the school and provides very good leadership and management. Subject co-ordinators are beginning to monitor standards and plan effectively for improvements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory and improving. They have a sound understanding of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and are planning to undertake more training in order to improve further. Not all legal requirements are in place.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school recognises that it does not yet make satisfactory use of available information from National Curriculum tests. Information from teachers' informal assessments is beginning to be used to target future learning. School development planning is improving but is not yet formalized
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. There is improving use of information technology and books are satisfactorily used to support learning. Available space is very well used. The financial management of the school is satisfactory.

There are a satisfactory number of teachers and classroom assistants for the planned curriculum. This effectively supports pupils with special educational needs. The accommodation is satisfactory overall following recent redecoration. The school strives to supply best value: sound financial planning and effective procedures for the ordering and supply of goods ensure that funds are satisfactorily used to improve standards. The school has begun to compare its performance with other schools and listens closely to parents' views about how the school can be improved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like coming to school. • Behaviour is good • The quality of teaching is good. • The school listens well to suggestions or complaints • Teachers have high expectations of pupils. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are insufficient extra curricular activities. • The amount of homework. • Information about how their child is getting on.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' largely positive views. Inspectors feel that the new headteacher has responded well to parents' concerns. Regular extra curricular activities include an art club, ball games, board games and visits, although pressure to make improvements to other aspects of provision have restricted the time available for teachers to supervise these activities. The recent Homework Policy has now ensured greater consistency in provision so that work at home suitably supports work done in class. Improved communication with parents includes better arrangements for teachers to be available at the beginning and end of the day to discuss the progress of individual pupils and there more parents' information evenings. Reports to parents are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Attainment in Key Stage 1 between 1998 to 2000 was well above the national average in reading and above the national average in writing and mathematics. Standards were also above similar schools during this period, with national tests results remaining high since the last inspection.
2. In the Key Stage 2 national tests during the same period, pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science was well below the national average, showing a decline in standards compared to the last inspection, when standards in all three subjects matched the national average. Whilst there were too few pupils in 2000 for statistical comparisons to be made, attainment in the 1999 tests were well below the national average in English and science and were in the bottom five per cent in the country in mathematics. Standards were also far below those of similar schools. This rapid decline contrasts with a national picture of gradual improvement over the same period. As a consequence, many parents removed their children from the school. The school's targets in English and mathematics were not met.
3. The new headteacher has responded vigorously to this serious problem of under-performance in Key Stage 2, which has jeopardized the future of the school. She has taken overall responsibility for the Key Stage 2 class, successfully applied for extra financial support from the Local Education Authority and conducted a detailed audit of provisions to determine where improvements are needed. Factors contributing to low standards have been identified and measures implemented to halt this decline. This decisive response, which has the full support of the staff, governing body and parents, has been very successful. Pupils are now working harder and making better progress. The poor behaviour of older pupils is improving, and so is the quality of their work. Inspectors are confident that the decline has been arrested and that the new measures will result in continuing improvement. This is largely due to the collaborative efforts of the new teachers, who are determined to rebuild academic standards and to restore local confidence in the school.
4. One way of measuring progress is to compare pupils' attainment on entry to their results in later assessments. The attainment of pupils in the current reception class is overall below average. However, there are no baseline records of pupils who have taken national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, and so there is no precise understanding of pupils' progress from their starting points. Children's initial attainment is determined by several factors; some have attended pre school groups, where they have been introduced to early reading and number work. In this case, children have a head start. Some children have had support in early number and letter/word recognition at home. However, a number of pupils come with little previous experience of the Early Years Goals that are expected for pupils in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception years). Their language and literacy skills are below average and they have little grasp of early word and number work. A number of higher attaining pupils have been withdrawn from the school following the publication of poor Key Stage 2 test results. This explains why the attainment of pupils seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection is not as high as the previous national test results.
5. It is possible, however, to compare pupils' test results at the end of Key Stage 1 with their results at the end of Key Stage 2 taken four years later. In 1999, the progress made by Year 6 pupils between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2 was well below the progress made by similar schools using the same measure. This way of measuring progress avoids the problems of trying to make comparisons based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, which at Suckley is inaccurate because there is no hot meals service. Inspectors are unable to determine the precise reasons for poor progress because all previous teachers have left the school and there are few records to show what went wrong. Whilst firm conclusions are hard to arrive at, the number of parents who withdrew their children suggests that all was not well, and this is confirmed by conversations with current parents, governors and pupils. Factors that significantly contributed to this serious decline in standards include unsatisfactory curriculum planning, a failure to use

assessments effectively to identify weaknesses in learning and a failure to maintain high standards of behaviour.

6. In work seen at the end of Key Stage 1 during the inspection, Year 2 pupils' attainments are above national expectations in reading and are in line with national expectations in writing, although several aspects of writing, including pupils' use of punctuation and the quality of presentation, are insecure. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are well developed. Pupils express themselves clearly and listen attentively in conversation. Taken overall, pupils' English skills in Year 2 match national expectations for their age group. In mathematics, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations and pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching. Pupils use the rules of number confidently and apply their knowledge successfully to real life situations. For instance, pupils work out what change they will have from their pocket money when buying sweets, and are well on their way to telling the time. In science, pupils' attainment is well above national expectations. Pupils understand what is meant by a fair test and are able to predict what might happen in an experiment based on previous observations. The targets set by the governing body and Local Education Authority for attainment in the year 2000 Key Stage 1 tests were realistic and ambitious and were exceeded in each case.
7. In work seen in Year 5 during the inspection, pupils' attainments are just about in line with national expectations in English, but below national expectations in mathematics and in science. The targets set for the Key Stage 2 tests were not matched, even though the targets were realistic. In English, pupils read confidently with suitable expression. They participate well in discussions, contributing ideas, for instance, about characterization and plot when discussing a play they are acting out. Their written work is less assured. Whilst they write for a range of purposes, their work is sometimes rushed, containing incorrect punctuation. The majority should attain Level 4 of the National Curriculum at the end of Year 6 if their current progress continues. In mathematics, pupils are rapidly improving from a very low base. They work out mental problems involving addition and subtraction of two digit numbers and construct simple graphs. However, pupils are still working at Level 3 of the National Curriculum, whereas they should be working within Level 4. Skilled teaching should help them to achieve in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 if their current rapid rate of progress continues. In science, pupils are below national expectations. They have many gaps in their knowledge and despite recent improved teaching pupils are over dependent on the teacher when doing practical work. Inspectors are less confident about these pupils reaching the expected Level 4 when they take the national tests at the end of Year 6.
8. There is little difference between the learning of boys and girls. Between the years 1998 to 2000, boys' average performance in Key Stage 1 was above that of girls in each of the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. During the inspection, however, inspectors did not identify any difference between the expectations or teaching approaches for girls or boys. Differences from year to year are due to pupils' natural academic differences rather than school-based factors. In Key Stage 2 during the same period, there is no evident trend separating boys' and girls' performance. As in Key Stage 1, inspection evidence shows that there is little difference between the attitudes to work or the achievement of boys and girls.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain appropriate standards in relation to their specific targets and goals. Their particular academic and personal needs are identified early and special targets are set that help them to improve. Those needing academic support have special targets in English and mathematics, whilst those with other needs, such as visual impairment or unsatisfactory behaviour, have particular learning goals. These are given to each teacher to support his or her work with the pupil. Higher attaining pupils are also identified and given help to maximise their achievement. A good feature of planning is the attention given to different groups of pupils. Consequently, pupils achieve well regardless of their individual starting points.
10. The children in the Foundation Stage (reception year) make good progress. Despite having an overall attainment on entry that is below the national average, pupils are making good progress. There is a stimulating environment and the quality of teaching is good. They receive skilled support from the recently appointed classroom assistant. The teacher, who is responsible for all pupils in

the reception as well as in Years 1 and 2, provides detailed planning based on the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. Children are interested and responsive; they speak confidently and are beginning to form letters correctly. They count accurately to ten and the higher attainer in the group is beginning to recognise written number symbols. They produce good quality artwork using a range of media and enjoy singing songs in assembly. However, their physical development is held back by the lack of an enclosed outdoor area with equipment.

11. The National Literacy Strategy, introduced in 1998 has had a positive impact on standards in Key Stage 1 with improvements made in both reading and writing. Improvements are most evident in standards of reading, which is particularly emphasized in the Strategy. The new staff have correctly identified that pupils' writing skills lag behind their reading skills, but have yet to plan strategically for improvement to the technical aspects of language, such as punctuation and grammar. In Key Stage 2, the implementation of the Strategy has not had a significant impact on standards. With the recent arrival of the new headteacher and part time teacher the methods and materials are used in a more systematic way. The National Numeracy Strategy was introduced in 1999. This has been implemented successfully in Key Stage 1, but has only recently begun to have an impact in Key Stage 2, again, following the appointment of two new teachers. Pupils are now using mental mathematics regularly to develop their agility in rapid calculation. They are also beginning to apply mathematics more successfully to everyday situations. Whilst there are evident improvements in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, not enough thought is given to the teaching of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than English and mathematics. This is because there is insufficient planning to ensure that basic skills are taught at a level that is compatible to the levels of demand in mathematics and English lessons.
12. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils are in Year 5. This is because, despite recent investment, there are insufficient programs to support ICT work across all subjects, not enough equipment to support the teaching of control technology and inadequate software to simulate imaginary events. Attainment in religious education is in line with the recommendations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. Attainment is satisfactory in all other subjects in both key stages and is good in art at the end of Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

13. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are satisfactory overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection, although the school is rightly concerned about a small group of pupils in Year 5 who are not always as attentive or well behaved as they should be. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and settle well to their work. They become involved in activities and listen attentively to their teachers. Most behave in a trustworthy way, even if not closely supervised, although appreciate help given by teachers or support assistants. However, not all pupils sustain their concentration well. This means that teachers have to work hard to keep pupils' interest, which they do by providing lively activities and interesting resources. In occasional lessons, pupils lose concentration. In a Year 5 information and communication technology lesson, for instance, two boys stopped what they were doing when the teacher's back was turned. They began working again as soon as they were reminded to concentrate.
14. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, but again a small group of pupils in Year 5 pose a challenge. They sometimes shout out and tend to disturb each other unless closely supervised. However, the parents and teachers, as well as the pupils themselves, say that their behaviour has markedly improved since the new headteacher came, and since the recent introduction of a new behaviour policy. The majority of pupils are well behaved, respecting teachers and other adults, and are sensible in lessons. In reception, pupils play sensibly without close supervision. The support assistant is right to give them opportunities for self-selected activities to help them develop independence. They also put their work away at the end of lessons and wait sensibly by the door. Although some pupils in Year 5 are challenging, they sometimes show good initiative, for instance when they help younger children in the playground. There is very little physical or verbal aggression.

15. The quality of pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. All parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children liked coming to school, and that the school expected their child to work hard and achieve their best. Inspection findings confirm this. The youngest pupils settle into school well, establishing good relationships, and adopt positive working attitudes. This is generally sustained well as pupils move up the school. However, whilst older pupils sometimes look after younger ones in the playground, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to contribute to discussions about issues facing the school. This is because there is no school council or other formal way for pupils to offer their views. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are sound overall and good in most classes. There is still some concern about some of the Year 5 pupils, although relationships here are improving as pupils give teachers increasing respect.
16. The most recent attendance figures for the school are well above national averages, and show a further improvement from the time of the last inspection. There were no exclusions from the school during the year prior to the inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

17. The quality of teaching is good overall. All teaching was satisfactory or better, with more than half judged to be good and almost one third very good. In the previous inspection, the teaching was described as a strength of the school, although this was a reflection of the high level of very good teaching in Key Stage 1, since in Key Stage 2 approximately 20 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. This was a high level of unsatisfactory teaching. The recent turnover of teachers, and some unsatisfactory teaching prior to the arrival of current staff, has contributed significantly to deteriorating standards in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. Standards have recently begun to improve following the appointment two new teachers to Key Stage 2 who have well developed teaching skills.
18. In lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 was very good. All lessons seen were graded good or very good. In the Key Stage 2 class, the quality of teaching is overall good with one third of lessons graded satisfactory, one third good and one third very good. This is a clear improvement on the last inspection. There has been a satisfactory response to the issues concerning teaching identified in the previous inspection. The teaching of physical education in Key Stage 2 is now satisfactory. Some lessons in the previous inspection lacked suitable challenge with weak management of pupils' behaviour. However, these problems have only begun to be rectified recently following the appointment of the new headteacher, who is the co-ordinator of PE.
19. The quality of teaching of reception pupils was good in each lesson observed. These pupils successfully follow the Early Years Goals that were recently published for pupils in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes). This planning is done effectively by the Key Stage 1 teacher. There is a very good working relationship between the teacher and the recently appointed classroom assistant. The assistant is skilled in working with this age of child. She uses the planning well and has secured a trusting relationship with children who are eager to learn. Consequently, pupils are happy to come to school, enjoy their activities and achieve well.
20. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides good quality support for identified pupils. Work is well matched to their particular needs, successfully addressing the targets on their Individual Education Plans (IEP's). These targets focus primarily on pupils' literacy needs, but also contain specific clauses relating to their numeracy needs, aspects of behaviour and special arrangements for those with physical impairment. There is good support from staff from the Local Education Authority (LEA) Learning and Behaviour Support Service (LBSS). Their support has been particularly beneficial in identifying and supporting pupils with behavioural difficulties. For instance, pupils who have arrived from other schools with a history of behaviour problems have been successfully supported in Suckley because of the close working relationship between teachers and LEA support staff.

21. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall and in many lessons is very good. In Key Stage 1, the teacher has a very clear understanding of the Early Years Goals and the requirements of the full range of the National Curriculum subjects. This is no easy task in a very small school and requires the teacher to plan very carefully for the full age and ability range. The teacher copes well and as a result, pupils learn well irrespective of their prior starting points. The classroom assistant, who was appointed very recently, provides high quality support and often works with the four reception age children whilst the teacher takes the older pupils. For instance, in a science lesson about the properties of materials, the teacher very successfully helped pupils to understand how materials change when they are heated. This was introduced by children eating a chocolate button, and led on to considerations of how heat or cold changes physical states. Pupils learnt words such as "temperature", "solid" and "three-dimensional". Whilst they were doing this, the reception children were also learning about materials by making clothes for a teddy. They used lots of words that were relevant for their particular stage, including "warm", "cosy", "summer" and "winter". They discussed the particular qualities of materials; were they "thick", "thin", "flimsy" or "stiff". In this way, the assistant successfully introduced specific vocabulary and introductory concepts related to the more advanced work being done by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. This lesson required a lot of thoughtful planning and was very successful. In Key Stage 2, both teachers also have a firm grip of the full range of National Curriculum requirements, which are taught confidently. There were no lessons where teachers lacked subject confidence.
22. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics lessons is good. Teachers have received effective training in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and there is confident teaching of basic skills. In English lessons, teachers use several methods to ensure that pupils' reading skills develop successfully. For instance, in their early reading, pupils are taught to recognise phonic shapes as well as using context clues. In doing this, teachers help Key Stage 1 pupils across the attainment range. In Key Stage 2, teachers also cope confidently when teaching the National Literacy Strategy. However, whilst teachers in both key stages reinforce the teaching of literacy skills in English lessons, basic English skills are not always taught successfully in other subjects. Whilst pupils read and write in other subjects, teachers do not always reinforce literacy skills to a level that is compatible to the work done in English lessons. For instance, the marking of older pupils' religious education books fails to correct weak spelling and punctuation. Misspellings from a higher attaining Year 5 pupil included 'storyi' (story), 'shoping' (shopping) and 'coperating' (co-operating). Also, poor presentation was not picked up. Number skills and other aspects of mathematics are taught successfully in mathematics lessons but are not always planned successfully across the other subjects of the curriculum, although there were occasional examples of good cross-curricular work. For instance, good use of data handling was evident in information and communication technology where Year 3 and Year 4 pupils constructed graphs to show which kind of fruit they enjoyed eating.
23. Teachers' planning is good in both key stages. Planning is done on a short and medium term basis and there is good use of nationally recognised schemes that provide a long-term strategic overview that ensures compliance with National Curriculum requirements. Teachers regularly refine and adjust their planning to make sure it challenges the full range of pupils' needs. At the time of the last inspection, weaker teaching was characterized by a lack of challenge. In lessons seen during this inspection the full age and attainment range was effectively challenged in both Key Stages. Those with special educational needs, as well as those who are higher attainers, are suitably planned for. Teachers' detailed planning helps pupils to learn in a systematic way. Pupils are clear about what is expected and therefore understand what they have to do to improve their learning. In Key Stage 2, the core lessons of English, mathematics and science are taught by two teachers. One teacher teaches the Year 3 and 4 pupils, whilst the other teacher takes the older pupils. This has been made possible by the additional funding from the Local Education Authority applied for by the new headteacher. Whilst the two teachers plan together, the regular separation into two age groups enables teachers to target learning to individual needs.
24. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods. In the core subjects, pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment. The mixed age classes also provide good opportunities for pupils to work with others of compatible ability, irrespective of their age. This means, for instance, that able Year 4 pupils will sometimes learn alongside lower attaining Year 5 pupils. Teachers

provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are doing. As a result, pupils are reflective about their learning and become aware of their own progress in the process of becoming more self-critical. In a Year 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils were clear about why they were placed in a particular group, explaining what they could or could not do. This is done in a sensitive way so as not to embarrass pupils. Teachers are equally pleased when lower attaining pupils are successful, giving them the praise they deserve. But importantly, teachers also make demands on higher attaining pupils, expecting them to understand more.

25. The very good management of pupils' behaviour across the school is a significant strength. At the time of the last inspection, some pupils in Key Stage 2 were disruptive. In lessons seen during the inspection this was still the case, although all teachers handle this very well. Teachers have a firm but positive manner and do not become flustered or angry at pupils' boisterousness or occasional rudeness. Instead they ask pupils which rule they are breaking and what they have to do to get it right. Good attitudes are praised. At the end of a Year 5 mathematics lesson, for instance, the teacher said, "Well done that group for clearing away sensibly, you can all have a house point". When one of the other pupils was sarcastic the teacher said, "What are you not doing now that you should be?" The child answered politely and correctly and the teacher said "Well, if you do it properly, you will also get a house point, but you only have five seconds in which to get it right". The child responded, got the house point and was pleased. His good response was rewarded and antagonism or recrimination was avoided. At the same time, the teacher remained firmly in control. Learning resources are kept tidy so that pupils know where to find things. This helps pupils to learn in an organised way. Teachers alter the tone of their voice and their use of gesture so that pupils' attention is focused on their learning. By keeping pupils alert and providing interesting activities that produce high motivation, teachers increase pupils' rate of learning, helping them to make good progress. Lessons are timed effectively so that there is little time wasting.
26. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is normally helpful, although there are some instances when weak grammar, spelling or punctuation are not corrected. Normally, teachers' verbal and written comments are regular and positive. Teachers not only give deserved praise, but also tell pupils what they need to do to improve. This helps pupils' learning because they have a clear idea of their own strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are selective in the way that they mark so that the comments for lower attaining pupils focuses on their particular needs, whilst comments to higher attaining pupils contain more ambitious expectations that stretch them. Whilst this is particularly evident in mathematics and English, good marking is less evident in other subjects. Homework is used increasingly well as a result of the recently produced homework policy. Parents showed some concern about the amount of homework on the questionnaire completed before the inspection, although parents attending the meeting felt the school had got it about right. In lessons seen, inspectors felt that the right amount of homework was set and that the recent policy is being applied successfully.
27. The quality of learning is good in both key stages and most pupils make good progress. This is because of improving teaching, increasingly positive attitudes to learning and harmonious relationships between pupils and with teachers. Most pupils work at a productive pace, know that their progress is good and are able to talk confidently about their new knowledge and understanding. In occasional lessons, the quality of pupils' learning did not match the quality of teaching. This was because pupils' behaviour did not match up to the high expectations of the teacher. This was particularly the case in lessons with Year 5 pupils. In a conversation with Year 5 pupils, they knew that they did not always behave properly but were unanimous in saying that they were improving. They felt that teachers were very fair and were interested in their learning. One boy knowingly said, "I know she likes me, it's my behaviour she's not always sure about". Pupils learn well because they trust adults, who provide consistent messages as a result of working very well as a team.

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

28. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, sex and drugs education and religious education that complies with the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus. The requirements of Curriculum 2000 have been successfully integrated into

lesson planning. Planning successfully covers the needs of the whole age and attainment range. For instance, planning for younger pupils clearly identifies the separate strands required for pupils in nursery and reception classes. However, planning also ensures that pupils who are higher attainers have separate work that challenges them suitably. The key issue relating to curriculum provision from the last inspection, which was to improve long and medium term planning, has been satisfactorily resolved. Other weaknesses have also been attended to; all subjects now have suitable schemes and there is a policy for sex education. However, much of this improvement is very recent, as it has been implemented by the new headteacher.

29. There are two areas where the curriculum needs improvement. Firstly, not all the strands of the information and communication technology National Curriculum are taught as often as they should be. This is because the school does not have the right kind of hardware and software. The school is aware of this and is planning to purchase these items as soon as funds become available. Secondly, the lack of suitable outdoor play space and equipment for the youngest pupils restricts both their physical development and their academic learning. Their academic learning is restricted because they do not have the outside resources necessary to support and complement the suitable equipment held inside. Again, the school recognises this and wants to build a secure outdoor play area for children under five equipped with large and small play equipment.
30. Arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good. The special educational needs co-ordinator has identified what these pupils need to do to improve and these are clearly recorded in their Individual Education Plans. Pupils who have particular statements of educational need are well supported and provided with work that suits their academic needs.
31. Literacy and numeracy skills are successfully taught in English and mathematics lessons, although the school recognises that these skills are not yet successfully planned for across the other subjects of the curriculum. This means that, on occasions, opportunities are missed to promote pupils' basic skills at a level that is compatible with the standards of work in their English and mathematics lessons. Nevertheless, mathematics skills were successfully taught in science and information and communication technology where pupils produced accurate tables of data they had collected. In Year 2, there are well-planned links in design technology where pupils measure the dimensions of a house they are making from card. Links to literacy are evident in subjects such as religious education, where pupils in Years 4 and 5 write accounts of their feelings to topical moral dilemmas.
32. The school provides some extra curricular activities that include clubs in art, French, computers and gardening. There are regular opportunities for ball games and there is a Christmas workshop where pupils make decorations. During the current term, some activities are not scheduled regularly as the new teachers need extra time to plan and implement new schemes of work and to write policies that should have been in place before. A number of parents drew attention to the current lack of activities in the pre inspection questionnaire. At the meeting held before the inspection with parents, several confirmed that the staff are very busy improving procedures and policies and appreciate they cannot do everything. However, teachers recognise this and plan to re-introduce more activities as soon as possible.
33. There is good equality of access and opportunity. No pupil is denied access to any activities on the grounds of their gender or disability. Special support and monitoring has been provided for a pupil who is visually impaired and pupils who are known to have difficulty concentrating are identified and given extra help. All games activities are open to girls and boys and no child is disappplied from the curriculum.
34. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The sex education policy is clear and regularly timetabled sessions provide suitable opportunities for pupils to be taught about other aspects that affect their health and welfare. As a result, pupils' personal development is securely planned for alongside their academic development.
35. Community resources are satisfactorily used to complement lessons in school. Children make regular visits to the local church and visitors share their particular views and ideas. A successful

recent visit by a minister and his wife was particularly helpful. The minister's wife, who is Asian, attended a very successful session about aspects of Hindu culture. The photographs of this visit clearly show the pupils' delight in learning about the clothes and customs of other people. There are very good links with the local toddlers' group. Representatives from this group attended the parents' meeting before the inspection and spoke of the good links with the school. There are satisfactory links with the secondary school that many pupils go to when they leave.

36. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Regular daily acts of worship and religious education lessons provide successful opportunities for pupils to grow in spiritual understanding. In the assemblies, teachers use a successful blend of stories, prayers and hymns to illustrate important lessons from the Christian Bible and other religious traditions. In one very good assembly, the teacher told a story from the Muslim tradition about how Mohammed valued the gift of a poor woman above those of visiting royalty because her gift was her last possession. Pupils listened with rapt attention as the teacher explained that the cost of a gift is not always an indicator of its real worth. This assembly successfully prompted pupils to consider important moral concerns.
37. There is good development of pupils' moral understanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and have introduced a new policy to curb some of the over boisterous behaviour of older boys. All teachers apply these routines well and this is having a very positive affect on these boys who clearly know what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. In a wider sense, pupils are taught to think carefully about important moral concerns. Teachers give a good example and expect pupils to show consideration and respect for others.
38. Provision for pupils' social development is also good. They collaborate well in lessons, for instance in physical education activities and in lessons such as art and music when they work successfully in pairs and small groups. A good example of collaborative work was shown in an English lesson where a group of Year 5 pupils were sent out to practise a play about school. Despite not being closely supervised, the pupils worked harmoniously together, contributing their ideas and giving each other positive support. A particularly welcome aspect of this was the way they discussed how to welcome new pupils in order to make them relax. This was another example of good moral teaching as well as helping pupils' social development. Older pupils help younger pupils, and those who are known to have shown particular consideration for others are rewarded in the weekly assembly. This helps pupils to appreciate each other's efforts and achievements.
39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils have regular opportunities to appreciate the way that art and music express aspects of culture. They develop an appreciation of local culture through visits to places of educational interest, for instance the Swan Theatre at Worcester and Bromyard Gala, where they won first places in puppet making and cake baking. A strong feature is pupils' appreciation of other faiths and cultures. Within religious education, pupils learn about other faiths. For instance, older pupils have recently been taught about the significance of symbolic painting of hands used within the Hindu and Sikh faiths for celebrations. Books in the library celebrate non-Western traditions and assemblies incorporate appreciation of many world faiths.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. As at the time of the last inspection, the school takes satisfactory care of its pupils. There is suitable provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety, there are good relationships at all levels and pupils trust the sympathetic adults who they can go to with problems. All staff work hard to maintain these positive relationships. They know the pupils well and successfully monitor their personal development both informally, and formally through their regular written records. Over time, these build up into a detailed picture of each pupil that is successfully used to construct his or her annual report.
41. The school has an appropriate health and safety policy, although this is now overdue for a review. Using the Local Education Authority prescribed forms, school safety audits are carried out every six months by the headteacher and nominated member of the governing body. Regular fire

practices are recorded systematically. There are suitable arrangements in place for first aid and medical support. The school policy for Child Protection is in place, with the headteacher as the named responsible person. She will shortly attend training to become conversant with local written procedures.

42. The school cares well for pupils who have special educational needs. The arrangements for assessing and identifying these pupils are implemented in accordance with the Code of Practice. This includes making effective arrangements to ensure that pupils meet the targets on their Individual Education Plans. The plans are regularly reviewed and there is effective liaison with outside agencies and external support staff.
43. The school makes satisfactory provision for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. There are well-developed formal procedures in the reception class and elsewhere, teachers track pupils' progress effectively on an informal basis, thanks to their good knowledge of them as individuals. There is suitable advice if a pupil is identified as having problems. The curriculum provides sound support and guidance through its provision for health education and citizenship.
44. The school promotes healthy and safe living through an appropriate programme of personal, social and health education. This is successfully taught through circle time, assemblies and science lessons. These lessons are effectively supported through visits by the school nurse and an annual session provided by the Life Education mobile classroom. There are no formal ways for pupils to provide their own views about the school, such as through a school council or pupils' forum. This limits the extent to which pupils can exercise independent discretion or judgement concerning school matters.
45. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. The school secretary monitors attendance registers, and instances of unexplained absence are carefully followed up. The school receives regular visits from the Education Welfare Service who also look into instances of unexplained absence. There are excellent procedures for encouraging good behaviour. The new behaviour policy, which includes an effective system of rewards and sanctions, is implemented consistently by all teachers to ensure that pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school. This is having a particularly beneficial impact on a small group of older pupils whose work has suffered through their unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour.
46. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils are now tested on entry to the school using the Local Education Authority baseline assessment system. This clearly shows that the overall entry profile of the current pupils in reception were below average. However, this system does not provide the school with a clear comparison with national data, although it does provide comparisons with other schools in the County. In addition to statutory testing at the end of both key stages, the school makes use of optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, and there is effective use of standardized mathematics tests at the end of Year 3 and 5. The school does not currently make use of nationally available spelling and reading tests, although the Key Stage 1 teacher conducts her own assessments. Again, however, these do not provide comparisons with national data that would more precisely pinpoint pupils' levels of attainment.
47. Whilst the school analyses some of its data, this is not done in a sufficiently thorough way. There is scrutiny of the national test data that is sent to every school, and use is made of Local Education Authority data. However, the school does not use available information to make long-term predictions about pupils' achievements. Too much is left to guesswork or educated hunches and there is not enough close statistical analysis. Consequently, the school is not able to set future targets for pupils with a sufficient degree of precision. The headteacher is aware of this but has been understandably preoccupied with essential aspects of planning that were not in place when she arrived. As soon as monitoring of the curriculum is effectively established, there is an intention that strategic analysis of assessment will be introduced.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Relationships with parents deteriorated after the last inspection with some parents removing their children as a result of concerns about standards of work and behaviour. The new headteacher and staff have been very successful in renewing and considerably improving links with parents and carers following this period of justifiable anxiety. The improved confidence of parents is helping pupils to come to school with more positive attitudes since they know that their parents are supportive of the school. This has been done by holding two consultation evenings since last March and by the staff making themselves available to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents now report that the school responds well to suggestions or complaints and that their individual concerns receive proper attention. On the parents' questionnaire sent out before the inspection, all parents expressed satisfaction with the way that the school works with parents.
49. Parents contribute well to the work of the school. They help with the art club and swimming, listen to readers and help with the organisation of the library. Parents find the reading diary helpful and several said that this is a useful point of exchange, with teachers and parents regularly writing messages to each other. The active Parents' Association meets regularly for social events such as the Christmas dinner and disco, and raises valuable sums of money for the school at the summer fete. Overall there are good links with parents; their positive impact and involvement with the work of the school is considerably helping to raise pupils' achievement, behaviour and personal development.
50. The pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting indicate that the majority of parents are now pleased with most aspects of the school. Aspects that particularly impress parents include the current quality of teaching, the management of the school and the high expectations of pupils. Parents are concerned about the amount of homework given, and the lack of extra curricular activities. Inspectors found that a new homework policy has just been introduced and is improving the regularity and consistency with which homework is set. There are some extra curricular activities available, and these will increase further as essential aspects of policy and planning are put into place. The headteacher and staff have been under some pressure to develop suitable procedures that were not securely in place before their arrival. To do this they have had to spend time at lunchtime and after school that might have been spent organising additional activities for pupils.
51. The school has established effective links with those parents who have children with special educational needs. They receive appropriate notification of their children's needs and are kept fully informed. They know the point of contact in the school and are encouraged to contribute to reviews of their child's progress.
52. The quality of information provided to parents about their child's progress is satisfactory. Parents find the summer term consultation evenings to review their child's progress valuable. Nearly all parents attend these. Reports are evaluative, providing a balance of positive comments and things to improve, although these omit what National Curriculum Levels they are likely to attain in the future. The home school agreement suitably summarizes the information the school makes available to parents. As at the time of the last inspection, the school does not include all required information in its prospectus. Items omitted include the figures relating to authorized and unauthorized attendance and the most recent Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 tests and assessments. The good links with the nearby playgroup are well established and provide an effective means for recruiting further pupils to the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The leadership and management of the school are now very good following a period of instability that has seriously affected the standards of pupils' work and relationships with parents. Improvement is due in large measure to the very recent reforms and organisational ability of the new headteacher. She has correctly identified a number of serious flaws in the running of the school that caused parents to remove their children. She has successfully begun to rebuild confidence in the school, but appreciates that some problems are deeply rooted and need more time to resolve.

54. A number of critical issues identified in the previous inspection report have only recently been acknowledged and have not been fully resolved. Development planning, until very recently, continued to lack manageable priorities and timescales. There was a failure to identify who was responsible for tackling development targets and there was little attempt to link developments with financial planning. The targets were not sufficiently monitored and the lack of measurable success criteria led to a lack of urgency. The new headteacher has drafted a new set of strategic responses to the school's problems and is seeking the broad support of new staff, the governing body and parents to ensure their success. The weak curriculum planning identified in the previous report continued to have an adverse impact on teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. This, in addition to the unsatisfactory management of pupils' behaviour, resulted in seriously deteriorating standards. National tests results in Key Stage 2 have plummeted to well below national standards. The headteacher knows that the prime objective is to raise these standards so that results at the end of Key Stage 2 build on the positive results at the end of Key Stage 1.
55. The governing body responded decisively when they realised that standards were slipping badly and that parents were removing their children. However, their lack of understanding, often resulting from insufficient information, prevented them forming an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They were unsure about the limits of their responsibilities and so hesitated to monitor standards of teaching and learning in classrooms. They were understandably reluctant to delve into issues that they thought lay within the professional judgement of teachers and were not encouraged to ask pertinent questions when standards started to seriously decline. Those governors who did ask about the weaknesses of the previous inspection, for instance about the reported misbehaviour of some pupils, did not feel that they got helpful answers. The tenacity of some governors, often with the support of parents, resulted eventually in the appointment of the new headteacher, although by this time standards had dropped alarmingly. The governors are improving rapidly. They meet regularly and are working successfully with the new headteacher and staff to improve matters. The governors do not have all the necessary legal requirements in place; performance management is not yet organised strategically and information about provisions is not collected. Consequently, the governors are not in a position to assure quality. Nevertheless there is improvement based on the growing trust between the governors and the new headteacher.
56. There has been a complete change of staff in recent months. This has made it difficult for the inspectors to judge the historical circumstances of the school. However, scrutiny of records and conversations with parents, pupils and governors indicate that some of the problems that caused low standards are well on the way to being resolved. Following a complete audit of provision, teachers' planning of the curriculum is to be based on principles agreed with the governing body. Each teacher has clearly defined curriculum responsibilities and is set to monitor provision in the subjects they are accountable for across the school. New nationally approved teaching materials are being introduced that will provide greater progression within each key stage and as pupils transfer from one key stage to the other. The teachers work well together, realising what is wrong and what needs to be done. This shared vision is a crucial component in improvement.
57. The management of special needs is good. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) produces paperwork that complies fully with the recommendations of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. The governor for special educational needs visits the school and is kept informed. Outside agencies, for instance the Learning and Behaviour support service, educational psychologist and nurse provide good support.
58. At the time of the last inspection, the school did not have a statement of aims. The aims are now clearly stated in the prospectus, emphasizing the importance of developing each child's full personal and academic potential. However, these aims tend to be general statements of intent and are not used to drive forward changes. More important are the immediate aims of the new headteacher. Her priorities are to improve behaviour, raise attainment, improve all round efficiency and ensure the school is safe. To improve standards, the new headteacher has implemented a programme of lesson observations. She has been effectively supported in doing this by the link inspector from the Local Education Authority. Clear records of the quality of teaching are shared with teachers so that they understand where they can improve further. In the past, the governing

body have not ensured that all teachers are appraised. By January 2001, the policy for managing teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, will be in place. This is important in order to identify weaknesses and build on the school's strengths. The recent government guidelines will be used, when they are agreed, to support teachers' professional development.

59. In the past, information from national tests and other assessments have not been used sufficiently to identify where pupils' attainment can be improved. There was insufficient understanding about how to measure progress and there was insufficient long term targeting to ensure that pupils achieved in line with their potential. This is still the case, even though this form of monitoring is improving. The headteacher realises, for instance, that not enough is known about how different groups of pupils perform. There is insufficient monitoring based on gender, prior attainment, age or background. As a result, the school cannot be certain that both lower attaining and higher attaining pupils are achieving as well as they could.
60. Financial planning, whilst satisfactory overall, has some areas of weakness. The governing body have not closely defined the responsibilities of its committees, the headteacher and staff or regularly monitor the school's income and expenditure to help it respond effectively to variations that occur over time. In future the headteacher is urging the governing body to plan its finances and developments from April to April so that each supports the other. At present, development planning is not well integrated with financial planning because they operate on a different cycle. Following her appointment, the Local Education Authority provided additional income to provide extra staffing to release the headteacher to concentrate on the priorities facing the school. This has been crucial in helping her restructure many aspects of provision that were uneconomic or inefficient. For instance, the headteacher has advised the governing body on how to implement the principles of best value. They appreciate the need for this and improvements are taking place. Grants are being used satisfactorily to support identified areas of provision. The costs of running a small school are considerable. The recent depletion in numbers makes the school uneconomic since the expenditure per pupil is well above average. Unless the school increases its numbers dramatically, it will continue to offer unsatisfactory value for money.
61. The school has sufficient teaching and support staff for the number of pupils in the school. Owing to the recent decline in numbers, classes are small with an advantageous pupil teacher ratio. However, in some years, such as last year's Year 6 and Year 2, there are very few, if any, pupils. This limits the extent to which pupils develop a sense of their own progress since they do not have enough other pupils of a similar age or attainment. Classroom assistants are used very well. This is very evident in the Key Stage 1 and reception class where the assistant often takes the reception group. Using the teacher's detailed planning, the assistant provides very good experiences that have a positive impact on children's progress. There is also very good use of support assistants in Key Stage 2, particularly to support lower attaining pupils needing extra help. The school has sufficient resources to meet the demands of the curriculum. The ratio of computers to pupils is a little above the national average. The recent provision of a computer suite with money from the National Grid for Learning is having a positive impact on standards. A recent audit of resources has highlighted uneven provision in some areas. For instance, whilst there are now sufficient computers, some aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum are not covered in enough depth because items of equipment and necessary software are not available. There are not enough artefacts in religious education, and the youngest pupils do not have enough outdoor equipment. Teachers make good use of resources in their teaching.
62. The accommodation for learning is satisfactory. The school is benefiting from redecoration and maintenance that had not been regularly attended to. The outside areas are suitable for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, with a hard surface and grass areas on the school premises and all weather football pitch and tennis court on nearby playing fields. Much needed adventure equipment for the school playground was added last year. Following an audit of accommodation, there is better use of available space. The headteacher now has an office, and the staffroom has been moved to the rear of the school where staff can keep an eye on pupils in the playground and where they can meet parents at the beginning and end of the day.

63. The school does not yet ensure that the principles of best value are applied in what it does and is not therefore giving satisfactory value for money. In the past, there has been insufficient comparison with other schools in order to identify how Suckley can improve, there has not been enough consultation with parents, and the low standards in Key Stage 2 have not been sufficiently rigorously challenged. There has not been enough monitoring of the curriculum to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their prior circumstances, make optimum progress. All this is now changing following the appointment of the new headteacher, who is aware of how the principles of best value operate. There is closer attention to how the school secures efficient and effective services and a clear appreciation of how the school's performance has fallen behind similar schools. The new partnership between the headteacher, staff, governing body and parents is the first sign that things are improving. However, there is some way to go before the school can claim that it offers satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to further improve the quality of education provided by the school, the governing body should now: -

- Improve Year 5 pupils' attainment in science by providing more opportunities for them to apply knowledge in practical situations. * (Paragraphs 7, 28, 90)
- Improve pupils' attainment in information and communication technology by (a) providing a greater range of software to support work across subjects and (b) providing more regular opportunities for pupils to use computers to control events and to simulate imaginary situations. (Paragraphs 12, 29, 61, 114, 115)
- Further improve the behaviour of pupils in Year 5 in order to improve their progress. *(Paragraphs 13, 14, 27)
- Make more use of assessment data to analyse patterns of learning and to provide longer-term predictions and targets to maximise individual pupils' achievement. (Paragraphs 47, 59, 88, 117)
- Provide better outdoor facilities and educational play equipment for younger pupils. *(Paragraphs 10, 29, 61, 66)

In addition to the above, the following less important items should be considered for inclusion in the Governors' Action Plan: -

- Include all required information in the Prospectus. (Paragraph 52)
- Ensure that governors comply with all legal requirements. (Paragraphs 55, 60)

* These issues have been identified for improvement in the school's development planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	13
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	31	54	15	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)	N/A	35
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	7

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	3	0	3

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	- (100)	- (100)	- (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

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	- (100)	- (100)	- (100)
	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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	2	0	2

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	- (53)	- (40)	- (67)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		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	- (53)	- (40)	- (67)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

Some boxes have not been completed because there were fewer than ten pupils in the group.

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	35
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	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	-	-

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)	2.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13.5
Average class size	18

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	146245
Total expenditure	147893
Expenditure per pupil	3608
Balance brought forward from previous year	6404
Balance carried forward to next year	4756

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

34

Number of questionnaires returned

12

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	38	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	54	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	54	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	31	15	8	0
The teaching is good.	54	38	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	38	15	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	46	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	54	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	23	15	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	0	38	46	15	0

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Inspectors' judgements support parents' largely positive views. Inspectors feel that the new headteacher has responded well to parents' concerns. Regular extra curricular activities include an art club, ball games, board games and visits. The recent Homework Policy has now regularized provision so that work at home suitably supports work done in class. Improved communication with parents includes better arrangements for teachers to be available at the beginning and end of the day to discuss the progress of individual pupils and there are more parents' information evenings. Reports to parents are good.

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

65. Children are admitted to the school in September and January of the academic year in which they are five. Only four children were of reception age during the inspection. Their level of attainment on entry was low. Baseline assessments are carried out in the first few weeks of the children starting school and these assessments indicate that the pupils have low literacy and numeracy skills. However observations carried out during the inspection indicate that the children have made good progress. By the time the children are five the majority have reached all of the Early Learning Goals. Children with special educational needs are identified early and, with effective support, make good progress. Standards in the reception have been sustained since the last inspection.
66. The school has worked hard to provide a stimulating and well-organised working environment. Resources for most of the areas of learning are adequate but there is a lack of resource provision for developing gross motor skills and equipment for pushing and pulling, which can be used as part of the outdoor learning environment. The curriculum is broad and enriched and follows the new Foundation Stage curriculum. The curriculum supports the children's intellectual, social and physical development. The induction procedures for the children starting school are very good and the school is working hard to establish good working relationships with the private pre-school providers. Parents appreciate the efforts which are made to ensure that school life is a positive and pleasant experience for everyone.
67. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good. Very good relationships exist between the teacher and the classroom assistant. The work is well planned by the teacher to ensure that the children have good opportunities to develop their language, literacy and mathematical skills through well-organised activities. There is a good balance between adult directed activities and child centred self-chosen activities. All members of staff have high expectations of the children's behaviour and for the manner in which the children approach activities. The classroom assistant and the teacher listen carefully to what the children have to say and through careful questioning develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. The teacher includes scientific, geographic and historical activities to stimulate curiosity and the classroom assistant guides the children effectively with her comments and questions. Both the teacher and classroom assistant manage the young children very well, making sure that they settle quickly and happily into daily routines.
68. Children's personal, social and emotional developments are given a high priority to good effect and learning in this area is very good. The children know what is expected of them and they behave very well. All of the children are interested and responsive, enjoying all the activities provided for them. All members of staff provide good role models for the children by helping them to form positive relationships and to care about others. The quality of teaching is good and the children are on line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the age of five.
69. In language and literacy all children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They are provided with a wide range of activities to encourage speaking and listening and an interest in books and the written word. The children listen attentively and they are confident speakers using appropriate vocabulary and constructing complex sentences. They know that print carries meaning and are able to read and recognise their own names. During lessons they enjoy listening to stories and handling and sharing books. The children are beginning to learn letters and letter sounds in a variety of purposeful activities. The children are aware of the purpose of writing and write their own names. The majority of the children form their letters correctly. By the time they are five the children have achieved the desirable learning outcome and attainment is in line with the expectations for their age. The good progress made by the children is as a result of very good planning and good teaching.
70. Children's mathematical development is in line with national expectations. Suitable activities such as recognition of number symbols and counting in sequence to ten and beyond are provided for the

development of their mathematical skills and they make good progress. A good foundation is laid for their future mathematics work. This is a result of good teaching.

71. No creative activities were observed during the inspection. However, progress in the creative areas of learning is judged to be good through observing outcomes, talking to children and scrutinising planning. The children paint pictures of themselves in some detail and the pictures show that the children have opportunities to use a range of media. They sing with obvious enjoyment in assemblies. Teachers' planning is thorough and provides separate activities for younger and older pupils in order to develop their respective needs.
72. The children's fine motor physical ability is in line with that which is expected nationally. They have sufficient opportunities to handle tools for writing, drawing and sticking. They are developing their skill in cutting using scissors. There was no opportunity to observe the pupils using large apparatus or developing body control or balance during the inspection. The quality of teaching in this area is good. For example the classroom assistant follows the teacher's plans in supporting the children to make houses, discussing with them the shape of windows and doors, and asking appropriate questions to enable the children to make the doors and windows open and close.

ENGLISH

73. The last inspection report judged that attainment was in line with national expectations in all aspects of English at both key stages. Since then the school has had good results at Key Stage 1 but poor results at Key Stage 2. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the Year 2 pupils are on line to exceed national expectations by the end of Key Stage in reading and should match national expectations in writing. Pupils in Year 5 are on line to match national expectations in English if their current good progress continues.
74. Standards in speaking and listening in Year 2 are above national expectations. Pupils are attentive and follow instructions well. They express their likes and dislikes clearly and can carry on a conversation within a group appropriately, listening and responding to each other, taking note of what others say and making adjustments to their own comments accordingly. The pupils of reception age speak confidently and are rapidly expanding their vocabulary. They can explain what they are doing in well-formed sentences and listen to their teacher and to other adults intently. Pupils throughout the school are eager to respond to questions and enjoy taking part in oral activities.
75. Current standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are above national expectations. Higher attaining pupils read confidently and with expression using contextual, graphic and phonic clues to help them decipher unknown words. They read for pleasure and understand humour in a story. They know the differences between fiction and non-fiction texts, and they use contents and index pages. Pupils with average attainment are already reading fluently at Level 2, the standard expected for their age. Lower attaining pupils need additional support to read but enjoy reading, recognising common words on sight and are beginning to use phonic and picture clues to decipher unknown words. The skills involved in using dictionaries and alphabetical order to find words are up to the standard expected in Year 2.
76. In Year 5, pupils' attainment in reading matches national expectations for their age and could be above this when they take the national tests at the end of Year 6. Higher attaining pupils in Year 5 read with confidence. They alter their voices to reflect characters in a play and work together co-operatively when acting out the play. They can discuss characters and have views about where various characters in a play would stand or sit, how they would move and what costume they might wear. They successfully debate relationships between characters in a play and can predict things which might happen next. The pupils with average attainment read using good expression. They have clear ideas about what they like and dislike and use reference books appropriately. The lower attaining pupils also read fluently. They self-correct and use a variety of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. The Literacy Hour and continuing parental involvement in reading are having a positive impact on pupils' progress and their attainment. From the beginning of their school life children are taught to read through a variety of methods. They learn initial sounds, practise reading together from Big Books during the Literacy Hour and their teacher supports their use of expression

very well. They read at home most days and parents and teachers make positive comments in their reading diaries valuing the skill at home and at school. In all classrooms there is a good range of reading and information books available.

77. Whilst attainment in writing in Year 2 matches national expectations, the school is less successful in teaching pupils to write than to read. Children of reception age are making a good start. They are making marks on paper as soon as they start school, and as they are exposed more and more to the teacher's and the classroom assistants' modelling of writing, their skills improve until words are recognisable. They hold their pencils correctly. The pupils in Year 1 are beginning to use full stops and capital letters in their work, which is legible and makes sense. The highest attaining pupils are beginning to use more advanced forms of punctuation such as commas and speech marks. Their use is not always accurate but they are demonstrating an awareness of grammar. Average attaining pupils are working at the standards expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils write for a range of purposes. Whilst pupils use their writing skills throughout the curriculum, particularly in History and Science, their work, although descriptive, is somewhat brief and lacks care. Subject specific vocabulary is beginning to be used in Science but punctuation is less well used.
78. Pupils in Year 5 are making good progress in their writing following a period when standards seriously declined. They are not yet matching national expectations for their age, but will reach expectations by the time they take the tests in Year 6 if their current good progress continues. Teachers in Key Stage 2 are attending to several areas of weakness. Pupils have not completed enough extended writing. Their written work is sometimes brief and hurried and is not always thoughtfully organised. During the inspection there was little evidence of pupils drafting and re-drafting their work. As a result, pupils have not developed the ability to be self-critical. Whilst there is provision in other areas of the curriculum for regular writing, for instance in history, geography and science, the level of challenge does not sufficiently support written work in English. For instance, some pupils are unable to label a diagram in science accurately or tidily.
79. Handwriting skills are being taught effectively in the reception. Children learn how to form letters correctly using their teacher's script as a model and practising letter formation physically, such as writing letters 'in the air' with their fingers. They learn to construct patterns that lead them into making joins between letters. By the time they enter Year 1, pupils are learning how to make simple joins between letters and their work is well presented and neat. Pupils in Year 2 are less careful about joining their script and their work is below the standard expected for their age. In Key Stage 2 the standard of handwriting is well below that expected for pupils of their age. By Year 5 many pupils are failing to join their letters correctly and their written work is poorly presented and lacks care. The content of their writing is often better than its careless appearance.
80. Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) are identified early. Their work is well planned to meet their needs as identified in their Individual Education Plans and they make good progress. The teachers have a good knowledge about the ways in which children learn and ensure that their lessons are organised in ways that encompass a variety of learning styles. A pupil with sight impairment is particularly well supported. A teacher from the SEN division visits the school once a week to work with the pupils in a one to one setting and to offer support to the SEN Co-ordinator and the class teacher. The school has managed to borrow special books to enable the pupils to gain full access to the English curriculum. Well-trained support staff help pupils with SEN effectively in all aspects of their English work. Pupils with SEN throughout the school make good progress.
81. The quality of teaching is good overall and is very good in Key Stage 1. Teachers have a firm grasp of the Literacy Strategy and make satisfactory use of day-to-day assessments of what their pupils know and can do to plan the next stage of work. The detailed planning for the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 has a positive impact on pupils' standards. Teachers have good questioning skills, draw out pupils' responses skilfully and then extend them. They show enthusiasm for the subject and their own knowledge of the English curriculum is good. They have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, which they share with them. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of their own learning. Unfortunately at the top end of the school the

pupils are not yet achieving the very high expectations which have been set. However, during the inspection, the team did see evidence that standards are improving. A strength of the teaching is the very good behaviour management strategies employed by all adults and the management of resources, which are varied and well used. The classrooms are bright and literate with good examples of labelling around the room.

82. The quality of the medium term planning documents is satisfactory and the short-term planning documents are good. The medium term plans follow the guidelines laid down by the National Literacy Strategy. The short-term plans reflect the regular assessments that are made by the teachers on the progress of individual pupils. All teachers give their pupils targets to reach and parents are informed of these. The school has used its financial grants well to purchase a good range of resources designed to extend pupils' skills in English. There is a range of Big Books. The English Co-ordinator is aware of the need to build up resources that will appeal to boys and girls. There is a good range of information books in classrooms and in libraries. The Co-ordinator leads the subject with skill. She is very keen, up-to-date and is currently redrafting the English policy to take account of new initiatives.

MATHEMATICS

83. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Since then, results have remained above schools nationally in Key Stage 1 but have seriously deteriorated in Key Stage 2. In the year 2000 Key Stage 2 tests there were too few pupils to make accurate comparisons. However, the 1999 results were in the bottom five per cent nationally and far below similar schools. Results were also very low in 1998. This was the case for both boys and girls. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the Year 2 pupils are on line to attain the expected Level 2 by the end of Key Stage 1, and that the pupils in Year 5 are on line to attain the expected Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2, if recent improvements are maintained.
84. The new headteacher, with support from colleagues and the Local Education Authority, has rapidly set about improving standards in Key Stage 2. Teachers have measured what pupils know and carefully adjust what is taught to ensure that pupils cover all the relevant aspects of learning. Whilst the standards of Year 5 pupils are still below the national average, very rapid improvement is taking place. Inspectors found it difficult to identify exactly what went wrong because all the staff have changed and there are few written records. However, a number of parents, governors and pupils claim that the low expectations of behaviour and work in Key Stage 2 had an adverse impact on standards that caused many parents to remove their children.
85. In work seen at the end of Key Stage 1, Year 2 pupils are in line with national expectations for their age group. Pupils are achieving well and making good progress in individual lessons and over time. Good use of the National Numeracy Strategy materials help pupils to use the language of mathematics well and apply lessons about number successfully to everyday situations. For instance, in a well-organised Year 2 lesson, pupils were learning to tell the time. They all knew what "half past" meant, and most had a good understanding of "quarter past" and "quarter to". Higher attainers confidently understood that "8.45" means "a quarter to nine". Good progress is evident in the reception class. Pupils rapidly learn to count out loud with the teacher and the highest attainer recognises the number symbols from one to ten. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who are higher attainers each make good progress irrespective of their particular ages. This is because teachers plan for the whole attainment range. The proportion of pupils gaining the advanced Level 3 in the Key Stage 2 national tests shows that pupils of higher attainment are being suitably stretched. Opportunities are taken to reinforce mathematics understanding in other subjects, although this aspect of provision is not yet formally planned for and so some opportunities are lost.
86. There are no pupils in the current Year 6 and it is not therefore possible to report on what is happening at the end of Key Stage 2. In Year 5, pupils are making up lost ground rapidly. They did not progress well in Years 3 and 4 and are therefore behind pupils of similar ages in other schools. In one lesson seen, middle attaining pupils mentally subtracted 43 from 57 before discussing

different ways that this sum could be written down. They calculate the perimeter of simple shapes and calculate 74385×3 . Pupils explore graphical ways of representing data; in one lesson, for instance, pupils constructed bar charts to represent their favourite types of fruit. Examples such as this place pupils at Level 3 of the National Curriculum whereas Year 5 should ideally be coping with more advanced Level 4 work. Not even higher attainers work confidently with decimals or fractions, which by now they should be doing. Nevertheless, scrutiny of pupils' books shows that good progress is being made from their low starting point. As in Key Stage 1, pupils do mathematics calculations in other subjects, although this is not yet sufficiently well organised. Consequently, opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding at a compatible level to that in mathematics lessons are sometimes lost. Both higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are given individual help to ensure they progress well. There is little difference between the learning patterns of boys or girls.

87. The quality of teaching is good across the school. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. All teachers have good subject knowledge. They understand the National Numeracy Strategy well and apply its principles successfully. As a result, pupils acquire new knowledge systematically and there is continuity in their learning. Teachers in both key stages plan well for the full attainment and age range. This is an important strength since there is a considerably diversity of needs in each class. In the Key Stage 1 class, for instance, whilst Year 2 pupils told the time, reception pupils made a model watch with moving hands. This made them interested in what the moving watch hands did and the classroom assistant was able to give them some preliminary understanding of how a watch is used to tell the time. Because teachers know the needs of higher and lower attainers well, they compensate successfully for them in their teaching. They set separate work and ask a range of questions tailored to particular pupils' needs. Pupils learn at a pace that suits them and they consequently make good progress. The emphasis on good manners and hard work amongst older pupils is beginning to have an affect. Some pupils are still a little silly and tend to disrupt, although this is becoming less frequent as time goes by. There was even a noticeable improvement in older pupils' attitudes during the three days of the inspection. The very good management of pupils' behaviour is a crucial strength in improving standards of pupils' work. Marking of pupils' work is often evaluative, helping pupils to become increasingly self-critical. The new homework policy provides commonly agreed systems for ensuring that work at home supports work done in class. This helps pupils to have a clear knowledge of their learning so that they gradually develop independent learning skills.
88. The management of the subject is good. The Key Stage 1 teacher and the main Key Stage 2 teacher share responsibility for mathematics. A recent curriculum review resulted in improved planning, leading to smoother learning experience across both key stages that help pupils to achieve well. Recent monitoring of teaching and help from the Local Education Authority Numeracy Consultant successfully identified areas for further improvement. For instance, there is now a greater focus on helping Key Stage 2 pupils to handle data and to calculate using fractions. The school is keen to improve its statistical analysis of results so that it can target learning more precisely to individual pupils' needs. To do this, the school, quite properly, wants to improve its assessment systems. The school is considering purchasing new books that will help pupils to apply mathematics knowledge more successfully to everyday situations. In being open to change, the school is developing a culture of continual improvement. This communicates itself to pupils who want to work hard in response to the hard work of teachers.

SCIENCE

89. The end of Key Stage 1 teachers' assessments in 2000 are inconclusive because there were too few pupils for statistical analysis of results. The Key Stage 1 assessments in 1999 were well above the national average. In work seen in the current Year 2, pupils are working in line with national expectations. Differences between previous assessments and current levels of work result from the different prior attainment of the year groups. The pupils in Year 2 have grasped the basic concept of a fair test and control simple variables successfully in practical work. They understand that they have to be able to give reasons for their predictions. In a lesson about the effects of heat on substances, for instance, pupils applied their knowledge to predict what would happen to various materials. They used subject specific vocabulary such as "temperature", "solid" and "three-dimensional" confidently as they made accurate and thoughtful observations. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection report.
90. There has been serious deterioration in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection when pupils' attainment matched national expectations. There were too few pupils for accurate statistical comparisons to be made in the national tests in 2000. In both 1999 and 1998, attainment was well below schools nationally and well below similar schools. This is because standards were allowed to slip to an unacceptable low. Pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are only just beginning to behave sensibly, following the arrival of new teachers. The pupils in Year 5 find it difficult to organise their equipment and ideas for practical work. They require a lot of direction and support in order to set up a simple experiment. For example, when making a circuit, two pupils, who knew how to test a bulb, had to involve their teacher in the process. They are beginning to hypothesise and to give reasons for their predictions but this is at a very early stage. However, positive changes are underway. Pupils may not make up sufficient lost ground to match national expectations by the end of Year 6, although the teacher is determined that they should. Much will depend on whether pupils are able to respond to the teachers' higher expectations.
91. Teaching is now very good overall with very high expectations for pupils' behaviour and work. The pupils' learning in Key Stage 1 is benefiting from these very high expectations. However, in Key Stage 2, teachers' very high expectations do not always impact sufficiently on the quality of pupils' learning. This is because some pupils let their concentration wander and are over reliant on the teacher for help. Teachers' management of behaviour is very good. They set tasks and ask questions which both challenge the pupils and support them to make connections. This supports high quality learning in Key Stage 1, but is only just beginning to have an impact on learning in Key Stage 2. Teachers insist that the pupils use correct terms such as "prediction", "hypothesis" and "conclusion". Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, work well together. They sustain their concentration well and remain on task. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing the skill of recording their findings. The skill of recording is not well developed in Key Stage 2 and this is directly linked to the pupils' lack of ability to organise their thoughts and work. Marking of written work is regular and positive, but does not always tell pupils how to improve. There is no evidence of marking being used to record Levels of attainment. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how they compare with expected Levels for their age group.
92. The policy for Science provides a suitably framework for planning. The school is using a nationally recognised scheme of work which provides a good basis for teachers' short term planning. Teachers use their day-to-day assessments to inform their weekly planning but there is insufficient use of more formal assessments to modify long and medium term planning. The Science Co-ordinator is effective and understands the relative strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She monitors teachers' planning and has provided good support for the newly qualified teacher. The school is building up its resources for the teaching of Science. The library has a variety of sections containing good quality information books for science and there are plans to use computers more regularly to support work. The classrooms provide adequate space for the pupils to take part in practical work.

ART

93. Although no teaching of art was seen during the inspection, judgements could be made from display work, scrutiny of planning documentation and conversations with pupils and teachers. Attainment in art is good at the end of Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection of 1997. Art is better in Key Stage 1 because pupils are given more time for art than in most schools, and there are some very imaginative approaches that grasp pupils' enthusiasm. In Key Stage 2 the time available for art is in line with schools nationally.
94. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use assorted fabrics to weave colourful wall displays. Year 2 pupils clearly understand the difference between the warp and the weft and select different coloured materials thoughtfully to change the final appearance of their displays. In doing this, pupils think carefully about how to match different colours. They also evaluate their work using criteria such as "Does it look attractive?" and "Have I worked neatly?" Good three-dimensional work includes realistic plates of food made from strips of paper and sensitive mini stained glass windows that replicate the colours of the stained glass in the local church. Pupils' progress is good because teachers encourage them to look closely at what they draw. When drawing hedgehogs, for instance, pupils had noticed how long the spines were and showed this clearly in their final efforts.
95. Whilst no teaching was seen in Key Stage 2, scrutiny of pupils' work and conversations show that when pupils work carefully, their attainment matches expectations for their respective ages. Pupils in Year 5 produce detailed observational studies of flowers. Whilst higher attainers include sensitive use of tonal variation that introduces a quality of depth into their work, this is not evident in the drawings of all pupils. Some drawings are too rushed, lacking a sense of precision and pride. Some flamboyant mask designs, based on historical Greek originals, make imaginative use of cotton wool and coloured paper. Lessons in colour theory successfully help pupils to produce careful paintings where they successfully mix and match colours for special affects.
96. Insufficient teaching was seen to form a conclusive judgement about its quality. Nevertheless, scrutiny of planning and displayed work shows that teachers organise successful lessons, making increasingly good use of nationally recommended schemes of work. As a result, pupils are clear about what they have to do and develop sound techniques using both two and three-dimensional media. The use of three-dimensional art has improved since the previous inspection when it was rarely attempted. As a result, pupils' creative development is not restricted to routine approaches; imaginative projects give pupils' self confidence so that few are heard to say, "I'm no good at art". Teachers know what they want pupils to understand and support pupils' efforts by providing helpful verbal feedback that tells them what to do to improve.
97. The recently appointed co-ordinator of art is enthusiastic. She wants to extend pupils' understanding by using different materials and reference sources. However, a lack of assessment strategies to measure pupils' attainment makes it difficult for teachers to accurately assess pupils' long and medium term progress. Since the previous inspection, there is better discrete teaching of art, whereas previously it was often only taught through other subjects. Recently introduced guidance is beginning to be used to provide a clearer idea of what levels pupils are working to. The resources for art are satisfactory, supporting a broad range of suitable activities.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is satisfactory at the end of both key stages, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils understand the processes involved in designing, making and evaluating products and apply these with increasing confidence, as they grow older. Pupils progress satisfactorily in individual lessons and over time.
99. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 produce design and make a building using boxes, masking tape and glue. In the process they learn to evaluate their products using criteria such as "Does it do the job I wanted it to do" and "Is it strong enough?" They know that in order to make something well, they have to design it carefully, thinking about who it is made for and how much it

might cost. These activities successfully develop pupils' ability to combine and join materials and provide good opportunities to add various details so that the models look more realistic.

100. By the end of Year 5, pupils have made packages to contain marzipan sweets as a Christmas gift. This helps them to appreciate that simple products, such as commercial packages, have to be carefully designed if they are to be fit for their purpose. Pupils develop confidence using subject specific vocabulary such as "scoring", "tabs", "capacity", "structure" and "assemble". Pupils produce accurate written and verbal evaluations using criteria such as "Is the product ornamental or functional and what affect will have on potential purchasers?" The project also provides useful cross-curricular connections to mathematics, English, science and art.
101. A small amount of good teaching was seen in Key Stage 1, although this was insufficient to provide a secure indication of the quality of teaching across the school. From available evidence, that includes teachers' planning, work on display and conversations with teachers and pupils, the quality of teaching is sound. Recognition of the needs of both lower and higher attainers, and clear identification and support for pupils with special educational needs, promotes sound learning that supports pupils' intellectual and practical progress. Recent improvements in Key Stage 2 include a greater emphasis on pupils' written planning and evaluation. The unsatisfactory organisation of lessons, that was evident in the last inspection, has now improved. Pupils think more clearly about what they are doing and create better links between the intellectual and practical aspects of learning.
102. The recently appointed co-ordinator is introducing nationally recommended schemes. These help teachers to organise the curriculum so that progress is more continuous within and across the key stages. These schemes also provide useful strategies for assessing pupils' work. Until recently, assessment was fairly haphazard, not always providing teachers with a clear idea of how pupils were improving. There are sufficient tools and materials and although there is no specialist space for design and technology, available space is used successfully. The concerns in the previous inspection about safety have been successfully resolved.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Whilst no lessons were observed during the inspection, interviews with pupils and teachers and evidence from planning shows that attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 5, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress irrespective of their age or prior attainment. Those with special educational needs receive helpful support, enabling them to progress well. There is also effective support for higher attaining pupils, who make sound progress.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 study the geography of the surrounding area. They know who lives furthest away and who lives close to the school. In doing this, pupils develop a sound understanding of distance, which they apply when making simple maps and diagrams. They also construct simple graphs of their travel to school. This effectively supports their work in mathematics, helping them to apply rules of number and the concept of data handling. From scrutiny of pupils' work, there is little difference in the quality of boys' or girls' achievements. Pupils are successfully involved in making some decisions about what happens to the school. For instance, pupils have contributed successfully to deliberations about current changes to the building and playground. This effectively places their geographical study in a relevant and topical context and makes learning come alive.
105. Whilst there was no teaching of geography in Key Stage 2 during the inspection, past records show that pupils continue to develop a more discriminating understanding of places. For instance they know facts about the British Isles and compare these with other parts of the world. In the near future, the school is to have an Internet link to a school in Australia. This enterprising initiative will provide good opportunities for pupils to hear first hand accounts from Australian children about their lives and circumstances.

106. Whilst no teaching was seen, records clearly show that teachers plan successfully using nationally recommended schemes, which are adapted successfully to meet the needs of the full age and attainment range. As a result, pupils learn in a systematic and organised way, helping them to present work that is thoughtful, although not always well presented. This was evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work in Year 5, where some work was hurried, with insufficient attention to page layout and presentation. Teachers mount interesting and informative displays that support pupils' learning.
107. The new co-ordinator is effectively building up relevant and interesting resources. There are books, posters and educational games that grasp pupils' interest. For instance, a game about children's rights and needs in India provides a wealth of geographical detail, whilst helping pupils to develop empathy for others who suffer disadvantageous personal circumstances. Such work successfully supports other efforts to promote moral, social and cultural understanding. Since the last inspection, resources have been improved, as has the planning of what is taught.

HISTORY

108. Whilst only one lesson was seen during the inspection, evidence from teachers' planning and interviews with teachers and pupils show that attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils are in Year 5. Standards have therefore been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' progress satisfactorily, irrespective of the age or starting point, and there is good support for those with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils have work that is relevant to their needs and therefore make sound progress.
109. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of Victorian household implements. For instance, they know that people used old flat irons that had to be heated because there was no electricity. They successfully talk about different skylines, noting that Victorian households had no television aerials. In recording their observations, pupils learn to compare and contrast pieces of information relating to different times and places and in the process develop an understanding of chronology. The home corner, which is set out as a Victorian kitchen, provides good opportunities for role-play, particularly when pupils dress in period costume. This brings their learning alive helping them to appreciate what it must have been like to live during those times.
110. By the time pupils reach Year 5, they develop an understanding of the history of democracy, looking first of all at early political developments in Athens and Sparta over 2000 years ago. In doing this they make clear links to the Olympic games, which brings in very topical aspects of learning that catches pupils' imaginations. Pupils develop an understanding of chronology by drawing accurate time lines identifying principal events and historical changes. They begin to interpret events taking account of where bias or distortion occurs. For instance, they realise that some historical events are not always accurately recorded because it is in someone's personal interest to present a rosier or bleaker picture than was actually the case.
111. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was good. Other evidence, including teachers' planning, shows that lessons are well prepared with good use made of limited resources. As a result pupils enjoy learning. Teachers' management of behaviour is very good. Teachers are welcoming, enthusiastic and well organised. This helps to promote a productive learning atmosphere in which pupils settle satisfactorily to their work. Classroom assistants are also well prepared, often taking a group of pupils that need special support. For instance, in the Key Stage 1 history lesson, the classroom assistant took the reception children to one side to give them work that was ideally suited to their particular stage of understanding and as a result they learnt well and made good progress.
112. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and planning to build up resources so that there are a range of materials to stimulate the whole age and attainment range. The planning of the curriculum is good, although use of assessment, whilst clearly identified, is not yet used to inform medium term planning. Work in history successfully supports language development through the regular opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are doing in small groups and with the full class.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 5. This is because, until recently, the school lacked the necessary equipment to provide regular lessons for pupils, and there is still a lack of software to improve ICT across all subjects. Also, whilst attainment in the previous inspection matched national expectations at the end of both key stages, there was a rapid deterioration in standards due to the lack of regular teaching. This has only recently begun to be addressed. Recent improvements include the increasingly effective use of new computers and a new computer suite that allows a larger number of pupils to work on computers at the same time. The recent connection to the Internet and the National Grid For Learning is further extending pupils' growing understanding of what computers can do.
114. Limited class teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection. However, computers were in use in classrooms by individual pupils and in small groups in the computer suite. Conversations with pupils and a scrutiny of lesson planning in both key stages shows that pupils are beginning to benefit from discrete lessons in ICT. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils store information in the form of pictures, words and charts, and during the inspection stored information in the form of a database. The data included the pupils' name and the name, height and weight of their Teddy. In this way, pupils appreciated that ICT can be used to store information for later retrieval. This information can be analysed using the database. Whilst there is some use of computers across subjects, for instance to support written work in English and to consolidate understanding in mathematics, the school realise that there are insufficient applications to support work in all subjects. Pupils do not use computers enough to explore imaginary situations or to give instructions to make things happen.
115. Pupils in Year 5 used computers to design attractive adverts for the forthcoming Carol Concert. They manipulated the size of text and used different colours in order to present information in an eye-catching way. This taught pupils to create, test and refine their initial ideas to appeal to the target audience of other pupils, parents and friends of the school. However, pupils did not understand how to incorporate art clips in their work and were unable to integrate different applications, for instance a word processor with a painting package, to further improve their work. Lack of available resources prevents pupils monitoring events such as simple lighting or sound circuits. As in Key Stage 1, pupils in Key Stage 2 use different applications across other subjects, although lack of formal planning means that opportunities are lost.
116. Insufficient teaching of ICT was seen to form a secure judgement about its quality. In lessons seen, teachers were enthusiastic to extend pupils' understanding. There was good management of available resources and pupils were kept on task. Teachers are growing in confidence as a result of recent investment in new software and hardware and are beginning to use the new suite confidently to teach a whole class. This saves time and helps pupils to learn at a more productive rate. Teachers encourage pupils to use computers for research in subjects such as religious education and history, but have not yet explored more sophisticated aspects of new technology such as digital imaging or video conferencing.
117. The recently arrived co-ordinator for ICT is keen to encourage staff and pupils to make full use of computers. Although systems have not yet been fully implemented for monitoring how computers are used, she is aware of the varied uses of computers and is enthusiastic about making computers applications available across the subjects of the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, there is improved guidance for pupils; there is better use of time and no indication of the directionless play when using computers that was evident in the 1997 inspection. The Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum are not yet satisfactorily taught, although there is provisional planning for this to happen as the necessary software and hardware is purchased. Use of assessment is insufficiently developed. This prevents teachers or pupils having a clear idea of what National Curriculum Levels pupils are working at.

MUSIC

118. No lessons in music were timetabled during the days of the inspection and it is not therefore possible to provide first hand accurate judgements about pupils' attainment. Evidence is gained from singing during assemblies, conversations with pupils and teachers and through a scrutiny of documentation. From this secondary evidence it would appear that attainment is at least in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment was above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and was in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards have been broadly maintained therefore, although detailed comparisons are not possible because of the lack of secure inspection evidence.
119. Pupils in both key stages enjoy singing. Their intonation is secure when singing lower notes, but is less accurate on higher notes. The school has identified this and gives regular lessons in singing technique in order to improve pupils' aural perception. They enjoy singing a varied repertoire in class music lessons and when performing in school productions. Pupils in both key stages sing in rounds. This successfully develops their ability to perform independent parts and helps to improve their intonation. Pupils comply with National Curriculum requirements by performing and composing their own music, although pupils in Year 5 do not confidently recall the simple structures of music, such as drone, sequence or repetition, that are used in composition. Children spoken to confirm that they regularly use tuned and untuned percussion, paying attention to aspects of technique. For instance, they control the dynamics of the music and develop the use of graphic and simple conventional notation. Pupils accurately recall music heard in assembly. One boy particularly enjoyed Holst's 'The Planets' and spoke enthusiastically about music they had heard by Mozart and Beethoven. Opportunities to listen to serious music contribute well to pupils' cultural understanding. There are no visiting instrumental teachers. As a result, higher attaining pupils, or those that have a particular interest, are unable to develop musical skills to a more advanced level. Lack of instrumental tuition also limits the development of ensemble playing that is important in the development of musical youngsters.
120. The quality of teaching cannot be accurately gauged because no teaching was seen. However, there is spirited leading of singing in assemblies, which pupils enjoy. Specialist teaching of music is provided by a visiting teacher, who was not in school on the days of the inspection. This teacher makes good use of a nationally recommended scheme and provides useful teaching ideas for the other teachers.
121. The co-ordination of music has been taken over by the new headteacher. She is aware of recent government guidance over how to assess pupils' skills, and is intending to make use of these materials to further improve standards of music making. There are suitable resources for music including pitched and non-pitched percussion and some electronic keyboards. Regular shows provide good opportunities for pupils to develop and display their skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. Whilst no lessons were seen during the inspection, scrutiny of teachers' planning and conversations with pupils and teachers shows that attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 5, although the range of activities offered is limited due to the lack of a school hall. Standards have therefore been maintained in Key Stage 1 and have improved in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection when PE was not well taught. However, limitations of accommodation means that opportunities for gymnastics and dance are constrained, particularly at Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator is exploring the use of the village hall and local secondary school facilities to improve provision.
123. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 show a good sense of rhythm in their dance work and successfully co-ordinate their movements using a range of sequenced actions. They evaluate what they do using criteria such as "I could have done it better if ..." and "I did this well because ...". All pupils are given the opportunity to swim and several already swim the 25 metres required of older pupils. By Year 5, both boys and girls develop the skills necessary to participate in team games such as football, cricket, netball and rounders. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls, and those with special educational needs are very successfully integrated in all activities, including a pupil who is visually impaired. During the week of the inspection, girls as well

as boys were successfully learning how to pass, dribble and retain possession of the ball. In doing this pupils acquire good team skills and co-ordination.

124. Whilst no teaching was observed, teachers' planning is clear and detailed, showing good progression in well-structured sequences of activities. Teachers are conscious of how the subject promotes good health and stress the need for safety at all times. They use the limited equipment well, although realise that they are unable to promote successfully all required activities because of the accommodation problems. All teachers emphasise correct use of PE kit, which was not the case at the time of the last inspection. In Key Stage 1, there is also a good emphasis on dance, which was not successfully taught at the time of the last inspection.
125. The co-ordinator is improving the challenge for higher attaining pupils, which was criticised in the last report. She is monitoring the curriculum to ensure its relevance and usefulness and is aware of the need to develop further assessment so that pupils are able to gauge whether they are meeting targets. Local facilities are well used to support the limited space available. During the inspection, Key Stage 2 pupils enjoyed a session on the nearby all weather pitch.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Very little teaching of religious education was seen during the inspection. Judgements are therefore based on interviews with teachers and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and scrutiny of documentation. This evidence shows that pupils attain in line with the recommendations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Key Stage 1 and when pupils are in Year 5, as they did at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory. Their progress is supported effectively through regular lessons in religious education and through the daily collective acts of worship.
127. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are familiar with the features of the main Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter. They also know about some of the festivals of other religions such as the Hindu Festival of Lights. Pupils are actively encouraged to link Bible teaching with everyday life. In one assembly, for instance, pupils were shown wrapped Christmas presents. This was linked to the gift of God through Jesus. This helped to bring the underlying moral message, that we should give as God has given to us, effectively to life, helping pupils to apply lessons to everyday situations.
128. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know about different places of worship. For instance, pupils in Year 5 have drawn detailed diagrams of the interior of a Hindu temple, including the various artefacts used in worship to promote a reverent atmosphere. In learning about this, pupils understand that whilst different peoples worship in different ways, it is common across religions for people to need opportunities for quiet reflection and prayer and that the place where this is done is very special. This also helps pupils to develop tolerance and respect for people from different backgrounds and cultures.
129. Insufficient teaching was seen to form conclusive judgements about its quality. Nevertheless, teachers' planning shows that they are secure in their subject knowledge. They plan interesting lessons that provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their own values and feelings. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1 where regular discussions support pupils' learning by providing them with a positive moral framework for living that helps them to distinguish right from wrong. There are also regular opportunities for role-play that bring lessons alive and help pupils to think carefully about how to apply moral codes to real-life situations. Teachers are aware of the different age and attainment levels, helping pupils to achieve in line with their respective needs. However, some marking does not clearly tell pupils where they can improve, and there are missed opportunities to correct weaker spelling, grammar and punctuation. Acts of worship are well planned and effectively celebrate both Christian and other religions. Achievement is celebrated in a weekly assembly, which provides good opportunities for raising pupils' self esteem and worth in the eyes of others. Pupils spoken to confirm that behaviour and attitudes have improved in recent times.

130. The co-ordinator, who is new, is effectively monitoring planning and providing useful advice to the other staff. She appreciates the need to improve the assessment of what pupils know so that weaker aspects of pupils' understanding can be identified and planned for more thoughtfully. Resources are unsatisfactory. Whilst there are enough printed materials, including books, posters and illustrations, there are not enough artefacts for pupils to handle and look at.