

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SACRED HEART RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ware

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117493

Headteacher: Mr P Coldwell

Reporting inspector: Phil Mann  
23219

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 225261

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Broadmeads  
Ware  
Hertfordshire  
Postcode: SG12 9HY

Telephone number: 01920 461678

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Jean McAleer

Date of previous inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> April 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Phil Mann 23219	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English as an additional language Children under five English History Geography Physical education	How high are standards? - attainment and progress How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Ann Taylor 19743	Lay inspector		How high are standards? - attitudes, behaviour, personal development and attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Richard Evans 20692	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information technology Design and technology Art Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sacred Heart RC Primary School has 120 pupils on roll, aged 4 to 11. It is located in the Hertfordshire town of Ware. The majority of pupils live close to the school but some live in surrounding villages. The school buildings were built in 1970 and are surrounded by a playground and playing field. The average class size is 24 pupils. The current circumstances of most families are above average and 3 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Six per cent of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language and this is above average.

At the time of the inspection, there were 17 children under five in the reception class. The attainment of children at the start of school is above average. Twenty per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. There are 18 pupils at the early, school-based stages of assessment and provision. Currently, there are two pupils with a statement of special educational need, with an extra six pupils needing the support of outside agencies. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average.

The school's current aims and priorities are very appropriate for the circumstances of the school. The school has exceeded the targets it has set to raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

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

This is a school that has undergone considerable change in the recent past. It continues to provide a caring, Christian environment, enabling pupils to learn and grow. The very good leadership by the new headteacher is providing the necessary direction and impetus for making the school effective. As a result, standards are continually being raised and the school now provides a high standard of education for its pupils and good value for money.

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

- High standards are being achieved in English, mathematics and science at both key stages.
- Standards in information technology are well above average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2.
- Standards are above average in all other subjects in Key Stage 1 as a result of consistently high quality teaching. Pupils achieve well in art, history and music at Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and relationships are very positive around the school.
- Curricular provision including that for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The headteacher and governing body provide dynamic leadership for the school.

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

- The consistency and quality of teaching at Key Stage 2.
- The outdoor play provision for children in the reception class.

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

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

There has been dramatic improvement since the time of the previous inspection. The new headteacher is providing very clear educational direction for the work of the school and as a result, all of the key issues have been tackled successfully. The overall attainment of the pupils is now high. This is especially so in information and communication technology where it is now a strength of the school. Teaching and learning are being very successfully monitored and assessment is being effectively used to measure the achievements of the pupils and plan for the next stages of their learning. There is now a very clear structure to school development planning and as a consequence, staff, governors and parents are fully involved in the process.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	C	A	A
Mathematics	B	C	B	D
Science	B	C	B	C

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

Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the time pupils leave school at 11, standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good and as a result of good teaching, standards are very high in English overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Numeracy skills are developed well but standards are not as high because activities are not always effectively planned to meet the needs of all abilities of pupils in the Key Stage 2 classes. Good standards are being achieved in science as a result of a good focus on investigation. High standards are also being achieved in information and communication technology across the school. This pattern of high achievement is continued in art, history and music.

These high standards are confirmed by the 2000 tests where standards were well above average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. This represents good improvement on that attained in the previous year, when they fell to just average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in these subjects is above the national average. These improvements are primarily due to a stronger focus on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school and the effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies. When these results are compared with those of similar schools, standards for 11 year olds are again well above average in English but only average in science. They are below average for mathematics. The school has already put in place an action plan to remedy this. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils follow the Golden Rules well and have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils based upon the strong Christian ethos in the school.
Attendance	Very good and well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good and this is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. In 70 per cent of lessons it is good or better and in over a quarter of lessons it is very good or better. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good, where nearly half of the lessons are judged as very good or better. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the school is very small but concentrated in Key Stage 2. Teaching is less consistent in this key stage and this is having an impact on the pupils' overall achievements.

Significant improvements have been made to the quality of teaching within the school since the previous inspection. Teaching is particularly good for children in the reception class and in Key Stage 1. In one lesson at the end of Key Stage 1, it was excellent. Teaching in this key stage is very good, where nearly a half of lessons are judged as very good or better no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the school is very small and this is a considerable improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when 25 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching has also improved in Key Stage 2 but its quality is not as consistent as seen in the rest of the school. Literacy and numeracy are taught well in all classes but inconsistencies in teachers' planning and the use of time in some lessons sometimes has an adverse effect on the progress pupils are making overall in Key Stage 2. For instance, planning sometimes does not take into account the needs of all pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the overall quality of teaching.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The well-planned curriculum is broadly based and balanced to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of educational visits and visitors to the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good levels of support are making these pupils feel valued. As a result they are making good progress in relation to their abilities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is strong emphasis on providing good support to these pupils. Good levels of communication between outside agencies and classroom teachers enable these pupils to successfully learn in the classrooms.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good opportunities are provided through the curriculum for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These are demonstrated in the excellent displays around the school, celebrating pupils' work and achievements and exploring themes such as relationships.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good procedures for the educational and personal support of pupils.

The school has established a good working partnership with its parents.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very clear educational direction by the headteacher is taking the school forwards. He has a clear vision for what needs to be done and as a result, the staff work strongly as a team to improve standards. Lessons taught by the senior teacher are of consistently high quality, providing a good model for other staff to follow.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide very effective support for the work of the school. Statutory requirements are fulfilled and they are very clear about the level of success so far and what needs to be further improved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teaching and learning has been very effectively monitored and as a result, the quality of teaching is now more consistent across the school. Assessment information is used effectively to monitor the progress of all pupils. Information and communication technology is used very well to monitor this progress and targets are set for the further improvement in standards.
The strategic use of resources	School development planning is very good. Curriculum co-ordinators are clear about what needs to be done in their subjects. Specific grants are used very effectively to further improve the opportunities available to the pupils.

The range of experience and expertise amongst the staff is good. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory overall and the accommodation is welcoming, clean and in a good state of repair. The absence of a dedicated play area for children under five limits the opportunities for structured outdoor play.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Eighteen parents attended the meeting and 52 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their child likes school and makes good progress.</li> <li>• That the school is approachable if there are concerns or problems.</li> <li>• The very good leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>• The good quality teaching.</li> <li>• That the school helps their child become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amounts of homework their child receives.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully endorse all of the parents' positive views. There has been a dramatic improvement in the school recently and parents recognise and value this. Inspectors do not support the concerns parents expressed. The amounts of homework pupils receive are satisfactory and in line with that seen in many primary schools. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities available for Key Stage 2 pupils, ranging from sailing, cross-stitch and science to competitive games.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Assessment on admission to school shows that most children under five have knowledge, skills and understanding in nearly all areas of learning that is above that normally expected for children of a similar age. Their physical and personal and social development are average. The children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make a good start in all aspects of school life. This is a considerable improvement on that achieved at the time of the previous inspection. Children are attaining above average standards in speaking and listening and in other aspects of literacy development. The inspection findings for mathematical development, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are also above that expected. Achievements in personal and social development are good. They are average in physical development due to the absence of suitable outdoor facilities. Many children are likely to exceed the early learning goals<sup>1</sup> by the end of the reception year.
2. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that by the time pupils leave school at 11, standards are well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science. A significant number of pupils are likely to attain the higher Level 5 in all these subjects by the end of the year. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good and, as a result of good teaching, standards are very high in English overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Numeracy skills are developed well, but standards are not as high because activities are not always effectively planned to meet the needs of all abilities of pupils in the Key Stage 2 classes. Good standards are being achieved in science as a result of a good focus on investigation.
3. These high standards are confirmed by the 2000 tests where standards were well above average in English, average in mathematics and above average in science. This represents good improvement on those attained in the previous year, when they fell to just average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in these subjects is above the national average. These improvements are primarily due to a stronger focus on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school and the effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There are no significant differences in the attainment of girls and boys.
4. Standards at seven have improved significantly over the last three years. In the 2000 tests, pupils performed well above average in their reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The results contrast significantly with those attained in the previous three years when they were generally unsatisfactory. The 2000 test results now closely reflect the findings of the inspection where achievements in English, mathematics and science are all above average.
5. When the 2000 results are compared with those of similar schools, standards for 11 year olds are again well above average in English, but only average in science. They are below average for mathematics. This has been recognised by the school and strategies are currently being used effectively to raise standards in mathematics. Comparisons made with similar schools of the 2000 seven-year-old test results portray a similar trend. These show that achievement in reading is well above average, but average in writing

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

and mathematics.

6. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are being developed well across the school through a range of activities in the literacy hours and other lessons. For example, Years 5 and 6 pupils performed monologues within small groups to illustrate the 'Battle of Hastings'. Regular reading in class and at home is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills across the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 follow a structured programme of reading books but the range of material is quite narrow and this is inhibiting progress overall. As pupils progress through the school they continue to read well but library skills are underdeveloped and their knowledge of the famous authors is a little limited by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are, however, developing their research skills very effectively through access to the internet. Information and communication technology is also providing a range of good opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. Many pupils display a level of independence when working individually on their writing tasks, but sometimes the presentation of their work lacks care.
7. Pupils' progress in mathematics is good over Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Insufficient provision for pupils of different levels of attainment, as well as of age, slows progress at the younger end of Key Stage 2. Progress is better at the end of this key stage because pupils are grouped effectively into ability groups and the level of challenge is high. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has been effective in raising standards of attainment overall and many pupils are becoming confident in handling numbers and solving problems that are suitable for their ability levels.
8. Pupils' written work shows good coverage of all aspects of science across both key stages. A strong feature is the investigative approach in both. For example, in Key Stage 1 pupils investigate different light sources, the causes of shadows and colours of the spectrum. At Key Stage 2 pupils test a variety of soils for permeability. Other investigations involve vibrating sounds, changes in pitch and electrical circuits. Experiments are written up using a proper format. Most pupils successfully predict what they think will result from their experiment and produce appropriate evidence to support this. Pupils make good progress across both key stages.
9. Pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents a dramatic improvement since the last inspection when attainment was found to be unsatisfactory at both key stages and a key issue. The school has worked hard to bring its equipment and resources up to date. It has produced a curriculum that is comprehensive and relevant and ensured that staff have been trained to teach it. These levels of improvement have resulted in high levels of achievement across the school. For example, Year 6 pupils are able to confidently use 'multi-media' software to create presentations of pictures and images researched for their study of ancient Greece. Working in pairs they select and scan the information, skilfully combining text and pictures to produce a presentation of high quality.
10. Pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in all other subjects across the school due to the improvements made in the overall quality of teaching. As a result, standards are above average in history at both key stages and above average in design and technology at Key Stage 1. This represents good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when these subjects were key issues for action. Standards are now also above average in art and music at both key stages and in physical education at Key Stage 1.
11. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages. Good levels of support are being effectively managed by the special needs co-ordinator. Class

teachers plan appropriate work in lessons for these pupils and the setting of specific targets assists with the effective monitoring of their progress. Those pupils requiring higher levels of support are fully included in what the class is doing and as a result feel valued members of the class.

12. Those pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress. They are continuing to develop their knowledge of the English vocabulary through well planned sessions with the local authority support teacher. These sessions are effectively reinforced through a range of activities in the classrooms.

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

13. Children in the reception class display confident social skills and are keen to interact with adults and classmates. These children sustain concentration well in all activities directed by the teacher and continue working independently when, for example, the teacher moved away from a mathematics shape activity. Children work well in small groups and their behaviour is good. For example, they co-operated well in activities such as sand and water play, were absorbed, involved and moved confidently from one activity to another.
14. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, their behaviour is good, relationships are positive and pupils respond very well to opportunities the school provides to enhance their personal development. These are all important school strengths, which are helping pupils to take full advantage of their education. The positive picture seen at the time of the previous inspection is still very much in evidence.
15. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and they enjoy their lessons. Parents agree that their children like school. Sheer enjoyment was seen when Years 3 and 4 pupils used computers to produce the writing for the inner of a Christmas card. They took special pride in choosing the font, colour, wording and layout and were very pleased and proud of the end result, making sure that their work was of the highest standard. This enthusiasm was also seen in a Year 1 history lesson when the teacher gave younger pupils opportunities to make decisions for themselves; for example, in deciding where in the classroom they would place their own museum of toys. The pupils pursued their own ideas enthusiastically and made a special invitation for the headteacher to visit their class and see their museum. This activity resulted in pupils gaining a good understanding of past and present. They became totally absorbed in what they were doing and in discussing how the museum should develop.
16. **Behaviour, both in school and on the playground, is generally good. There have been no exclusions and this is the usual pattern for the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and will sometimes try and influence others as to the way to behave, for instance in telling each other not to talk if they are supposed to be listening! In assembly, they enter and leave in a very orderly fashion and show a high level of respect for the occasion. They are polite and friendly to visitors and offer to help by holding doors open, fetching and putting away chairs.**
17. Relationships in the school are very good, both between pupils and each other and pupils and adults who work in the school. Pupils get on well with each other and older ones look out for younger ones in the playground. They are pleased to be chosen for special responsibilities, such as taking the register into the office, and younger pupils wear their special 'helper' badges with pride. Jobs are eagerly sought after and carried out well.
18. Older pupils show, by their sensible attitudes and mature approach, that they are capable of taking more responsibility and playing a higher profile in decision making and school organisation than they are currently given. They were pleased to have been consulted by

the headteacher about areas the school needs to improve on and offered a range of sensible suggestions such as improving the playground and toilet facilities.

19. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language respond well to extra support. They make useful contributions to lessons and work with enthusiasm in small withdrawal sessions outside the classrooms.
20. All pupils have a good sense of awareness of the needs of others and work hard to raise money for charity. Groups of older pupils are currently making friendship bracelets and organising raffles to raise money for an endangered species appeal and for a major Christian charity. They have raised a considerable amount of money over the year.
21. The schools attendance is well above the average for primary schools nationally and has risen considerably when compared to last year and to the rate at the time of the previous inspection. Unauthorised absence is rare as most parents are careful about letting the school know the reason why pupils are away. Pupils are prompt to school in the mornings and timekeeping is good during the day.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

22. Overall, the quality of teaching across the school is good. Teaching is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons. In 70 per cent of lessons it is good or better and in 26 per cent it is very good or better. In one lesson at the end of Key Stage 1 it was excellent. Teaching in this key stage is consistently good, where nearly a half of lessons are judged as very good or better with no unsatisfactory teaching seen. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching in the school is very small but confined in Key Stage 2. However, this is a considerable improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when 25 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. Raising the quality of teaching and learning has been a key focus for the newly appointed headteacher. Lessons have been regularly monitored across the school and specific inservice training on teachers planning has been a major contributory factor in achieving these improvements. Parents commented positively on the level of good teaching now within the school.
23. Teachers' subject knowledge is good across the school. It is very good for children in the reception class and in Key Stage 1. Teachers' technical competence in the teaching of basic skills is good and consequently the literacy and numeracy strategies are being implemented effectively. For example, in the one excellent literacy lesson in Key Stage 1, the teacher used subject specific vocabulary with confidence to develop the pupils' range of strategies for writing a poem. Teachers also display individual expertise in information and communication technology, art, music and physical education. This expertise is shared effectively by the teachers to further improve the quality of teaching and learning for the pupils.
24. Teachers also display individual expertise in information and communication technology, art, music and physical education. Teachers readily share this expertise and, as a result, the quality of teaching is continually being improved across the school.
25. Planning is good overall across the school and the introduction of a common format has contributed positively to this judgement. Learning aims and objectives are clearly identified in teachers' planning and these are always effectively shared with the pupils at the beginning of lessons. This strategy effectively enables pupils to be fully aware of their own learning. On the rare occasions when lesson planning is less successful, learning is disjointed and consequently pupils are not clear about what is expected of them; as seen in one unsatisfactory geography lesson at the end of Key Stage 2. Planning to match the ability of pupils in lessons is mostly good across the school. However, analysis of pupils

work indicates that tasks are not always effectively matched to the abilities and ages of the pupils in the class at the beginning of Key Stage 2. This is particularly so in some English and mathematics lessons. This factor was not the case during the inspection when lesson planning effectively matched their abilities of these pupils. These inconsistencies in teachers planning directly effect the overall quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 and consequently limit the potentially very high standards that these pupils could achieve.

26. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly at Key Stage 1. The level of challenge is generally high in most lessons. In the best lessons it is very high and pupils are clearly motivated to learn new skills, as seen in a science investigation for a class of Years 3 and 4 pupils. In a literacy lesson for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' writing skills were fully challenged when they had to create a passage containing tension and suspense. Analysis of pupils' books in Key Stage 2 shows that teachers do not always have high expectations of the way pupils' present their work. As a result, handwriting is sometimes untidy, work is not always dated and some pupils display a lack of attention to detail in their writing.
27. Teaching methods are good overall and lessons are made interesting to enable effective learning to take place. Teachers in Key Stage 1 display a higher degree of competence in the methods they use to ensure that lessons are very effective. For instance, in a Year 1 gymnastics lesson, the teacher very effectively demonstrated a rocking technique to the pupils. As a result, the level of individual achievement by the pupils was very high and considerable progress was made in skill development. There is a good balance between direct teaching and practical activity across the school and this is particularly evident in literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils are grouped according to ability in many lessons and this enables all pupils to make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Information and communication technology is used very effectively to support learning. A good feature is the degree of support that teachers give to pupils when they are working with the computers in the library area or in class.
28. Teachers manage pupils well in lessons and their expectations of behaviour are high. Staff have established a positive rapport with the pupils and this results in a good ethos for learning across the school. Teachers manage class discussions well and pupils who call out answers are gently reminded of the correct procedure in order that all pupils can take part.
29. Teachers use time effectively in nearly all lessons. When it is not used so well, as seen in a gymnastics lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils, the behaviour of the pupils is not satisfactory and learning is hampered as a result. Teaching resources, such as computers and the television, are used well to demonstrate new teaching points and to assist pupils in their understanding of ideas. This was effectively demonstrated in a Year 2 history lesson. The teacher used an excerpt from a programme on Florence Nightingale to illustrate the differences between hospitals in the last century from those of today. The pupils clearly were able to make these comparisons resulting in a greater understanding of historical ideas.
30. Improvements have been made to the school's procedures for assessing pupils' progress in a range of subjects. There is consistent implementation of these procedures across the school and teachers are effectively using the information collected to plan for the next stages of pupils' learning and the matching of tasks to their ability. Overall, the quality of marking is good and, as a result, pupils are clearly informed about their own learning. A good feature is the setting of individual targets for the pupils.

31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language is good. Consequently, these pupils are making good progress. Individual education plans are used effectively by teachers to plan for pupils' needs. The targets identified within these plans are specific. Support staff and voluntary helpers provide useful help for pupils in a range of skills. This is facilitated by good communication between support staff and the class teachers.
32. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities for homework and it is often used well to support learning in class. This was clearly demonstrated in an information and communication technology project for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils had clearly researched the ancient Greeks using a range of materials to produce a short computer generated presentation.

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

33. The curriculum is broadly based and balanced to meet the intellectual, personal, creative and physical needs of the pupils. It fulfils statutory requirements to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The time allocated to each subject is appropriate and in line with national guidelines. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and are securely embedded into the curriculum. The previous report noted that pupils did not receive their entitlement to information technology. The school has very successfully redressed this deficiency. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup> is planned well.
34. The planning of the curriculum overall is good. Most subjects base their long-term planning on nationally published material which ensures the development of skills and balanced coverage of subject content. Long term planning is successfully broken down into medium-term units of work and ultimately into detailed lesson plans. A good feature of these is the clear statement of learning intentions, which teachers share with the pupils. The good assessment procedures and associated target setting also are well used in curriculum planning. Long term planning, including the school development plan, also ensures that deficiencies in provision such as in design and technology are rectified. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English is appropriate. They participate fully in lessons. Specific targets for these pupils, are set in some teachers' planning and work is adapted for them as required. The pupils receive good support in lessons. Higher attaining pupils are identified through the assessment procedures and receive good extension work, for example, in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. However, there is insufficient consistency in the provision of extension work for these pupils across the curriculum.
35. The teaching of health and sex education is largely addressed through the healthy living element of the science curriculum. A separate policy for sex education is currently under consideration by the governing body. The school has introduced a policy for education in the use and misuse of drugs. The headteacher plans to link these issues with moral responsibility through the provision of a more formalised system of personal, social and health education lessons.
36. There is a good range of interesting extra-curricular activities to enrich the curriculum. Last year these included a day at the Celtic camp making natural dyes, a science workshop, the 'Ghanaian village', Henry Moore sculptures, an exhibition of Japanese drumming and many more. Visitors to the school included the Mayor of Ware, a

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<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development.

representative from Paradise Wildlife Park, a stained glass artist and an African Dance Troupe. Extra-curricular activities provided in the school include football, netball, rounders, cricket and rugby. The science club organised by a governor and teacher has achieved the bronze award of the British Association of Young Scientists. There is also a cross-stitch club and a fitness club. Some pupils learn to play brass instruments from a visiting teacher.

37. Links with other Catholic schools in the area are beginning to provide some curricular co-operation, for example, in mathematics. Curricular links with secondary schools, however, are undeveloped.
38. The school's strong Catholic ethos and tradition firmly underpins pupils' personal education. Provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A good number of factors, apart from Collective Worship, daily prayers and religious education, contribute to pupils' spirituality. These include the high esteem in which pupils are held by the school, the development of their imagination through well-chosen topics in subjects such as art, music, literature and information and communication technology. The school also strongly celebrates pupils' achievements in assembly and displays.
39. Moral development is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong behaviour and its effect on relationships. The school's 'Golden Rules' are prominently displayed and reinforced by staff. In their very good relationships with each other and the pupils, the staff provide good role models for pupils to imitate. Pupils' behaviour in and out of the classroom is good. They are courteous, friendly and helpful to each other and to visitors. Wider moral issues are encountered through the curriculum. For example, in a science study of the respiratory system, pupils discussed how and why increasing atmospheric pollution was a cause of asthma in many children.
40. Personal and social development is good and a strength of the school. The school is a closely-knit social community where there is genuine concern for the welfare of others. Pupils support a range of charitable causes, some of which they initiate themselves, for example the Sumatran Tiger Appeal and the Harvest Appeal for Ethiopia. Pupils show pride in their school and help to keep it tidy and attractive. When asked to do so, pupils collaborate well in pairs and groups, sharing equipment and materials readily and taking turns. The close relationship between the school, the parish church and the parents creates a close 'family' environment. The many excursions provide further opportunities for pupils' social interaction and development.
41. The previous report found that the school gave insufficient emphasis to promoting pupils' cultural development. The school has remedied this and cultural development is now good. There is now a strong focus on pupils' creative development in art and music including study of the work of famous artists and composers. Pupils study world faiths through their religious education curriculum. Their visit to the Aklowa village stimulated a good depth and range of work on African culture. Pupils are made well aware of their local heritage through their frequent visits to places of historical and environmental interest.

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



42. The school has created a warm and supportive environment for its pupils, within a clear Christian framework, which is allowing teaching and learning to flourish. They are successful in creating an environment which has a good balance between pastoral care and the aim for high academic standards. Parents commented very positively on how caring the school is.
43. The school's procedures for child protection are satisfactory. As at the time of the last inspection, there is still no child protection policy. The named person with responsibility has been recently trained, although there has not been any whole school training for some time. This is a minor area for development.
44. Health and safety procedures are also satisfactory and school routines and practices are administered with due care and attention. The school does not have its own health and safety policy where current practices are detailed and this is another minor area for development.
45. Most pupils are naturally well behaved and the school builds well on this to ensure a consistently high standard in the school. Staff are experienced and the headteacher takes a lead in talking to any pupils who are having difficulties. Small matters are not ignored; for example, in response to a pupil throwing a rubber across the table, the teacher pointed out this was not the way pupils were expected to behave and the pupil was asked to explain the 'proper' way it should have been done. This serves as a lesson for other pupils.
46. Monitoring procedures are appropriate considering the small size of the school and the good behaviour shown by all. Any pupils who are having difficulties are quickly spotted by staff and spoken to by the headteacher, with parents involved if the situation merits it.
47. The schools procedures to eliminate bullying are appropriate. Pupils are generally happy about the way the school handles this issue. They are united in their view that the headteacher does not 'allow it' in their school and that adults listen to them and act once concerns have been raised. This is clearly backed up by inspection evidence. Pupils in the older years groups were more positive about bullying being sorted out, whilst pupils in Years 3 and 4 knew most instances are sorted out; although they referred to a couple of cases they felt were ongoing.
48. The procedures for monitoring attendance are good. A more overt approach from the headteacher in trying to dissuade parents from taking holidays during term time and not taking their child out of school for occasional days off has paid dividends. As a result, the attendance rate has risen by almost two per cent compared with last year. This now takes the school's attendance to well above national averages.
49. The school has made good progress and considerably improved its systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are good overall, especially in the area of English, mathematics and science. The school is currently developing its systems for assessing pupils' skills in information and communication technology and, here, assessment is currently satisfactory.
50. Teachers have a clear understanding of the levels of attainment in National Curriculum subjects. The use of individual and group targets for pupils is an area that is developing wells and has recently been introduced from Year 2 onwards. Pupils have their own individual target cards where they record their progress and where they tick, after having discussed with the teacher, when they have successfully achieved a certain level. Their use is still in its early stages and there is inconsistency of application between classes. This good system is not carried through to pupils' annual reports, which do not contain

targets for parents and pupils to work on together and this is a minor area for development.

51. The assessment of children in the reception class is good. There is good use of involving older pupils in what they will be learning and in getting them to assess for themselves if they have been successful. For younger pupils, this involves the teacher using cartoon characters such as 'Wilf and Tibbs' who say what is to be learnt and if it has been successfully achieved. This is an effective way of involving pupils in their own learning and getting them to understand how they are progressing.
52. There has been much development in the use of assessment data to analyse areas of strengths, weaknesses and trends in performance. A new assessment co-ordinator is now in post who is being well supported by the headteacher in analysing test data. However, as a result of these recent changes, the assessment policy does not reflect the current state of assessment within the school. The school has a clear understanding of how pupils are performing when compared to both local and national test results. They are using this information effectively to set themselves targets for improvement, such as, identifying weaknesses in the use of shape and space in mathematics and investigative work in science and a tailoring of the curriculum to remedy this.
53. These good assessment procedures are used effectively to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are detailed and targets set are specific. This practice is also used to monitor the progress of pupils with English as an additional language.
54. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good and is largely based on the informal knowledge teachers have of their pupils and the very good relationships that exist within the school. Pupils agree that their teachers are supportive and the comments on pupils' annual reports, which record how pupils are developing personally and socially, show staff have good knowledge in this area.

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

55. The school has seen an almost complete reversal of the level of support and satisfaction from parents, compared with the views expressed during the last inspection. There has been very good progress in this area of the school's work. The years following have been turbulent for the school for a number of reasons and parents have had ongoing concerns and have often been frustrated.
56. However, following the appointment of the headteacher almost a year ago, parents are now fully behind and very supportive of the school and they are very pleased with the changes that are being made. This is shown in the number of positive replies to the Ofsted parents' questionnaire and in the discussions that took place during the Ofsted parents meeting.
57. Parents are now very pleased with the good standards in the school which are the result of good teaching, the rate of pupils' progress and the quality of leadership and management. They appreciate the openness and friendly approach by the headteacher and staff. They are pleased with the way the school helps their child become mature and responsible. These views are fully endorsed by the inspection team.
58. The concerns a minority of parents expressed about the provision for extra curricular activities are not supported by inspection evidence. In relation to the activities the school provides outside of lessons, there is a very good range of extra-curricular events provided for pupils in Key Stage 2, ranging from science club, competitive games and cross-stitch to sailing. Homework is another area a minority of parents is not happy with. The

school's provision for homework is satisfactory and in line with that seen in many primary schools. The headteacher acknowledges the need to provide more information for parents about how much homework they can expect and how it will be distributed throughout the week. The school see this as an area to develop, which is entirely appropriate.

59. **There are some effective links between the school and parents, which are having a positive impact upon pupils' education. The monthly newsletter is one example, where the headteacher shares with parents the developments that are taking place. This is especially important given the levels of uncertainty for parents over the last few years. They can now see how things are moving and this is reassuring. Parents were recently consulted about the way they wish the school to develop and this is an example of good practice. Invitations to assemblies and to Mass are all helping to strengthen the bonds between parents and school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are made fully aware of the levels of support for their child.**
60. **Parental involvement in school life is good and is a developing picture. The Friends of Sacred Heart parents' group continues to work hard to raise money for items of equipment the school would otherwise find it difficult to afford. They raise a good amount of money each year and are currently saving to help with the funding of playground developments. Their hard work is making a positive contribution to the quality of education, especially in view of the need for playground developments mentioned elsewhere in the report. Parents who are governors are playing an important role in the very good quality of management the governing body is providing.**
61. Good quality information is sent to parents and they are kept well informed. In addition to the useful newsletter, class teachers send out a termly overview so parents have an idea of what is currently being taught in each class. Pupils' annual reports are satisfactory overall. They are clear on the progress pupils are making, especially in relation to the areas of mathematics, science and English. However, they do not give parents a good idea of the areas pupils need to work on, nor do they include targets for parents to work on at home with their child. In this respect, the school is not taking full advantage of parents' willingness to support education and this is a minor area for development.
62. Parents provide a very good level of support for learning at school and in the home. The vast majority of parents attend parents' evenings, listen to their child read regularly and help them with tables and spellings. Parents and grandparents, too, find time to take their children to the local library and to provide them with reading books and other resources such as computers. They want their child to achieve high standards at school and most are able to help them all they can.

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

63. The leadership and management of the school are very good. Although he has only been in post for a short time, the headteacher has rapidly and accurately identified the strengths of the school and the areas in which it needs to improve. He has, for example, identified the need to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. Considerable effort has also been given to the development of information and communication technology. This very good leadership has also been used to ensure that the assessment of what the pupils can do is more closely matched to their needs. As a consequence, all the issues from the previous inspection have been very successfully addressed and the level of improvement has been dramatic. The headteacher sets a very clear vision and direction for the school. This is effectively shared with the staff, governors and the parents and is clearly expressed in the current school development

plan. Everyone who contributes to the smooth running of the school knows that its overarching aims are to improve standards and to attract more pupils from a community which supports and values what the school does.

64. The headteacher very closely monitors the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and this is especially so in literacy and numeracy. As a result, staff are provided with well focused evaluations about the quality of their teaching and planning. This has resulted in an improvement in the overall quality of teaching. There are, however, inconsistencies in teaching at Key Stage 2, but these have already been identified by the headteacher. For example, the in-service work on learning objectives held at the beginning of the academic year has resulted in a greater awareness by teachers and pupils of what is to be learnt in each lesson. The review of these at the ends of every lesson is very effectively informing both teachers and pupils of the progress being made.
65. The governing body very effectively fulfils its statutory duties. Governors share their expertise and experience with staff and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. The governors fully support the headteacher in his vision for the school and carefully assess policies and plans before they are put into practice. As a result of this close working relationship, the school's reputation in the community is becoming stronger. Parents express great confidence in the leadership and management of the school. Consequently, an increasing number of parents are choosing to send their children to the school.
66. The school makes good use of its available funds. It carefully monitors its expenditure through adequate and up to date administrative systems. The headteacher and governors agree appropriate allocations from the annual budget to support priorities. The school clearly understands the principles of best value and is starting to apply them to significant purchases.
67. Support for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. The nominated governor liaises closely with the special needs co-ordinator to ensure that provision for these pupils is effectively used. This level of support is also provided for pupils with English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make good progress and feel valued members of the school community.
68. The school has an appropriate number of teaching staff for the numbers on roll. All are suitably qualified and there is a good blend of experience and expertise. There is an appropriate system in place to support newly qualified teachers and there are informal systems to support staff new to the school. The shared commitment to improvement, the significant improvement since the previous inspection and the quality of teaching confirms the school has the potential to be an effective provider of initial teacher training. Learning support assistants are skilled and make a positive contribution to supporting teaching and learning. Administrative staff are efficient and provide a warm welcome for parents and visitors.
69. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. A new classroom blends in well with the rest of the school and incorporates a stained glass Millennium window in the shape of the Cross, which the pupils helped to design and is a stunning feature. Classrooms are enhanced by some interesting displays of excellent quality. These give value to pupils work and cover all areas of the curriculum, such as the display of puppets made in design and technology. Arrangements in all classrooms, using the colour purple in silks and with candles, some with fresh greenery, gave a special emphasis to Advent.
70. There is no dedicated play area for children under five years of age and this is a weakness which is restricting their creative and physical development. The playground is

small for the number of children and is muddy during the winter months. The school has recognised the improvement of the playground as an area for development and pupils support this view.

71. Learning resources are good in most subject areas. They are satisfactory in art and in English, where the reading scheme is dated. The level of resources for design and technology and history are unsatisfactory.

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

72. To further develop the effectiveness of the school and continue to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching at Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that planning is of a consistently high quality and that it effectively caters for pupils of all abilities in all lessons;
  - developing teachers' skills and expertise in physical education;

*paragraphs: 25, 29, 102, 144*

- improve the provision for outdoor play for children in the reception class.

*Paragraphs: 70, 82*

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

- the quality of pupils' handwriting;
- the quality and range of reading books;
- the formalisation of policies for child protection and health and safety;
- improving the quality of reports to parents and sharing of pupils' targets with them.

*Paragraphs: 26, 43, 44, 50, 61, 87, 89, 93*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2	24	42	26	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	120
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (83)	100 (92)	100 (92)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	16	16	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (83)	100 (83)	100 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	4	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	14	11	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (75)	73 (75)	93 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (69)	80 (88)	87 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

NB Some data is not available for Key Stage 2 because the number of girls is less than ten.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	98
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5:1
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	287,087
Total expenditure	277,222
Expenditure per pupil	2,411
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	9,865



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 43%

Number of questionnaires sent out	120
Number of questionnaires returned	52

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	37	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	50	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	37	17	0	4
The teaching is good.	63	35	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	56	6	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	35	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	33	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	48	50	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	62	37	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	31	21	2	2

**The totals do not always add up to 100 per cent because some parents felt unable to answer all the questions.**

## **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**

73. Children join the reception class at the start of the year of their fifth birthdays. The reception class curriculum closely follows the areas of learning for children under five and is clearly based on the new, national Early Learning Goals.
74. Assessment on admission to school shows that most children have knowledge, skills and understanding in nearly all areas of learning that are above that normally expected for children of a similar age. Their physical and personal and social development are average. The children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make a good start in all aspects of school life. This is a considerable improvement on that achieved at the time of the previous inspection. Children are attaining above average standards in speaking and listening and in other aspects of literacy development. The inspection findings for mathematical development, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are also above that expected. Achievements in personal and social development are good. They are average in physical development due to the absence of suitable outdoor facilities. Many children are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.
75. The quality of teaching and learning is good. A competent teacher and support assistant manage the reception class well and they effectively plan the curriculum together. As a result, the planning is imaginative and firmly based on children's interests. This planning ensures focused activities promote specific learning and child initiated activities promote structured play of high quality. As a result, teaching methods and planning are effective, as is the teaching of basic skills. A particular strength is the care and thought that have been taken to provide a stimulating classroom environment. Resources are good and used effectively to motivate the children. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. The children have the opportunity to visit the class twice before they start school and meetings are held with parents.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

76. A good feature is that the teacher and support assistant have a clear understanding of this area of development. Their good subject knowledge and positive approach results in the emotional needs of the children being met well. Relationships between the staff and the children are good. Children feel secure and this has a positive effect on progress.
77. The children make good progress in developing personal, social and emotional skills. They come eagerly into school each morning and leave their parents without concern. Children eagerly seek one of the well prepared structured play activities at the start of the day. They are independent in putting on aprons, hanging them up and going for lunch. They line up sensibly to go out to play and are beginning to understand the school routines. Children tidy up well when asked and use their initiative to see what needs doing.
78. Children display confident social skills and are keen to interact with adults and classmates. Children sustain concentration well in all activities directed by the teacher and continue working independently when, for example, the teacher moves away from a mathematics shape activity. Children work well in small groups and their behaviour is good. For example, they co-operate well in activities such as sand and water play, are absorbed, involved and move confidently from one activity to another.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

79. All children make good progress in all aspects of communication, language and literacy because lessons are well planned. They include a wide range of activities for them to use and apply their developing speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Children make good progress in communication skills. For instance, they discussed what they liked most about each other in a class discussion time. They listen intently to stories and offer sensible comments. Opportunities for extending speaking and listening skills through role-play activities are good. Children enjoy books. They talk enthusiastically about the stories and turn the pages carefully. Children are beginning to pick out letters and words in books based on the beginning sound and picture clues. Most children recognise their name and the more mature know several sounds and some simple words. All children hold pens and pencils correctly and can independently write their first name but letters are not always correctly formed. It is very evident that children enjoy writing and their efforts are valued in a display showing their first attempts.

### **Mathematical development**

80. The children make good progress. The teacher plans a variety of tasks for children to experience and picks up on spontaneous opportunities to develop children's numeracy skills. A good example of this was seen when the teacher asked the children to count the number of children present at the start of the day. Activities are carefully matched to the children's stage of development, as seen in a lesson on shape. The teacher effectively worked with less able children while providing good levels of support for more able pupils playing a number dice game. Many children name shapes such as square, rectangle, circle and triangle. They experiment with capacity and volume through sand and water play. Many children know the names of the days of the week. All children count accurately down from 10 when singing counting songs. The children enjoy the challenge of mathematical activities and are further motivated by the teacher's praise.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

81. The children make good progress overall in this area of learning. A good range of activities is planned to challenge the children's understanding of the world and to promote the use of technology. A particularly strong feature is the teaching of simple skills in using the computers to generate shape pictures. Other opportunities for developing technology skills are implemented through using construction kits, modelling clay and reclaimed materials to make simple models. Good use is made of the local area to provide learning opportunities in geographical study. For example, the class visited a local supermarket and recorded their walk there and back with a sketch map.

### **Physical development**

82. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning, but a lack of planned learning through outdoor play limits overall development. The school has recognised this difficulty and timetables the hall twice a week for physical education. Planning for these sessions indicates that opportunities are provided for the children to run, jump, hop and skip and handle equipment such as balls. They are provided with the opportunity to throw and catch. Children develop their skills in cutting and sticking through suitable activities. They develop manipulative skills when pouring water into containers during water play and increase their skills in taking care of themselves by dressing and undressing for physical education and independently washing their hands before lunch. Children sit, kneel or stand when working with 'small world' toys, construction sets, sand and water and use the most comfortable and appropriate position for these activities. The children play outside at playtime. This provides appropriate opportunities for vigorous play, but does not satisfactorily fulfil the requirements of the Foundation Curriculum. There are no wheeled toys or large climbing frames and staff are not able to set up relevant activities and resources to support specific skills. This deficiency has been recognised by the school in its forward planning, but there are no specific details as to how this important aspect of the under fives curriculum will be addressed.

## **Creative development**

83. The children make good progress in creative areas of learning. Children explore a range of media including paint and glue. They paint portraits of themselves and make simple drawings of things around them. They show an increasing ability to use their imagination through role-play activities and use of 'small world' equipment. All the children are increasing their awareness of sounds and are developing their ability to listen through appropriate musical activities. For example, they sang familiar nursery rhymes during a circle time session at the end of the day. The teacher uses opportunities in other areas such as numeracy to sing songs that are relevant. Their skills in art are further extended with good use of a simple graphics program to generate attractive pictures.

## **ENGLISH**

84. Standards in English have improved significantly after a sharp decline since the time of the previous inspection. They are now back to the previously high levels attained then for both seven- and 11-year-olds. Results of the 2000 national tests show that standards were well above average when compared with those for similar schools in reading for seven-year-olds, but in line for writing. Standards for 11-year-olds are well above average in English. Test results have fallen in the last four years but are now back in line with the national trend with the result that the school exceeded its targets for 2000. Boys achieve much better than girls in reading and spelling at Key Stage 1, but there is no significant difference at Key Stage 2. Year groups are quite small and, therefore, these findings need to be treated with some caution.
85. Inspection findings generally reflect the test results at both key stages. Standards in speaking and listening are well above national expectations at both key stages. Above average standards are attained in reading and writing at Key Stage 1. Standards in reading and writing are well above average at 11 with all pupils attaining the expected Level 4. A quarter of these pupils are expected to achieve the higher Level 5 by the end of the academic year. Despite these high achievements in English, the restrictive nature of the reading scheme and the inconsistent teaching of handwriting skills are limiting the overall attainment of the pupils. Standards in handwriting are consequently below that expected at both key stages with few pupils writing in a consistent cursive style. These weaknesses have been recognised by the school and the reading and handwriting schemes are currently under review.
86. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are being developed well across the school through a range of activities in the literacy hours and other lessons. For instance, teachers use every opportunity to involve pupils in reading aloud from a range of texts in these lessons either as individuals or as a class. Pupils in a Year 1 class provided a very good example of this when they effectively read the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' with good expression to convey the characteristics of the wolf. Speaking and listening skills continue to be developed well across school. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 3 and 4 class lesson when pupils read poems aloud in preparation for writing their own to demonstrate the use of figurative speech such as similes. Good opportunities are also made available for older pupils to further develop these skills through drama; for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils performed a monologue in small groups to illustrate the 'Battle of Hastings'. These pupils worked very enthusiastically to perform their monologue before their classmates with clarity and much humour!
87. Regular reading in class and at home is enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress in developing their reading skills across the school. Pupils in Key Stage 1 follow a structured programme of reading books but the range of material is quite narrow. Reading development is, however, appropriately supported through guided reading sessions in the literacy lessons and, as a result, phonic development is good. As pupils

progress through the school they continue to read well but library skills are underdeveloped and their knowledge of the famous authors is a little limited by the end of Key Stage 2. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 find the literacy lessons challenging and often seek out the books illustrated and used at the local library in order that they can read the entire book themselves. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are, however, developing their research skills very effectively through access to the internet. Year 6 pupils effectively demonstrated this by writing detailed reviews of recent films after gathering their information via the computers in the computer suite.

88. Information and communication technology is also providing a range of good opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can write a simple poem to a prescribed structure following a very good introduction by the class teacher. Other pupils in this class can write simple sentences correctly punctuated, but the quality of their handwriting is inconsistent in style and letters are not formed correctly. The quality of pupils' spelling is, however, good and many pupils can spell many simple words correctly. They can use simple dictionaries to check the spellings of these words and add others to their collection. The inconsistency in handwriting continues to be seen throughout Key Stage 2 where the presentation of pupils' work is very variable. Spelling, however, is satisfactory and, by the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils are spelling at the expected levels of attainment. Pupils in this class are challenged effectively by the teacher to produce interesting and varied pieces of writing in their books and for classroom display. All pupils in Key Stage 2 have individual targets to achieve and the highlighting of the national expectations for these pupils to refer to has raised their expectations and provided a good focus for improvement.
89. Pupils' achievements reflect the good quality of teaching seen in English. Pupils respond well to lessons and enjoy the literacy lessons. They show great enthusiasm for the introductory text work at the beginning of lessons and listen carefully to the teachers. Many pupils display a level of independence when working individually on their writing tasks, but some pupils can be noisy in these sessions which limits the amount of progress that can be achieved. Presentation skills are very variable and often there are careless mistakes in their work. However, they respond well to the high quality marking of the teachers and corrections are undertaken with diligence.
90. Teaching is good across the school but best in Key Stage 1, where in the lessons observed it was consistently very good. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing and they provide a good range of opportunities to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. The effective implementation of the literacy hour is providing a good platform for the further improvement of pupils' literacy skills. In Year 2, teaching is exceptional as demonstrated when visual aids were used very effectively to challenge the pupils' knowledge of 'ow' and 'ou' words. The success of this teaching is in the quality of the pupils' vocabulary and poetry and their obvious enthusiasm for learning. All teachers ensure that the learning objectives for each lesson are clearly understood by all the pupils and displayed in language they understand. This is as a result of effective in-service training by the newly appointed headteacher earlier in the year to improve the quality.
91. Teachers display good subject knowledge and introduce lessons and new learning concepts with confidence; as seen in a lesson for Year 3 and 4 pupils to develop their use of figurative writing within their poems. In this lesson the teacher talked with confidence and provided a good review of what was needed in the follow up tasks. Challenging texts are used by the teacher at the end of Key Stage 2 to stimulate the oldest pupils awareness of the classic novels. For instance, an extract from 'Treasure Island' was used effectively to highlight the use of dialogue to create tension and suspense. As a result, most of the pupils were able to identify adverbs that the author had used to provide a dramatic picture for the reader.

92. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported either in lessons or in small groups withdrawn from the class. Individual education plans are used effectively to provide a clear programme of work for these pupils. This results in clearly focused teaching either by the teachers or learning support assistants. This level of support is also provided for pupils with English as an additional language. The part-time support teacher provides a good range of activities for these pupils and has established good communication links with class teachers to ensure that the levels of support are consistent throughout the week. A good feature is the construction of bilingual books to enhance the level of resource but also to provide these pupils the opportunity to recognise their own culture within the school.
93. Management of English is satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator is very aware of the areas of the curriculum that need to be improved. She has been involved in the monitoring of teachers' plans and the observation of some teaching and learning. The resources are satisfactory overall but the reading scheme material is limited in range and quality. The range of non-fiction books available for individual research is satisfactory and effectively enhanced by the pupils' ease of access to further information over the Internet.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. In the national tests and assessments in 2000 pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 was very high and well above the national averages. This represented considerable improvement on previous years' results. At Key Stage 2 attainment was in line with the national average. In comparison with schools of a similar context, the school's results were average for Key Stage 1 and below average at Key Stage 2. Higher attaining pupils' results were above the national average at both key stages. The previous inspection found that pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 was average and above average at Key Stage 2. The year groups are quite small and, therefore, these results need to be treated with care.
95. Although there have been fluctuations over recent years, the trend is now one of rising standards. The finding of the inspection is that the rise in standards is being well maintained and that pupils' attainment is above the national average at both key stages and at all levels. A significant factor in promoting this is the very good system of assessment and target setting applied to each pupil.
96. In Key Stage 1 pupils grasp of number facts is good and they have a good understanding of addition and subtraction. In Year 2 pupils respond animatedly and accurately in mental maths to well prepared stimuli such as large 'dominoes' to help them recognise and calculate double numbers and near-doubles. They quickly work these out to totals of 20 and beyond. The 'class café' provides good opportunities for pupils to add and subtract sums of money to £1 using coins and number squares. Most accurately perform one, two or three-step calculations.
97. Younger pupils use 'number fans' to show their additions to 20. They respond eagerly, anxious to show the right result. In a good problem-solving approach they work with coins to calculate ways of making 10p, or find how much is in their worksheet 'purses'. Pupils' books in Key Stage 1 show the full range of work in mathematics including number patterns and sequences, shapes and measures, and data handling such as tallying. Their work shows good progress in knowledge and understanding of these aspects. Much of their calculation and problem-solving is accurate.
98. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of number including multiples, factors and prime numbers. In a good mental maths activity pupils worked in pairs at a board game, solving

number problems such as “what even number is divisible by seven and three?” Pupils continued problem-solving as they formed triangular patterns with sticks and drew intersecting lines on paper. The challenge was to find the formulas which express mathematically the relationship between sticks and triangles, lines and sections. The higher attaining pupils’ progress is accelerated by the headteacher’s regular teaching of the group. In a challenging lesson pupils were set number problems involving mental calculation as well as the use of a calculator. A good feature was that pupils were given only a limited period of time to complete the problems.

99. Younger pupils in the key stage count on and back in 10s, 20s, 25s and 100s. In number calculations they successfully adopt short-cut methods of addition and subtraction and clearly explain their thinking to the class. Pupils understand how to express multiplication facts as division and use mathematical language with ease. Scrutiny of pupils’ work across the key stage shows that they are making sound progress in all aspects of mathematics, including solving ‘real life’ problems with timetables, area and perimeter, graphs and co-ordinates.
100. Pupils’ progress is good over Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Insufficient provision for pupils of different levels of attainment as well as of age slows progress at the younger end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English are well supported in the classroom by the learning support assistants. Some teachers’ good lesson planning incorporates particular targets for these pupils. They make good progress.
101. Pupils work well in mathematics lessons at both key stages. They answer accurately and confidently in mental maths sessions and are anxious to learn and make progress. In group work, when asked to collaborate in pairs or groups, they do so sensibly and efficiently. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. In Key Stage 1, for example, pupils working in groups not directly supervised by the teacher get on with their work with concentration. There is a wide range in the quality of the presentation of their work. Some is neat and careful, but some careless and slipshod.
102. The teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with good features at Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented at both key stages. It is an important factor in the raising of standards, both through the emphasis placed on the quick recall and use of mathematical facts, and in the clear structure of the syllabus and lessons. At Key Stage 1, teachers’ planning is detailed and well organised so that no time is wasted in lessons. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils and skilfully target their questioning and work-setting to meet their different attainment levels. Lessons are well managed and teachers have high expectations of pupils’ behaviour and achievement. At Key Stage 2, planning clearly sets out lessons’ objectives and the activities to overtake them. However, there is insufficient planning of work appropriate to the younger pupils’ different levels of ability. Higher attaining pupils at the end of the key stage are regularly withdrawn from part of the lessons to work productively with the headteacher.
103. Teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics. This has been assisted by recent training. Their marking of pupils’ work is inconsistent. At its best marking offers pupils constructive comments on their work which help pupils to improve. Some marking, however, consists merely of ticks. A good feature of teaching at both key stages is the discussion with pupils at the beginning of the lesson of the objectives to be overtaken. In the whole class sessions at the end teachers check these by asking the pupils what they have learned. Management of the subject is satisfactory and the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively.

## SCIENCE

104. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is above average. This represents an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when pupils' attainment was in line with the national average. In the national assessments in 2000, teachers' assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 was that all pupils attained Level 2 or above. This is well above the national average. The number of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was below the national average. In the national tests at Key Stage 2 pupils attained above the national average at both Levels 4 and 5. When comparisons are made with similar schools, attainment is well above average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. The year groups are quite small and, therefore, these results need to be treated with some care.
105. In a very good lesson on materials and their properties, Year 2 pupils discussed the difference between natural and man-made materials. They handled clay, cotton and wood and successfully researched from books and the computer how these are transformed into a brick, piece of timber, paper and fabric. They went on to discuss their use in everyday life. Later they looked at an arrangement of everyday articles and, using their knowledge, decided whether they originated from plants, animals or minerals. Their learning is supported by a very good display of the topic. Younger pupils investigated magnetism. They used magnets to find out which of a number of metallic and non-metallic articles are attracted. They then carefully tabulated their findings. Pupils use scientific terms such as 'attract', 'magnetic' and 'non-magnetic'. Two pupils tested the magnetism of a 1p and a 5p coin. They noted that the 1p is attracted, the 5p is not. One pupil commented 'because they are different colours', the other replied 'No, they are different metals'.
106. At Key Stage 2 Year 6 pupils study the human respiratory system. They undertook a series of investigations to measure lung capacity, expansion of the ribcage when breathing, change in temperature of the air breathed in and out, and the effect of exercise on the rate of breathing. Pupils complete a number of investigations and enter the findings in their books. Pupils' written work shows good coverage of all aspects of science across both key stages. A strong feature is the investigative approach in both. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils investigate different light sources, the causes of shadows and colours of the spectrum. At Key Stage 2, pupils test a variety of soils for permeability. Other investigations involve vibrating sounds, changes in pitch and electrical circuits. Experiments are written up using a proper format. Most pupils successfully predict what they think will result from their experiment and produce appropriate evidence to support this. Pupils make good progress across both key stages. Their good knowledge and understanding of science is strongly promoted by the experimental approach.
107. Pupils enjoy studying science. They are anxious to discover facts about living things and the world around them. Pupils listen attentively in lessons to the teacher and readily join in discussion, appreciating each other's contribution. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. They collaborate well in group work, taking turns and sharing equipment and materials sensibly. Presentation of their written work is mixed. Many pupils draw careful diagrams with neat labelling and write up their experiments in legible handwriting, but some show less pride in their written work. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English participate fully in lessons and are well supported, particularly in practical activities.
108. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good overall with one very good lesson seen at Key Stage 1. It is good at Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning is based upon nationally published material, which is effectively translated into medium and short-term plans. Lesson plans



are good, showing clear objectives and appropriate activities. Learning intentions are well shared with pupils at the beginning and end of lessons. One teacher asked the pupils "Why should we learn about this?" Teachers use good assessment procedures to track pupils' attainment and progress, and also as a tool to help them in their planning. Their marking of pupils' work is generally satisfactory, commenting on how well pupils have attempted or completed their tasks. In the lessons observed work was aimed well at pupils' different levels of attainment. Teachers plan imaginative and stimulating lessons, which are strongly geared to pupils learning by experiment and research. Teachers' knowledge of science is secure.

109. Teachers prepare resources of equipment, materials and worksheets well. A good example was a circuit with battery, bulb and reed switch, mounted on a board which clearly showed correct connections. The curriculum is well planned with a strong emphasis on investigative work. It is enriched by the after-school club and good subject management is enabling further improvements to be made.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

110. During the inspection only one lesson could be observed. The judgement that attainment in art is above national expectation is, therefore, based on this, scrutiny of pupils' sketch books, discussion with teachers and their planning and, in particular, the exceptionally good displays of pupils' work around the school. This is a significant improvement on the finding of the previous report, when pupils' attainment was found to be similar to national expectations at the end of both key stages. There was limited opportunity to produce three-dimensional work and insufficient understanding of non-European art. These shortcomings have been addressed. There is a satisfactory range of three-dimensional work, including masks, claywork and pictures. In drawing and painting, pupils at both key stages use a good range of techniques and media. Observational drawing, however, is not systematically developed. The pupils' visit in summer to the nearby traditional 'Ghanaian village' of Aklowa stimulated print-making as well as drawings and paintings of huts, drums and masks.
111. Year 1 pupils paint vigorous portraits and self-portraits showing strong brushwork and good imaging of features. Their pictures of birds and animals from mini-beasts to rhinoceroses show well developing sense of shape and the use of strong colours. Pupils in Year 2 make templates of shapes such as leaves and use these as a basis for fabric collages with careful detail and contrasting colours. These are fixed to a stockinette background for stretching and mounting. Also in display are good examples of careful colour toning. Good use is made of computer graphics programs. Pupils create patterned pictures of insects with a good sense of design and use of colour. They also use animal images as the basis for making pictures in the style of Rousseau. This work shows imagination, well-developed visual response as well as good computer technique.
112. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 2 pupils carefully practised their colour-mixing and toning techniques. The purpose of the lesson was to incorporate these into still life painting. Using viewfinders to focus their perspective and composition, pupils successfully painted fruit. Many pictures incorporated well the techniques they had been practising. They showed good observation, careful use of colour and form.
113. Younger pupils in the key stage display charcoal drawings showing a good sense of line and texture. A school theme, that of 'relationships', is well represented in pupils' paintings of two interacting figures. It is also strikingly portrayed in two 3-dimensional pictures incorporating a variety of paper, photographs, fabric and other materials. There is good evidence of pupils' study of artists such as Kandinsky, Klee and Picasso. Pupils in Year 6 create vigorously coloured concentric patterns after a Kandinsky picture

displayed in the room. Years 3 and 4 pupils use Paul Klee as a stimulus for very good computer-generated pictures.

114. The school is proud of its pupils' accomplishment in art. Pupils assisted in the design of the magnificent stained glass window inserted in one wall of a classroom. They learned about stained glass techniques from the artist who completed the work and there is an exhibition of very attractive stained glass panels in the school. Teachers plan a good range of activities to develop pupils' visual awareness and skills in a wide variety of media. In the good lesson seen, the teacher provided well-informed direction and demonstrated colour-toning effectively. She motivated the pupils to work with interest and enthusiasm, so that in the lesson they made good progress in painting. The subject development plan provides for a review of resources, planning and the further inservice training of teachers where necessary. The recently appointed co-ordinator plans to build on what has already been achieved by monitoring planning and teaching more closely, and improving the quality of the resources.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Only two lessons could be observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on the basis of these, evidence of work completed, scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' planning and talking to teachers and pupils.
116. Pupils' attainment and progress is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. This is an improvement on the previous report when standards of attainment and progress were found to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1. However, the limitations of the curriculum imposed by a lack of resources of tools, kits and materials noted in the previous report is still evident.
117. At Key Stage 1, pupils successfully make a good variety of glove puppets. Most are well designed and carefully made. They involve the use of the skills of cutting, shaping, stitching and stapling. They are decorated with other fabrics stuck or sewn on to produce facial features or collage effects. Other skills involved in the design and making are hand measuring and templates for shaping. Pupils evaluate their work on worksheets saying what proved difficult and what they could do to improve the product. In a good contribution to developing their speaking and listening, pupils read from their sheets to describe their work and talked about it.
118. At Key Stage 2, pupils design and make a variety of toys with moving parts involving a cam mechanism. During the lesson, half the class evaluated their work in progress, setting out the next steps. The rest continued making the product using saws, scissors and glue. They showed proper awareness of safety requirements. Pupils' books show good understanding of processes, sequencing correctly drawings of proposed artefacts, design of their mechanisms, the materials needed, the method of construction and evaluation of each step.
119. Pupils work with enthusiasm. They enjoy the practical aspects and are anxious to produce good results. They take a pride in their work as when Year 2 pupils showed their finished glove puppets in assembly. They work well together and readily share tools and materials for which they show respect. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, particularly in the practical activities, and they make satisfactory progress.
120. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The school is now working to a curriculum based on nationally produced material. Long-term planning, therefore, takes account of the currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to design and make wheeled vehicles and structures. Teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory with a

clear balance between the elements of designing and making. Assessment is inconsistent with insufficient recording of pupils' work to track their progress in attainment and the development of their skills. Teachers' management of lessons is often good. Their encouragement and support helps pupils to see how their work can be improved. The subject development plan recognises current deficiencies in provision and puts in place a programme of increased resources and in-service training from the Spring of 2001.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

121. Only one Key Stage 2 lesson in geography was observed during the inspection, therefore no overall judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. Further evidence was taken from teachers' planning, pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is particularly good in Key Stage 1. Standards have been improved since the previous inspection and mapmaking is a strength across the school.
122. At Key Stage 1, pupils gain knowledge about places and build on their skills in using maps. Good links are made with literacy when pupils learn about island life through the story of Struay and its community of characters. Teachers are providing pupils in Key Stage 1 with good opportunities to learn about other countries through the encouragement of families to take 'Barnaby Bear' on holiday. The current photographic display of his most recent travels provides pupils with a rich resource of material about Chicago. Teachers are promoting the use of geographical vocabulary well within the context of the topics the pupils study.
123. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed satisfactory skills in geography and their understanding and knowledge of other cultures has increased. Pupils have a sound understanding of mapping skills and use numeracy skills to locate grid references. Years 3 and 4 pupils know how to use maps to find places, for example, in their local study of Ware. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 can effectively describe the water cycle and many common features of rivers; this is effectively supported by a local river study. Mapping skills are a strong feature across the school. This is further supported by orienteering activities around the school site and while on residential trips. Particularly good research methods have been used and developed by the pupils. Pupils are aware that they can access information from websites to support their projects.
124. Curriculum provision is satisfactory overall with strengths in its links with other subjects such as in English at Key Stage 1 and in physical education at Key Stage 2. Management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator has a clear vision of what needs to be done to further raise standards further. This has already been seen to be working effectively for older pupils.

## **HISTORY**

125. Only two lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and one in Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was taken from the scrutiny of work, teachers' planning, displays and discussions with staff and pupils. Standards are above national expectations at Key Stage 1 and in line at Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language, are making good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is now good and this represents good improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.
126. Key Stage 1 pupils are developing a good sense of the passing of time when they

compare events in the past with that experienced today, for example when comparing hospitals of today with those in the Crimean War. Very good teaching is enabling all of these pupils to understand how famous people from the past such as Florence Nightingale influenced events in history. This teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, very good use of visual aids and an ability to bring the subject to life through imaginative displays. As a result, these pupils are very keen to be part of lessons and eagerly raise their hands to make contributions to the class discussions. Younger pupils are prepared well for this level of learning through relevant experiences to develop their understanding of chronology by looking at old and new toys. This is increasing their knowledge of the past and of how things change over time.

127. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils build on their understanding of the passing of time and develop a sense of chronology through using timelines. They make gains in knowledge about different eras, for example the way of life in Tudor and Victorian times. They make particularly good gains in their understanding through the use of reference material. These include secondary sources of evidence, books, computer programs and websites. Pupils also use websites at home to support their learning in school. Good links have been established with literacy work and extended writing. In the one lesson observed, the teaching was satisfactory with some good features. The teacher made good use of house inventories from the Tudor time to encourage skills of deduction. As a result, these pupils began to form an opinion of what life in Tudor times was like for poor and rich people.
128. Pupils show a keen interest in history topics and are keen to display their knowledge of the past. Older pupils are particularly confident to give their opinions and build on each others' contributions when discussing their work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development by causing them to reflect on past events and to find out more about the past of their own and others' cultures.
129. The curriculum is good. It makes an effective contribution to pupils' development through focusing on life from different eras. The policy has recently been updated in the light of the new guidance. Management and leadership are satisfactory and a useful start has been made to monitor curriculum planning. Good use is made of the local area for study but the school has unsatisfactory levels of artefacts and resources to fully support the topics being taught.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

130. Pupils' standards of attainment are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents a dramatic improvement since the last inspection when attainment was found to be unsatisfactory at both key stages. Improvement in information and communication technology was a key issue. The school has worked hard to bring its equipment and resources up to date. It has produced a curriculum that is comprehensive and relevant and ensured that staff have been trained to teach it.
131. Information and communication technology learning and skill development begin well in reception. Pupils show good control of the mouse and use and understanding of the toolbar. They confidently use a graphics program to 'stamp' shapes and fill them in with colour. They correctly drag and drop images on to the screen. Higher attaining pupils change the colours using the toolbar palette. Pupils in Year 2, in a good link with their artwork, select and design geometrical patterns after the style of the artist Mondrian. They successfully choose and use the tools to flood some of the shapes with colour. The pupils confidently understand and use the correct terms such as icon, toolbar and cursor. They know how to save and print their work. On display are some very high quality

graphical pictures in the style of a Rousseau animal painting. Their progress over the key stage is good. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English receive very good support in the activities and they too make good progress.

132. At Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils use a program to create presentations of pictures and images researched for their study of ancient Greece. Working in pairs they select and scan the information, skilfully combining text and pictures. One pair presented an impressive sequence of at least 18 pictures and text, complete with built-in sound effects. This showed very well developed control technology skills. The presentation was met with applause, but the class offered the criticism that the pictures were not displayed for long enough. The pupils quickly explained how they would rectify the problem. At the end of the key stage the pupils are confident with computer skills, programs and language. A good range of work around the school shows poems, reviews, narratives and reporting using a variety of word-processing techniques. Sometimes in lessons for younger pupils in Key Stage 2 there is insufficient opportunity for 'hands on' experience so that pupils who have competent skills make slower progress than they should. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language join in lessons fully and make similar progress to their peers.
133. Throughout the school pupils enjoy working in the computer suite. They willingly co-operate at the machines and appreciate each other's work. Teachers often choose pairs of pupils where they know that one can help the other. The high standard of skills already developed at both key stages means that tasks are challenging and absorbing for the pupils. Pupils are anxious to learn, develop their skills and make further progress. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good.
134. Teaching is good overall but best in Key Stage 1 where it is consistently good. At Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory and sometimes good. In the good lessons teachers give pupils good direction and the opportunity to use their skills at the computer. Sometimes, however, too much time is taken in revising previously learned procedures and writing them down, with insufficient time allocated to carrying them out. A good programme of inservice training for teaching and support staff has enabled teachers to develop good skills and knowledge. The school development plan indicates that this will continue. Teachers' planning, based on nationally produced material, is satisfactory in the medium and short-term.
135. The subject is expertly lead by the headteacher. The school's strong focus on provision for and development of information and communication technology is relatively recent but is already beginning to show results in the high levels of pupils' attainment and good progress.
136. A strong feature is that the development of pupils' information and communication technology skills is closely linked with their work in other subjects, for example English, art, science and history. The school's purchase of new programs and sensing equipment will enable the full curriculum to be taught. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment and progress is as yet undeveloped.

## MUSIC

137. Raising pupils' standards of attainment at both key stages was a key issue of the previous inspection report. The school has subsequently appointed a visiting specialist teacher who now teaches all classes during her weekly morning's visit. Her impact has been considerable; standards are now above national expectation and the pupils make good progress across the school. This has been achieved in advance of the target date set in the school development plan.
138. At Key Stage 1, in a good 'warm-up' Year 2 pupils clapped three beats rhythmically and rested one. Individuals then supplied a 'street-cry' in the beat's rest. This was to fit in with the theme of the lesson which related to the history topic 'The Victorians'. The teacher developed the theme well. Pupils worked in groups to create Victorian street songs using tuned and untuned instruments. They performed these to the other groups showing good rhythmic control and melodic invention as well as adaptation of known tunes. Younger pupils also showed good rhythmic sense as they sing and clap rhythm patterns. They also demonstrated a knowledge of pitch as they described the teacher's different voice registers as 'high', 'middle' or 'low'. Listening to a glockenspiel, pupils correctly distinguished between its high and low notes. One pupil recognised that the pitch is related to the length of the bar on the instrument.
139. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 sing very well unaccompanied, in two parts. They hold the parts confidently and sing well in tune with mature tone. In groups they continue to work on their project which is an extended composition based on their geography topic 'Rivers'. The musical form of this is a rondo – a piece with a recurring theme. The pupils have a good knowledge of the form and understand well the value of contrast in musical composition. Two groups successfully perform their work-in-progress to the others. They listen attentively, recognising musical painting of source and waterfall and offering valid criticism. Other pupils in the key stage show good rhythmic control as they clap complex rhythm patterns. They successfully combine these in groups, keeping a steady pulse. The pupils have a good recall of previous learning. One correctly defines an 'ostinato' and another recalls the rhythm of a pavan, which they have heard in connection with Tudor music. The pupils work well in their groups to create rhythmic collages, which they perform as an accompaniment to the teacher's piano playing.
140. Pupils clearly enjoy their music lessons and enter upon all the activities with gusto. They enter the hall quietly and are straight into their work. Group work is very well organised. Individual pupils emerge as leaders and conductors. The pupils handle and share instruments with respect for them and each other. They listen appreciatively to each other's work and are anxious to perform themselves. There is disappointment when time runs out and some groups have not had time to perform. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English play a full part in lessons and make good progress.
141. The teaching is good and often very good. The visiting teacher's expertise is an asset to the school. She concentrates on developing pupils' performing and composing skills during her short visit. The class teachers provide additional lessons of listening and appraising which are linked to the theme of the specialist's lesson. Her planning is very good. While primarily designed to raise the standards of pupils' musical skills, the lesson's content is closely linked to what the pupils are learning in other subjects. The school's good resources of classroom instruments are well used. Although teaching time is short, particularly for older pupils, the teacher organises her lessons very well so that no time is wasted. There is a lively pace to her teaching and her expectation of pupils' good work and behaviour is very high. Music teaching is now a strength of the school.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Pupils' standards are in line with national expectations at Key Stage 2. Standards are above national expectations at Key Stage 1 as a result of consistently good teaching. This represents a general improvement on the previous inspection. All pupils achieve the standard expected nationally at the end of Year 6 in swimming.
143. At Key Stage 1, pupils respond quickly to the teachers' instructions and show confidence and enthusiasm for physical activity. Standards of dress are good and pupils take a pride in their work. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 1 display good levels of control when running and jumping and in balancing on the floor. Pupils in Year 2 display good levels of agility when moving around the hall in a dance lesson. They respond very well to the high quality teaching of this year group; for example, they persevered with their dance and worked well with their partner to produce a complex dance phrase. Higher attaining pupils in this year group can demonstrate their skills effectively to the rest of the class. The ability of pupils to appraise the work of others is good and they can make useful comments to assist them with their own physical development and learning.
144. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress overall in a range of physical skills. The vast majority have positive attitudes towards physical activity and most pupils work quietly. When teaching is less focused, as seen in an unsatisfactory lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils, their behaviour can be unsatisfactory and this adversely impacts on the standards achieved. Older pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 can use space well and their individual ball skills are good. This was demonstrated effectively in an indoor games session to develop netball passing techniques.
145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but best in Key Stage 1. Most planning is detailed and clearly linked to schemes of work. Teachers dress appropriately for physical education. They provide good opportunities for warm up and cool down at the beginning and end of lessons. Most teachers demonstrate exercises effectively to the pupils during these warm up sessions; for example, in a gymnastics lesson for pupils in Year 1 the teacher demonstrated challenging balances and movements. The pupils responded very well to this and as a consequence, they improved their own skills. Most teachers are fully aware of pupils' abilities and monitor their progress accordingly. The teacher of a class of Year 2 pupils effectively reviewed the work from a previous dance lesson and provided clear expectations of what these pupils should include in their dance phrases. A very good rapport has been established with these pupils. As a result, the teacher manages these pupils well and maintains good levels of discipline and control. Good use is made of these pupils to demonstrate skills learnt and assess progress and good opportunities are provided for the pupils to appraise the work of others. Good pace is ensured in lessons for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Individual skills are being developed well and pupils display a high level of motivation. This enthusiasm was clearly displayed in an indoor games lesson in the hall during a period of inclement weather.
146. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator. She is providing clear direction for the continued development of physical education within the school. The quality and range of resources is good and effective use is made of local authority scheme to help teachers when planning lessons. There is good provision for competitive sport and the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities.