

INSPECTION REPORT

THE JOHN BAMFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Crabtree Way

Etching Hill

Rugely

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124171

Headteacher: Mr. Lawrence Wood

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Kath Wallace

1151

Dates of inspection: 6 – 10 November 2000

Inspection number: 225297

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Crabtree Way
Etchinghill
Rugeley
Staffordshire

Postcode: WS15 2PA

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. D. Scott

Date of previous inspection: February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. Kath Wallace	Registered inspector	Under Fives	What sort of school is it?
		English	How high are standards? The school's results
		Music	How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve?
Mrs. Linda Buller	Lay inspector		How well does the school work with parents?
			How high are standards? Attendance
			How well does the school care for pupils? Health, safety and pupils' welfare
			How well is the school led and managed? Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr. John Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development.
		Art	
		Physical Education	
Mr. Keith Oglesby	Team inspector	Science	How good are curricular opportunities?
		Information and Communications Technology	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Design and Technology	
		Equal Opportunities	
		English as and Additional Language	
Mr. George Halliday	Team inspector	Geography	How well does the school care for pupils?
		History	
		Religious Education	
		Special Educational Needs	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The John Bamford Primary School is a larger than average size, open plan primary school situated on the northern edge of the town of Rugeley in Staffordshire. There are 293 pupils on roll with an even mix of boys and girls. There are few children from ethnic minority backgrounds. There is an attached nursery class that caters for 60 children under four on a part time basis. The majority of children attending the school have attended the nursery although some also move on to other local schools in the area. Standards of attainment on entry to the school vary considerably from one year to another but are broadly average. Local housing is a mix of owner occupied houses and those owned by the local authority. Thirty pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly in line with the average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is also close to the average. Seven pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school targets for the proportion of pupils likely to attain the national standard or above at the end of Year 6 in 2001 and 2002 are realistic and based upon a detailed analysis of the previous attainment of pupils.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The John Bamford Primary School is a school that rightly prides itself on enabling pupils to develop into caring and responsible young people. Standards attained by pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 are generally high although this varies from one year to another. Standards in mathematics are high at the end of Key Stage 1 but not so in English. The quality of teaching is good although there is insufficient structure to the teaching of reading. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good in all key stages.
- Standards attained in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 were above the national average and compare favourably with similar schools. Standards in mathematics are high in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils' learning is good and they generally make good progress.
- The school promotes moral, social and cultural development well and as a result pupils' behaviour is good, they have positive attitudes to learning and are caring of one another.
- Relationships within the school are good and pupils are well cared for.
- The support provided by parents has a positive impact on the quality of education provided.
- The procedures set up for tracking progress and setting targets for future achievements are good.
- The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for pupils.

What could be improved

- The school does not have an agreed approach to the teaching of reading that could be followed by staff and parents. As a result pupils do not always attain the standards they could in reading and this impacts on standards in writing in lower down the school.
- The organisation of the school day does not enable staff to make best use of time. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the taught time is below the nationally recommended time for Key Stages 1 and 2. There are also pockets of wasted time because the timetable has not been altered to take account of the national strategies.
- The school development plan is not used effectively to identify the main priorities of the school, take necessary actions, target resources or influence the targets set for professional development.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996.

Since that time the school has made satisfactory progress with the improvements suggested and in implementing national policies.

The standards attained in English at the end of each key stage have fluctuated from one year to another but are significantly improved at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000. Standards in mathematics and science have been, and remain consistently high in both key stages.

The assessment procedures of the school are now good and help the school to chart the progress of individual pupils.

There are now procedures for monitoring what happens in classrooms and curriculum co-ordinators take some responsibility for monitoring the quality of the curriculum.

The provision made for the spiritual development of pupils is now satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	C	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	B	A	
science	A*	A	B	A	

The work seen during the inspection week reflected these standards. However the standards attained in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 were very low in the most recent tests and this also influenced standards in writing. Standards in English in the current Year 4 are also below the levels expected. Low standards were partly explained by the high proportion of pupils in Years 3 and 4 with special educational needs. In the Year 3 cohort this is identified in the school's analysis of assessment data over time and the targets set for this year group take account of that. The standards attained in mathematics, art, music and physical education are high in both key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and take a pride in their school
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite and well behaved towards one another and adults. Despite the concerted efforts of staff in Years 3 and 4, there are a few pupils who display immature behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The relationships between pupils and staff are good and create a good ethos for learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching of both English and mathematics is generally good.

53 lessons were observed, 4% were judged to be excellent, 25%, very good, 38%, good, 32%, satisfactory and 2%, unsatisfactory.

Numeracy skills are taught well and this is reflected in the standards attained by pupils.

The lack of structured guidance on how the school teaches reading makes progress in reading less effective for pupils in Key Stage 1 and the early part of Key Stage 2.

The shared planning for lessons in parallel classes effectively ensures consistency about what is taught.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school fulfils legal requirements and provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The procedures for identifying pupils are clear and the support provided in classes enables pupils to make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school promotes the moral, social and cultural development of pupils. As a result pupils are responsible and caring young people with a strong sense of their own culture. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The standard of care offered by the school on a day-to-day basis is good as are procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.

The taught time is below the nationally recommended time in both Key Stage 1 and 2 and in both key stages there is time lost due to the organisation of the curriculum. All classes in the school go swimming for half a term in each academic year. This puts a strain on curriculum time for other subjects in Key Stage 1.

The school has a good relationship with parents and those that support work in classrooms provide valuable extra help for pupils. Parents are provided with regular progress reports and advice about the topics covered in classes. Despite the regular reading diaries that go home with pupils and detailed annual reports, parents are not routinely given specific targets for future learning. Opportunities are lost to engage parents to support the learning of their children at home.

The school meticulously monitors health and safety issues and all staff follow the procedures and guidelines regarding the reporting of accidents.

Procedures for identifying and following up unauthorised absence are not well established.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. Senior staff effectively reinforce the aims and values of the school and have established procedures to reflect them in the day-to-day life of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities for the school and are always seeking to improve the education provided.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has good procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils. The school development plan is not used as well as it should be to set the school's priorities and map out future actions.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of information technology and resources allocated for special educational needs are used well.

Staffing levels are good. There are sufficient teachers for each class group and the deputy head teacher teaches small groups for focused teaching as identified by the class teachers. All classes have the benefit of classroom assistants at designated times. This is more effective when staff have a clear understanding of their role. For example, the additional literacy support provided.

The accommodation of the school presents difficulties for staff because space is at a premium and also because of noise from neighbouring classes, at times, disturbs learning. The area currently used as a computer suite is too small to accommodate a whole class. Because the library area is usually used as a teaching area pupils do not have enough access to it.

The range of learning resources is satisfactory.

The aims and values of the school are shared and strongly promoted by staff and governors. However, governors do not always have sufficient information to make the right strategic management decisions.

The school is aware of the need to apply the principles of best value for money but is not always sufficiently critical of its own practice to ensure that they are met.

The school provides satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The standards attained by pupils. • The values promoted by the school. • Relationships between the school and parents. • The active support of the parents' association. • Opportunities to discuss the progress made by their children. • The good behaviour of children. • The Friday assemblies where pupils' efforts are publicly recognised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consistent implementation of the school's homework policy. • The reporting of incidents that occur during lunchtimes.

- The inspection team endorses the positive views expressed about the quality of relationships that exist between the school and parents and the good behaviour of children.
- The Friday celebration assemblies are good and value the efforts made by pupils.
- The standards attained by pupils are generally high by the end of Key Stage 2. High standards are attained in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 but this is not the case in English.
- The homework policy is comparatively new and is not yet applied consistently throughout the school. Parents are not given enough advice on how to help their children at home.

- The school's procedures for reporting incidents are good and carefully documented. This is the case during the lunch break.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

1. Standards of attainment in mathematics and science at the end of both key stages are consistently high from one year to another. Standards in English are less strong although in the 2000 test results they are significantly improved. This is due to good identification of areas of weakness that needed to be addressed and also giving specific pupils extra help with English skills. In the 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the standards attained in English are above average when compared to the national average and when compared with similar schools. In both mathematics and science standards are above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. In Key Stage 1 the picture in English is very different. In reading, standards are very low in comparison to the nation average and are extremely low when compared to similar schools. Writing standards are below average and well below the average gained by similar schools. In mathematics the school continues to match national improvement and the standards attained are above the national average and above those gained by similar schools. National comparisons are not available in science in Key Stage 1 because pupils are assessed on the basis of teacher assessment only.

2. The high standards attained in mathematics in both key stages are attributable to high standards in mathematical skills on entry to the school, good curriculum guidance and co-ordination in mathematics and consistently good teaching of the subject in both key stages. In English the more erratic standards attained from one year to another are partly explained by differences between cohorts of pupils identified through the school's own tracking procedures. However this is not totally explained by different cohorts of pupils both of whom were capable of attaining high standards in mathematics. The school does not have a whole school approach to the teaching of reading and therefore parents are not given consistent messages about how to support the learning of reading at home. Obviously this is reflected in the standards attained at the end of Key Stage 1 because that is when children are mastering the early reading skills and they have an adverse impact on standards in writing. Although this is redressed by the end of Key Stage 2, reading is still less strong than the other core skills by the end of the Key Stage.

3. Standards of attainment are above age related expectations in both key stages in art, music and physical education and in all these subjects good leadership and management of the subject supported by clear curriculum guidance is a key factor in the good progress made by pupils. With regard to physical education, pupils already have good co-ordination and sense of space when they are in the nursery and this is developed well in all classes. The school has a tradition of musical performance that has been developed and sustained by an able and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has regular opportunities to teach music to all classes. The high level of take-up for musical tuition also plays a critical part in the high standards gained.

4. Standards of attainment on entry to the nursery classes is broadly in line with the average, although it is higher in mathematical and personal skills than in language and literacy. The school makes good use of baseline assessments to predict and chart the progress made by pupils through Key Stages 1 and 2. The progress in mathematics and science is good in both key stages and reflects the good teaching seen in lessons. The progress made in reading and writing is disappointing.

5. In the remaining subjects the progress made by pupils is satisfactory and they attain standards expected for their age as described in the National Curriculum programmes of study or the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous levels of attainment and the targets set for them.

7. The school's targets for the proportion of pupils expected to attain the expected level or above in national tests are realistic given the knowledge that they have of pupils' prior attainment.

8. Standards of attainment in mathematics and science have remained high since the previous inspection. Standards in English have been more erratic but now seem to be improving at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in reading were not secure then and are not so now and this also impacts on standards in writing in Key Stage 1.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils like school, enjoy learning and have positive attitudes towards adults and one another. As a result they make good progress in lessons, become involved in a good range of activities and attain high standards by the time they leave. Their personal development and personal relationships are also good and this makes a substantial contribution to their learning. Pupils entering school for the first time settle quickly in the routines of school and are keen and enthusiastic about their lessons. Pupils are interested and involved in their work. They concentrate on and persevere with tasks in most lessons. They listen well to their teachers and take an interest in their classmates' contributions to debates. Pupils want to learn and respond quickly, quietly and positively to work set by teachers. Parents' view that the school positively promotes and values good attitudes and behaviour is well founded. Pupils co-operate well in a variety of situations, thrive on well-earned praise and take a pride in their work. This is evident in the high standard of presentation seen in all classes.

10. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good and often very good. They enter and move around the school quietly and with due consideration for others. Pupils are almost invariably polite and helpful. For example, they willingly escorted inspectors to classrooms when asked for directions. Teachers and other adults are good role models and clearly expect pupils to be well behaved, considerate and orderly. Pupils respond to this in a mature manner and show that they recognise and value their own role in creating a pleasant, working atmosphere in the school. No pupils have been excluded in the past year. The school makes it clear that bullying is not acceptable and that any incidents will be dealt with promptly. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection.

11. Personal development is good and positive relationships are a strong feature of the school. Pupils act responsibly within the school buildings and around the school premises. They show care for one another and older pupils happily help and support younger pupils, for example, during wet lunch hours. Pupils are polite to adults and other pupils. They look after materials and equipment well and handle tools safely. Personal responsibility is encouraged in all classes. For example, children in a reception class are proud to take turns calling the register with the help of their teacher. Older pupils are responsible for a variety of tasks including moving equipment and ensuring desks are hygienically cleaned after lunch. At lunch-time, pupils of all ages exercise their choice of meals sensibly, talk quietly to each other and make their meal an enjoyable social occasion.

12. Levels of attendance are satisfactory. As at the time of the last inspection they are in line with national average figures. The school's capacity to improve levels of attendance is currently being hampered by the increasing number of pupils who are absent during term time because of family holidays.

13. The previous report was positive about pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development and this good standard has been maintained.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all key stages. It is particularly strong in the nursery, one class at the beginning of Key Stage 2 and two classes at the upper end of Key Stage 2. As a result pupils make good progress with their learning and are enthused and motivated to work hard.

15. When teaching is very good or better, the teacher or nursery nurse is knowledgeable about what has to be taught and shares their enthusiasm for learning effectively with pupils. Lessons are made interesting and enjoyable and pupils can see that they make good progress. In the nursery this can be seen in the responsibility that the children take for their own learning and for looking after resources carefully. At the beginning of Key Stage 2 this same lively and enthusiastic approach to a lesson was seen in science. In this lesson pupils were encouraged to express their opinions and refine their ideas about how the density of a shadow was influenced by the angle of the light source in relation to an object. In classes at the end of the key stage pupils respond very positively to books that are well read. In one art lesson at the end of this key stage a visit to the theatre was followed up with a good range of artefacts to activate lively discussion. As a result pupils were keen to work and produced work of a high quality.

16. Teachers plan lessons carefully and the practice of planning for lessons across the team ensures consistency and makes good use of the curriculum strengths of teachers. In the best teaching this planning is turned into specific learning outcomes that take account of the learning needs of pupils. When this is not done so well, although the lesson is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress, there is not the same amount of commitment to achieving highly. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of presentation of work and behaviour, so both are good. Classroom discipline is good in the majority of lessons but, in the only lesson judged to be unsatisfactory at the beginning of Key Stage 2, the teacher was not aware that pupils were making silly noises and therefore they went unchecked and disturbed the learning of others.

17. The teaching of reading in the guided reading part of literacy lessons is well structured but the whole school guidance on how reading is taught and learned detracts from the progress made in lessons. This lack of guidance also impairs the support that parents can provide with reading at home. Other basic skills are generally taught well. Pupils learn to build up words phonetically, identify common spelling patterns and then break complex words into sections. Although numeracy skills are taught well overall, there are still a number of children in Key Stage 2 who need to count up on fingers when they should have a more instant recall of number facts.

18. All staff are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. They commit time to support them well either individually or in small groups. Teachers ensure that pupils' work is well matched to their level of understanding and to the targets in their independent action plans. Pupils are set interesting and challenging tasks and this has a direct effect on the progress they make. There is close teamwork between the special educational needs co-ordinator, teachers and support staff. The co-ordinator consults with teachers in the writing of independent action plans. Teachers use the targets effectively to plan suitable work that enables pupils to maintain interest and motivation so that they can make progress in literacy and numeracy.

19. Support staff are used well in both key stages to meet the learning objectives of lessons. Where they have most impact on raising standards it is when they have a clear brief to do so. The work done on raising standards in literacy in Key Stage 2 is a good example. The nursery nurses who run the nursery class under the guidance of a co-ordinator do an excellent job in providing children with a suitable curriculum that is good preparation for school.

20. Good use is made of resources although the lack of large texts that can be seen by all pupils in a teaching group does sometimes impair the impact of otherwise good teaching in English. A similar problem is encountered in geography where there are insufficient copies of the same atlas for use in lessons. As a result both the teacher and pupils waste time finding the information from two different sources. Good use is made of information and communications technology despite the limited resources actually in school.

21. The use of time is made very difficult because the time between breaks is not tailored to meet the changes made necessary by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. As a result time is not as well managed as it could be.

22. Teachers make good use of assessments to plan for future learning. Although pupils take reading diaries home regularly they are not always used to set targets for future learning and the use of homework to extend the curriculum is not consistent.

23. The quality of teaching has remained consistently good as it was at the time of the last inspection.

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

24. The curriculum meets statutory requirements in both key stages and in the Foundation Stage. The activities provided in nursery and reception are well matched to the Early Learning Goals and provide a good foundation for pupils' future learning. This is a strength of the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2 the school also provides a good range of worthwhile activities but there are areas that need attention.

25. National Strategies for literacy and numeracy are in place and all teachers have had relevant training. Lessons are carefully planned and evaluated. Since the introduction of the Literacy Strategy the curriculum balance in English is satisfactory but the teaching of reading is not sufficiently structured, as there is no whole school approach to the teaching of reading. This undermines the good teaching and strong curriculum seen in all other aspects of English. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when the use of literature was judged to be undervalued and the range of writing too narrow. The position with reading was raised in the previous inspection report.

26. The curriculum co-ordinators have ensured that planning and curriculum development is effective and have worked hard to develop teamwork among all staff. However in some subjects their work has more impact on Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. This is most noticeable in English and science. Co-ordinators monitor attainment in English, mathematics and science in both key stages. They have been very successful at identifying how they could raise standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 and this is reflected in improved results in tests. There are good procedures for tracking pupils' progress and setting targets for their future achievement. Information from optional national tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 are included.

27. The organisation of the school day does not make the best use of time. The 'teaching time', which is the whole school day minus registration, assemblies and breaks, is below the nationally recommended time by at least an hour per week in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching time is lost due to the organisation of the timetable as blocks of time between breaks leave pockets of time that are not well used. The time given allocated to swimming lessons is high. All classes in the school have a block of swimming sessions at the local high school over a half-term period. This reduces the time available for other subjects, particularly for younger children where changing takes longer. The

teaching day is already short in Key Stage 1 and there is no requirement to teach swimming until Key Stage 2.

28. The curriculum offers a good range of additional activities, both within the school day and after school. There is a large orchestra that welcomes pupils of all abilities. This is featured on the excellent school website. The school makes good use of available expertise. This includes visiting artists, theatre groups, environmental experts, local museums and farms, police and traffic wardens, and the facilities of the nearby secondary school. French is taught in the final term of Year 6. Adult time is deployed well to allow these things to happen, for example smaller groups are created by using learning support assistants and the deputy head teacher. The skills and knowledge of parents make a good contribution to learning. After school activities include several sports, choir, orchestra and a computer club.

29. The curriculum is planned effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers promote equality of opportunity for boys and girls and successfully break down stereotypes. For example, in a very good lesson on modern literature, boys were happy to volunteer for a female part in the role-play. After school clubs and fund-raising events are well attended by both girls and boys. Work in English, mathematics and science lessons is matched to standards of attainment and all pupils are skilfully involved in class discussions. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good. Appropriate targets are set through carefully devised individual educational plans and are followed by learning support assistants and class teachers.

30. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Adults are good role models and relationships are good. Time is given for discussion of pupils' experiences and decisions. Good use is made of the expertise of other agencies such as the police or school nurse to deal with issues of safety, sex education and drug awareness. When conflict occurs it is dealt with very well. The pupils grow in confidence and maturity as they move up the school.

31. Provision for moral development is good. Good moral values are communicated through some of the assemblies and through the implementation of the school's behaviour policy. Rules are clear and interpretation is fair. Teachers use opportunities that occur in other subjects such as history or English. Some very good modern novels are used to present moral dilemmas that pupils recognise. Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of the differences between behaviour that is acceptable and that which is not. Pupils' sense of fairness was observed on a number of occasions in lessons such as art and information technology where equipment and time had to be shared.

32. The school successfully promotes pupils' social development. They are given opportunities to work together in small groups and pairs where they learn to co-operate. Pupils are motivated both by appropriate tasks and knowing that their group will often have to report on their progress to the rest of the class. This was observed in lessons such as art and science. In classrooms, teachers treat wrong answers or misunderstandings well. As a result pupils learn how to be tolerant and supportive of each other. The school's good programme of visits and events helps pupils to learn how to deal with adults and other institutions.

33. The provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. The school has identified opportunities in all areas of the curriculum for learning about other cultures. Work seen during the inspection included good work in history from a farm visit in Key Stage 1 and from a visit by a Greek theatre company in Key Stage 2. Good use is made of artefacts from museums, for example Roman and Victorian items. Resources for younger pupils, for example dolls, puzzles and language games, reflect a multi-cultural society. There is an adequate selection of useful books in school, both fiction and non-fiction, but those in the library are not well displayed or easily accessible.

34. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The previous inspection report found that this was not reflected enough in areas of the curriculum, particularly English. This has been improved. All subject co-ordinators identify opportunities for 'special moments' of awe and reflection within each curriculum area. These include watching eggs hatch in science or reflecting on an artist's feelings when studying a picture. Some thoughtful moments were seen in English lessons and class discussions, for example when looking at the movement of the Sun and Earth. Teachers generally allow time in religious education lessons and 'circle time' for pupils to talk about what is important to them. Spirituality is promoted in the best of the school assemblies, but in others opportunities are not taken to create the right atmosphere for sincere reflection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment begins with baseline assessment in the nursery and continues in the reception classes. Assessments continue on a day-to-day basis throughout the school, enabling teachers to make accurate judgements on how pupils' knowledge and understanding have developed during the course of a lesson. This helps teachers to a suitable degree to plan further work. Structured occasions for assessment are planned systematically. Pupils' progress is monitored effectively through a variety of school-based and national tests. The results of these tests are thoroughly analysed by staff and are monitored. Reading progress is monitored well during guided reading but individual reading records and diaries are less helpful.

36. Teachers know their pupils well and assess their personal and social development well but the school does not have a standardised method of recording these assessments.

37. Arrangements for promoting good behaviour are satisfactory and pupils are aware that bullying is not tolerated. Teachers, classroom assistants and midday supervisory staff deal with unsatisfactory behaviour effectively. The school policy sets clear expectations of good behaviour in the school but there is no whole school system for monitoring behaviour.

38. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by good procedures for the assessment and recording of what they know and of their personal development. Teachers can thus pitch work at the correct level. The school makes good use of the services provided by the local education authority, such as the educational psychologist and special educational needs support staff. Pupils receive good support in their daily lessons and sensitive guidance on behaviour. The continual monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress helps teachers to regularly update individual education plans. New targets are set as required from regular reviews. All pupils with special educational needs have equal opportunities to learn and have access to the whole curriculum.

39. The procedures for promoting pupils' health, safety, welfare and child protection are good. Fire safety, first aid and medical arrangements are good and pupils are confident that they will be well cared for. The school meets the legal requirement to have a health and safety policy and risk assessment procedures are in place. Regular safety checks on the premises are carried out by the staff and the committee with designated responsibility and appropriate action is taken. Arrangements for child protection are good and reflect the caring nature of the school.

40. The care taken of pupils has improved since the previous inspection and so have assessment procedures. However, reading records were not considered to be sufficiently detailed then and remain so now.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents have a positive view of the school and are happy with the standards achieved by their children. The inspection findings support parents' views that both academic standards and standards of behaviour are high. However, standards in reading and writing vary considerably from one year to another.

42. The information the school provides for parents is satisfactory. Parents are well informed about curriculum topics and school events through good quality letters and notices of special events. Annual reports sent to parents describing their children's attainment and progress, provided satisfactory information regarding what it is their child can do in each subject. However, the setting of targets for future learning, which would enable parents to support their children at home, is not consistent. Similarly, although reading diaries are used to record what pupils have read at home or in school, insufficient guidance is provided to make maximum use of parental support.

43. The school has a good relationship with parents and encourages them to provide help for teaching and learning in classrooms. Those parents that help in classrooms are given clear instructions on what to do by the teacher and as a result pupils gain full benefit from their support. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, a parent ably supported pupils with work regarding probability. This enabled the teacher to provide a more challenging task for a group of high attaining pupils, so that pupils of all abilities made very good progress during the lesson.

44. Parents of children with special educational needs are involved from the beginning of the process of identification of needs and are kept fully informed of their children's progress at all stages. The school reviews education plans regularly and parents are invited and encouraged to take part in reviews.

45. The school has maintained its good relationships with parents described in the previous inspection report. Overall, the school links with parents are effective and have a positive impact on their children's learning. This would be more effective if the school had a more clearly defined structure for teaching reading that parents could use to support the development of reading skills at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management provided by the head teacher and key staff are satisfactory. The management structure of the school is clear and responsibilities for areas of the curriculum shared among staff. The senior management team of the school meets regularly and are committed to high academic standards and standards of behaviour. In Key Stage 2 they have successfully used their analysis of the end of the key stage tests to identify what needed to be done to raise standards in English as they were lower than those in mathematics and science. Although they were aware of very low standards in reading and low standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 they have not been so successful at analysing all of the reasons for these low standards.

47. School procedures for identifying special educational needs and charting the progress of individual pupils are good; they give staff accurate predictions for future attainment based on their prior attainment. Teaching is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in both key stages but it is only in mathematics that the trend in standards is consistently high over time at the end of both key stages. The curriculum co-ordinator for mathematics does not have a class responsibility and is able to effectively manage the curriculum throughout the whole school. The English and science co-ordinators are both based in Key Stage 2 and this is where they have most impact on what is taught. The lack of structure to the teaching of reading inevitably has a more negative impact on standards in reading in Key Stage 1 because that is when pupils are acquiring this basic skill.

48. The school development plan provides the staff and governors with an audit of where the school is in relation to current legislation and initiatives. It is not used to establish the priorities that the school needs to address in order to improve further. For example, no mention is made of the need to improve standards in English at the end of each key stage although staff have worked hard to achieve this at the end of Key Stage 2 and know that they need to do the same in Key Stage 1.

49. The aims and values promoted by the staff and governors are centred on the need to develop personal and social skills alongside the academic. Parents are very supportive of this and a success of the school is seen in the way pupils care for one another and take pride in their achievements and those of others.

50. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily but does not always have sufficient information about issues of importance to monitor performance and ensure improvements. For example they were not aware that the curriculum time was below the nationally recommended levels by at least an hour per week in each key stage. There is also some slippage of time because the timetable has not been adjusted to take account of the recent changes in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. This is more critical in Key Stage 1 when classes take time out to go swimming although this is not a curriculum requirement until Key Stage 2. Procedures for monitoring unauthorised absence are not routinely followed and parents are not made sufficiently aware that extended holidays are classified as unauthorised absence.

51. The school procedures for staff appraisal are good and put the school in a good position for the introductions of performance management. Staff set their own targets for improvement in negotiation with senior staff and governors set similar targets for the head teacher. They are not always linked to the priorities of the school or the school development plan. The monitoring and evaluation over curriculum initiatives such as the National Literacy or Numeracy Strategies is good and have ensured consistency within each teaching team. The more focused appraisal on improving the quality of teaching or the curriculum is not so strong. The focus on raising literacy skills through the use of classroom assistants working with small groups of pupils has paid dividends.

52. Governors, staff and parents are very conscious that space within the school is at a premium and at times this impacts on learning either because a class is disturbed by noise or facilities like the library are not fully accessible. The management of finances is good and this allows the school to plan for major improvements or more computers with some confidence. However, the reasons for spending are not always focused upon raising standards for pupils currently in school. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used well and as a result these pupils make good progress. The nursery classes are run very effectively by two experienced and effective nursery nurses under the guidance of a co-ordinator and provide good value for money.

53. The school makes good use of information and communications technology despite the limitations of classrooms resources. Pupils use the ICT suite at the local high school, staff are confident when using computers and records, including class registers, are stored electronically.

54. Procedures for inducting newly qualified teachers into teaching are good and provide a good basis for effective teaching. Teachers new to the school and those working as supply teachers are also well supported by colleagues. Students working in the school during the inspection were given sufficient guidance to make a positive contribution to the quality of education provided.

55. The school is aware of the need to apply the principles of best value for money but is not always sufficiently critical of its own practice to ensure that they are met. The school is aware of the need to apply principles of best value and is aware of its comparisons with similar schools at the end of each key stage. The services bought in by the school are considered in terms of best value for the money spent. Staff and governors have consulted with parents in the past about how they view the

school but this is not a regular feature of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money with the potential to do better when all of the management systems are more sharply focused upon raising standards.

56. There have been improvements in many aspects of the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection and the potential for further improvement is good. Staffing levels are now good. Monitoring of the curriculum and staff development have both improved and so has the impact of classroom assistants on pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve the quality of education provided and ensure that standards of attainment are as high as they can be for each pupil, governors and staff should:

1. Establish a whole school approach to the teaching of reading that:
 - Identifies the methods used for teaching reading,
 - Enables staff to chart progress with in each year group and from one year to another,
 - Is used throughout the school,
 - Is shared with parents so that they can support their children more effectively in learning to read.Paragraphs 2, 4, 8, 17, 22, 25, 35, 40, 42, 45-48, 75, 78, 80, 87.
2. Ensure that the English curriculum makes clearer links between reading and writing.
Paragraphs 2, 4, 46, 81.
3. Re-organise the school day to:
 - Increase the taught time in each key stage,
 - Make maximum use to the time available for the identified curriculum priorities of the school.Paragraphs 21, 27, 50, 85.
4. Use the school development plan to more clearly identify priorities, determine the actions to be taken and chart the progress towards meeting goals.
Paragraph 5.

Minor issue to be addressed

Governors should ensure that records of attendance are regularly monitored and any unauthorised absences followed up.

Paragraph 12

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

58.

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

59.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	25	38	32	2	0	0

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

60.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y R– Y 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	293
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y R– Y 6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	35

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

61.

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	17	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	17	21
	Girls	13	15	17
	Total	25	32	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (80)	80 (78)	95 (98)
	National	83 (89)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	21	19
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	27	36	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (83)	90 (91)	85 (89)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	21	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	19	16
	Girls	18	15	21
	Total	33	34	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (74)	85 (86)	93 (98)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	19
	Girls	19	16	20
	Total	35	34	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (77)	85 (86)	98 (98)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

63.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	98.4
Any other minority ethnic group	1.6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

64.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	247

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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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	2000
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	£
Total income	543073
Total expenditure	539333
Expenditure per pupil	1620
Balance brought forward from previous year	50720
Balance carried forward to next year	54460

Results of the survey of parents and carers

65.

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	328
Number of questionnaires returned	113

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	37	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	49	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	55	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	47	11	1	11
The teaching is good.	59	40	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	42	7	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	32	2	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	0	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	54	39	3	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	49	40	5	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	46	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	36	12	0	20

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

66. The provision made for children under-five is now incorporated into the Foundation Stage that includes the nursery and reception classes. This came into effect this year and the school has made good progress towards this integration. Standards on entry into the school are broadly average although they are consistently higher in mathematics than communication, language and literacy skills. The schools own analysis of the baseline assessments carried out at the beginning of the reception year shows considerable variation between each cohort of pupils.

67. Children are admitted into the nursery in the September before their fourth birthday on a part-time basis. Most of them move on to the reception classes within the school but several go on to other local primary schools.

68. Personal, social and emotional development is good. Children very quickly settle into the routines of the nursery and learn to share resources, take turns and behave well towards other children and adults. They are meticulous in the care of equipment because staff teach them to be. If a piece of equipment is mis-laid they know that it impairs its value to their learning. They appreciate the need of classroom routines and rules and quickly respond to instructions from the teacher. In the reception classes the majority of children dress and undress for physical education lessons with the minimum of help. They work in small groups with the support of adult helpers and relate well to adults. A few children are able to work independently for a period of time. This was seen when a group of children worked on naming body parts by sticking labels on one another. They enjoyed the activity and had fun with it and yet kept focused on the task.

69. Communication, language and literacy skills are generally satisfactory although among the current nursery children they are high. Children in the nursery are confident when talking to adults about things in their own lives or when making sandwiches for their snack time. They readily engage in role-play and enjoy experimenting with words related to specific situations, such as the class café. They enjoy listening to stories and understand that words and pictures are used together to create them. Similarly, many of the children in reception have good communication skills and are able to recognise the sound made by letters and recognise their own names sufficiently well to register themselves each day. Many copy letters and words correctly and some are able to find words on a chart and copy them correctly onto their own diagram of the human body. They form letters correctly and understand that letters make up words that describe their activities. They recognise initial letter sounds and begin to build up simple words from those sounds.

70. The mathematical development of children is good. Even the youngest children in the nursery have a good sense of shape and colour. This is clearly demonstrated by the way that children put all the pieces of a game or jigsaw away when they are finished with them. These young children are familiar with the order of numbers to five and count out drinks or snacks to match the number of children in the café at any one time. They repeat simple patterns when threading beads and order items according to size. At the beginning of the reception year, they are familiar with order of numbers to five, use numbers to ten and have the idea of adding or taking away one to change the number. Several children can count in two using concrete examples of pairs of eyes, feet to hands and higher attaining children begin to do this mentally to see that five people have ten eyes between them.

71. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. In the nursery they quickly establish where things stay and what activities take place in each area. They find out the properties of water and know that the weather influences outdoor play. They enjoy talking about their own lives

and share their experiences. In reception children become increasingly aware of their place within the school, where they enter and leave and to appreciate features of the area they live in. The majority of them name obvious body parts such as arms, legs and feet and correctly label them either on themselves or a poster.

72. Many of the children in both the nursery and reception have developed good physical skills. In the nursery they take part in games involving activities in a confined space with little difficulty. In their outdoor play they manoeuvre wheeled toys to make good use of the space. They manipulate paintbrushes, pencils, dough and cutting tools well for their age. In the reception classes this good control of tools and equipment is maintained and is seen in letters that are formed well and the good control of pencils and crayons when they draw. In physical education lessons they use space well, have good control of their own bodies and start to understand the importance of exercise and how they feel after it. For example, in both reception classes the children interpreted the poem 'Let's Dance' with enthusiasm and with good representations of actions such as, *squirring like a fish*.

73. Creative development is a strong feature of both the nursery and reception classes. Children readily associate with the characters in the stories read to them and learn about feelings and emotions in the process. They enjoy dressing up and acting out imaginary stories and re-living real life dramas. For example, one group of reception children imagined that they were controlling traffic for children to cross the road and had to turn them back because flooding had closed the road! They enjoy singing and dancing and show what they feel through their class discussion times and their art.

74. The quality of teaching is good in all classes but is consistently very good in the nursery. Teachers and nursery nurses plan work carefully to give children structured opportunities to mature and learn new skills. Children learn to take responsibility for their own learning and look after equipment carefully. When parents come in to help in classrooms they are used effectively to promote the learning planned by staff. Classroom assistants and students give good support to learning and therefore the children make good progress in speaking and listening, mathematics and writing. There are occasions when support is needed, for example at the beginning of a physical education lesson, when another adult would greatly ease the task of getting the whole class changed and into the hall. Relationships between the children and staff are very good so the time spent in school is a good experience for all concerned.

75. The curriculum planned for children under five is appropriate for their age and includes a good mix of activities. Children are introduced to some elements of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies during their time in nursery and reception. When they move on to Year 1 this early training is evident in the way they settle to the more formal routines of the Literacy or Numeracy Hour. The structure for teaching phonics skills, handwriting and spelling are good but progress with reading skills is inhibited because there is not a uniform structure for teaching reading throughout the school.

76. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has taken up post this term and is clear about what needs to be taught. She and the nursery staff work well together to provide a suitable curriculum for children under five. The accommodation is good. The nursery and reception classrooms are spacious and provide good opportunities for whole class, small group and individual tasks. The range of resources is also good and both staff and pupils take good care of them.

77. The provision made for pupils under five was judged to be good at the time of the last inspection and it remains so.

ENGLISH

78. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2000 so pupils attained above average levels in relation to the national averages and in comparison to similar schools.

However, there is considerable variation between the cohorts of pupils from one year to another. The school's own analysis of its performance in Key Stage 2 and measures taken to address areas of comparative weakness have also made a significant impact on standards. The work seen during the inspection reflects these high standards although reading skills are less well developed than writing. The variation between different year groups is very apparent at the end of Key Stage 1 where in 1999 and in 2000 the standards attained by pupils in reading were very low and in writing were low. The weaknesses in reading contribute to lower standards in writing. Although the school has good procedures for charting the progress of individual pupils, the analysis of Key Stage 1 results is not so rigorous and therefore areas of weakness have not been identified early enough. For example the school does not have an agreed approach to the teaching of reading and pupils and parents are not given sufficient guidance on the suitability of texts or targets for future learning.

79. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory in both key stages and are good when pupils have the opportunity to engage with adults and their peers in an informal setting, such as lunchtimes. The background noise from other classes regularly makes listening difficult and this inhibits class discussions at times.

80. Standards attained in reading are variable and in some classes at the beginning of Key Stage 2 they are well below the levels expected for the age of the pupils. Where pupils make good progress in reading and therefore attain high standards, this is often due to the support for and interest in reading at home. The majority of pupils know how to spell out unfamiliar words or use the context of the story to establish their meaning. There is not enough guidance on the range of books to be taken home to read and as a result they are not always matched to the levels of attainment of pupils. The records kept on guided reading give teachers indications of the learning needs of pupils and this information is used well to give support during lessons. This information is not routinely transferred to set targets for learning at home. When pupils are identified for additional help with literacy skills they begin to make better progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' reading skills and enjoyment in books improve considerably. However, although most know how to use an index or the contents page to find information from a book, far less pupils knew how to use the library classification system.

81. The standards attained in writing are stronger than in reading in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils attain standards that are high in relation to the expectations for their age. In the past two years standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 have been below the levels expected. This is due to a combination of a high number of pupils with special educational needs in these classes but also that reading standards have an influence on writing. In the current Key Stage 1 classes standards in writing are broadly in line with the expected level for their age. Handwriting and standards of presentation are good in both key stages. Pupils generally form letters well and quickly establish a handwriting style that is fluent and legible. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn to spell words by building up letter sounds and learning blends of letters that go together. This is evident in a short piece written by a pupil in Year 2 describing part of the Giant Turnip story. *"hey planted beeteyto (potato) carets seeds"*. This is developed in Key Stage 2 so that pupils break words down into sections if they find them difficult to spell and are confident to try new words and experiment with language. The use of punctuation in writing is developed well and clearly links the written and spoken word. One higher attaining pupil at the beginning Year 6 was writing an advertisement for cars with the following good use of persuasive language: *"If this hasn't taken your breath away already then come to Groovy land of cars and see it in person"*.

82. The quality of teaching in lessons is good in both key stages. Literacy lessons are well planned for parallel classes to ensure consistency between them. In the best lessons this planning is translated to closely meet the learning needs of the pupils within the class. Texts are well chosen to interest pupils and give them real contexts for writing. The use of large texts for the shared reading part of the lesson is not so well organised as the school does not always have relevant texts in sufficiently large print for the whole class to read together. Teachers use a good range of strategies

to make lessons more interesting and reinforce what has to be learned. For example, in one lesson seen in Year 1/2, the teacher used one of *The Little Bear* stories to stress repetitions and also made good use of *letter fans* (fingers of card with letters or simple blends of letters written at the top end of the finger and joined at the base with a paper fastener so pupils can move them) to spell out simple words. When teaching is very good teachers share their enthusiasm for language and literature with pupils and have high expectations of them. Good texts are chosen to illustrate the theme of the lesson and the teacher provokes class discussion by reading the selected pieces of poetry or prose with good expression and feeling. In one Year 6 class pupils were then keen to explore how different characters would react in different situations.

83. Classroom support assistants in classes in both key stages provide good support for the individual pupils or groups of pupils they work with. This is most effective when classroom assistants are focused upon teaching specific skills in English lessons. Pupils enjoy the sense of achievement at reaching the goals set for them when they work in small groups with support.

84. Pupils usually enjoy English lessons and work hard to complete the tasks set by their teacher. They contribute to class discussions and when they are highly motivated by the tasks set, show good levels of concentration. This was apparent in one Year 3/4 class where pupils were asked to prepare a frame for a poem ready for the next lesson. During the plenary at the end of the lesson it was apparent that all pupils had worked hard and were keen to complete the task the following day.

85. The English curriculum is based upon the National Literacy Strategy in both key stages and all aspects of the subject are planned for satisfactorily within that framework. The teaching of reading skills within the guided reading section of these lessons is satisfactory but there is no whole school policy that sets out how reading is taught. As a result, guidance for parents on how to support their children is not strong. This undermines the good teaching in lessons. Similarly a lack of consistency in the giving of homework means that it is not used as well as it could be. Literacy skills are taught across the curriculum but work does not always take sufficient account of the differing English attainment levels of pupils in subjects like, geography, history or religious education. The allocation of times to literacy lessons has not been changed since the introduction of the Literacy Hour and as a result there are some pockets of time that are not used effectively.

86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall but good in Key Stage 2. In this key stage the co-ordinator has led a detailed analysis of standardised test results at the end of the key stage to identify what needs to be done to raise standards. The school is aware of the need to raise standards in Key Stage 1 but has not so clearly identified what needs to be done. Resources are satisfactory but teachers do not have the materials to provide single large texts to be shared by the whole class. The library area is small but has an appropriate range of non-fiction books but is not used as often as it should be because it is used as a teaching area for much of the day. The open-plan nature of the school causes some problems with background noise so pupils and staff have to work hard to maintain concentration at times.

87. In the previous report reference was made to the lack of structure with regard to reading and this is still an issue for the school to address. In other respects the situation with English seems similar although there is more variation from one year group to another. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been well absorbed by teachers but would be improved by access to more large texts for the guided reading part of each lesson.

MATHEMATICS

88. The standards achieved by children on entry to the Foundation Stage are above the levels expected for their age. Children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 1 the standards attained by pupils are above the national average and

are comparable with similar schools. The school has maintained this pattern of attainment to make improvements that are broadly in line with the improvements made nationally.

89. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards remain above the national average and are well above the levels attained in similar schools. As in Key Stage 1, standards have improved at a rate consistent with the rising national trend and are similar to the standards reported in the previous inspection report. The good progress already established in the earlier key stages is maintained in Key Stage 2. This includes pupils with special educational needs.

90. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and is sometimes very good in Key Stage 2. Teachers are using the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well so that their lessons are well planned, balanced and focused on clear learning objectives. This ensures that pupils develop their ability to do mental calculations in a number of ways, discuss mathematical concepts using an appropriate technical vocabulary and demonstrate their understanding in parts of the lesson devoted to individual learning.

91. Teachers generally know the subject well and use this knowledge to plan and teach effectively. Lesson plans usually cater well for pupils with different abilities, including those with special educational needs. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged by their tasks so that they are encouraged to do well. In the one lesson where teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory, at the beginning of Key Stage 2 average and below average pupils covered the same work so that tasks were too difficult for those with lower ability. This led to some frustration and some anti-social behaviour. Teachers use non-teaching assistants, parents and other visiting adults well to support learning, especially when the extra help is focused on pupils with special educational needs. As a result their progress is good. Pupils usually work with set materials so there are few opportunities to engage in personal study. This is a particular concern for the older and more able pupils who would make better progress if encouraged to engage in more problem-solving activities.

92. Most teachers have high expectations and set suitable learning tasks to enable pupils to achieve their targets. In a small minority of lessons, which are based on identical planning, pupils' progress and attainment depend largely on the difference in their teachers' expectations. Teachers successfully foster and develop good relations with their pupils and this can be seen in the quiet, well-ordered learning atmosphere in most classrooms. Pupils generally listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and show an eagerness to learn. Teachers use praise and shrewd questions to build up self-esteem in their pupils so that they face new tasks with confidence. This enhances their progress and allows lessons to move at a good pace so that learning is effective. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils of all ages are aware of learning objectives at the start of each lesson so that they gradually develop the important skill of self-evaluation.

93. Teachers go to great lengths to make mathematics interesting and relevant. All classrooms have an area devoted to the subject, which contain useful tools such as number squares and vocabulary boards. The best mathematical areas make good use of pupils' work such as the graph on families in the reception classes and a good collection of three-dimensional mathematical shapes in the mobile classrooms. Pupils are proud of their efforts and this encourages them to do their best and to co-operate well on specific data-collection tasks. In a small minority of classes pupils share work sheets unnecessarily and this leads to uneven challenge and poor assessment opportunities. Teachers choose and use resources carefully to add interest and stimulation to lessons such as the study of place value. As a result, pupils concentrate well and enjoy handling the materials to demonstrate their increased knowledge and understanding.

94. Assessment procedures for mathematics are good. Pupils' work is carefully marked and teachers are beginning to ensure that their written comments sum up observed learning or indicate how pupils can improve. Teachers record individual attainment against the learning objectives set for

groups of lessons. This is not done often enough to allow lesson plans to be amended in the light of assessments made so that weaknesses are quickly addressed. The school has a rigorous system for analysing the national tests and this data is well used to indicate strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. As a result, teachers are beginning to emphasise and develop lessons on topics, which have been weak in the past.

95. Mathematics continues to be one of the strengths of the school as it was at the time of the previous inspection.

SCIENCE

96. Standards of attainment in science have been consistently high since 1996. At the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessments show standards broadly in line with those expected for similar schools. Good progress is made in Key Stage 2; Year 6 pupils achieve levels above the national average and well above those expected for similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms the good test results. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. This is due to good teaching and effective planning for science.

97. Appropriate time is given to science and there is a good quantity of work done in each year. In Key Stage 2 the balance between the various strands of the National Curriculum is very good. In Key Stage 1 the teacher assessments in 1999 indicated that some areas were studied more thoroughly than others. The school is aware of this and has taken steps to improve the programme. All classes give due emphasis to teaching investigative skills. Learning in this begins in the nursery, where teachers patiently encourage pupils to find the best words for what they see, touch and hear. It continues in Year 1/2, for example in the work on light where pupils using the black box are guided to base their answers on the evidence rather than the opinions of friends. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have a good range of enquiry skills. They understand the importance of controlling variables in a fair test. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson on light and shadow, pupils were able to consider and explain six possible variables in constructing their own tests.

98. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their ideas in their own way. For example, in the Year 3/4 work on shadows, pupils remembered the main ideas from previous work, spoke clearly and used correct scientific vocabulary. This reflects the clear explanations and good use of questions by the teacher. Pupils written work is good. Teachers expect them to take increasing responsibility for their recording as they move up the school. In Year 1 pupils can complete grids in their work on waterproofing and add sentences when looking at forces. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 write lively personal accounts when they test soundproofing materials around an alarm clock. By Year 6, most pupils can describe their results and explain their thinking without much help. They organise their work well and use charts and diagrams effectively. They include predictions and reflections, as when Year 5 pupils wrote *"I think my bulb will light but very faintly because two bulbs will use more electricity."* and *"Perhaps there needs to be more cells."* Teachers give good support to those who have difficulty with the writing. For example in some books there are explanations written jointly by the pupil and the teacher.

99. The quality of teaching in science is good overall and often very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers plan together in year groups and are able to compare what works well in lessons. This process is valuable, although it is most effective when shared planning is adapted to the needs of individual classes. Lessons start promptly. Introductions to the lessons are clear and to the point; teachers' subject knowledge is generally good. They use questions well, pupils of all abilities expect to think hard in their science lessons. Teachers collect a wide range of resources to illustrate their explanations and to ensure that each pupil has a chance to experiment. Adult help from classroom assistants and parents is used well and they make a valuable contribution to learning. Marking is satisfactory or good in all classes and sometimes very good. Where it is very good there

are lively and encouraging comments, which help pupils to understand scientific ideas. Teachers relate learning to everyday situations to make these ideas meaningful. This is seen in Year 1/2 where an insulation experiment was linked to pupils' clothing and in Year 5/6 where a boy studying the movement of sun and earth suddenly realised why the Sydney Olympics were broadcast during the night.

100. Teachers keep thorough records of the work done and how well pupils understand. They know their pupils well; this is evident in the way that they vary the level of difficulty in their questions. Teachers use this knowledge effectively to match work to ability and to identify where support is needed. It is used less often to identify pupils who understand the task and might sometimes be able to begin their investigation with reduced explanation and help. However pupils with special educational needs are supported well.

101. Pupils behave very well in their science lessons, they are keen to ask questions and listen politely to other pupils' ideas. Equipment is used carefully. The pupils work hard, groups and pairs collaborate well and take turns. Pupils in Year 6 are able to remember and describe science work done in previous years. When results are shared at the end of lessons pupils try to listen and contribute. However this can be difficult in some parts of the school because of the noise from other classes working.

102. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and able co-ordinator who is keen to see standards maintained or improved. The curriculum has been adapted sensibly to take account of new national guidelines and the recent changes in the National Curriculum. There is a two-year programme to see that pupils in mixed age classes do not miss or repeat work. Good links with other subjects have been included, particularly in design and technology, English and maths. Links with information technology are being developed as the availability of computers increases. However good use is already being made of the secondary school computer suites, for example in a Year 5/6 lesson using the internet to see live satellite pictures of the earth in light and darkness. Liaison with the secondary school for science is good, equipment is shared and teachers travel in both directions to observe and teach. Other useful links have been made with local museums and environmental agencies. A satisfactory assessment system is in place and records are passed on from year to year. However it is time-consuming and teachers in Years 5/6 are trying a new system to see if colleagues will find it more useful. Pupils' progress is tracked well as they move through the school. The co-ordinator has written a very useful analysis of the test results at the end of Key Stage 2. Changes have been made in the curriculum in response to this. However the teachers involved in the assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 are not sufficiently involved in this type of analysis. The science co-ordinator has begun to teach a weekly lesson in Year 2 in order to give her a better overview of the curriculum in Key Stage 1.

ART

103. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. However, sufficient evidence was available through scrutiny of pupils' work, examination of classroom displays and discussion with teachers and pupils to enable judgements to be made.

104. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly learn to produce high quality artwork. They make interesting faces from string on black paper and use paint and crayon to produce portraits of a good standard. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. They learn to mix colours to produce different shades and make attractive patterns on papers of different colours. They learn to use a variety of media such as paint, colour pencils, crayon and chalk and understand how each is used to create a different effect. Pupils make sensitive and attractive cereal prints using polystyrene sheets, ink and rollers. They use simple materials to produce well-made baskets to link with an African story of *Honda's Surprise*. Pupils use the computer very well to produce lively and vivid pictures of

fireworks displays. They successfully link art with a study of light and dark in science when they produce very good displays of work using wax resistant techniques, *scratchboards* and coloured pastels. Pupils are taken to places such as Etching Hill to investigate the concept of panorama. They take digital photographs from different viewpoints and work well collaboratively to make a colourful and detailed three-dimensional representation of the view.

105. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress. They develop a good knowledge of famous artists such as *Kandinsky* and *David Hockney* and produce good quality work in similar styles. Pupils use the digital camera effectively to take portrait style pictures and then carefully assemble them to make interesting and thought-provoking montages in the *Hockney* style. They produce very good ink and colour pictures such as a very good drawing by a pupil in Year 4 of a cottage linked to a project on *Houses and Homes*. Pupils in this year group learn to use line, shape, colour, light, dark and tone in their work and produce good examples of work based on close observation. They study *Pugin's* gargoyles and use clay to develop very good, detailed heads with expressive faces. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 successfully design and draw vases as part of their study of Ancient Greece. They visit the theatre and use this experience to create Greek Theatre masks depicting different emotions. Pupils engage in mature and focused discussion before and after the practical sessions which demonstrates an intellectual, thoughtful approach to their work.

106. Teachers have a good knowledge of art and design and teach all elements, including three-dimensional work, well. They make full use of the wide range of materials available to ensure that pupils develop their skills and understanding from different perspectives. Teachers successfully ensure that basic skills such as colour mixing or close observation are duly emphasised so that pupils can experiment from a firm foundation. Planning files show that lessons are prepared carefully with clear learning objectives and relevant methods that are appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities. Pupils are enthusiastic about their art and design lessons and talk about their work happily and with clear understanding. Teachers take great care to display selections of pupils' work and often add short, clear descriptions to ensure the display has maximum impact on teaching and learning.

107. The art curriculum is broad and balanced. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator. She has worked hard to produce detailed guidance for each year group. As a result the art curriculum and structure are well planned and resourced. An art club encourages pupils in Key Stage 2 to extend and develop their skills and knowledge.

108. The last inspection found that standards were average or above. There has been an improvement, since standards are now good in both key stages with many examples of very good work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. During the inspection only one lesson was seen. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of finished products, photographs, examination of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and staff. This evidence shows that the pupils' skills in designing and making are in line with age-related expectations. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. All aspects of the national curriculum are covered. The previous inspection report found no shortcomings in the subject and this is still the case.

110. In the lesson seen, teaching was good. From the planning seen, teachers prepare lessons well and make the learning outcomes clear. They choose challenging tasks, such as the powered vehicle in Years 5 and 6 or the card game designed in Year 3/4. In both of these examples there is provision for a good balance between the stages of designing, making and evaluating. There are good links with other subjects. For example, designing a powered vehicle uses knowledge gained in science work on electrical circuits. The card game utilises skills in lettering practised in the computer room. Teachers

use homework well, as in the task given to look at commercial card games at home and make notes of what makes them successful.

111. From the limited evidence of finished work most pupils are able to identify the stages involved in making a product. In their design work they make painstaking diagrams to make their ideas clearer. Pupils join materials with a good standard of finish in Key Stage 1, for example in the work on basket making. By the end of Key Stage 2 they can measure and mark out measurements accurately and make objects with strong joints. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are proud of the finished work. Pupils in Year 6 were able to describe projects that had been completed two or three years before. Some said that these models were still intact and on display in their bedroom.

112. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator has revised the scheme of work in the light of new national guidelines but successful units have been included from the previous school scheme. Careful links have been made with other subjects to make the best use of limited time available, particularly with science and information technology. Suggestions for links with literacy and numeracy have also been included. For example, pupils are taught to take notes and write instructions for making things in some of their literacy lessons. There is an adequate collection of tools and resources and teachers take care to ensure the safe use of them.

GEOGRAPHY

113. The school has maintained standards in geography since the previous inspection. Pupils throughout the school attain standards that are typical for their age.

114. The quality of teaching is good. A good feature of teaching is the way teachers use fieldwork in the school grounds, the locality and further afield. Teachers develop pupils' map-making skills from an early age when they visit local shops and draw the route to and from school. The recently completed school pond and sensory path gives teachers an opportunity to develop pupils' understanding of environmental change. Teachers take good advantage of the locality of Etching Hill to develop progressively pupils' mapping skills and their knowledge of land use as they move through the school. Younger pupils make a *papier maché* model of what they have observed and noted from the summit, while older pupils draw maps using co-ordinates. However, teachers miss the opportunity to exploit this resource further with the use of aerial photographs.

115. Teachers link the study of geography with other subjects, which helps pupils develop an understanding of its relevance. They use texts about other lands in literacy lessons and teach the specialist vocabulary required for geography. When younger pupils visit *Shugborough Farm* they compare farming today with the past. Older pupils link their study of present day Greece with the Ancient Greece of their history lessons. For instance, they make posters to attract tourists to Crete incorporating its archaeological attractions. When they compare the climate of Athens with London they use their mathematical knowledge to draw graphs illustrating the difference.

116. Teachers arouse pupils' enthusiasm for the subject by making it interesting. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of performance and behaviour. In one lesson the good relationships between teacher and pupils and her lively, informed approach enabled pupils to enjoy the lesson thoroughly and make good progress in their understanding of the location of Rugeley within the UK. However, she missed the opportunity to make good use of her questioning at the beginning of the lesson, which revealed pupils' lack of knowledge of which countries make up the UK. By the end of the lesson this aspect of their learning was little improved. The absence of a permanent display of large wall maps during the period of a geography topic, in this classroom and others, prevents pupils from building up a steady store of such knowledge.

117. The subject co-ordinator continues to move the subject ahead. She is at present introducing a new programme of work. Plans are in hand to monitor the use of information and communications technology in geography lessons. She has recently upgraded the school's provision of atlases. However, in one lesson, the need to use two different half sets of publications inhibited learning and made teaching more difficult. The school is investigating how to extend its links into Europe. Its Great Balloon Race 2000 gave pupils an exciting opportunity to investigate the wider world when they received letters from as far afield as Lyon in France. Leadership in the subject gives the school good capacity to raise standards in geography.

HISTORY

118. The school has maintained standards in history since the previous inspection. Pupils throughout the school attain standards that are typical for their age.

119. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers enrich pupils' understanding of the past by visits to museums and historic buildings and by involving them in role-play with visiting theatre groups. Such experiences bring the past to life for pupils and motivate their learning. Younger pupils visit Shugborough Farm and compare modern farming with the past. They see for themselves how life used to be on a farm and join in activities such as making bread. Teachers use the experience suitably to develop pupils' recording skills and ensure they use correct terminology for implements used, such as *flail*. When pupils study the topic of toys past and present, teachers take them to a toy museum so they can relate their own toys with those of children in the past.

120. In Years 5 and 6 teachers invite a visiting theatre group to involve pupils in role-play, for instance about life in Ancient Greece. This generates an enthusiastic response to their learning in subsequent lessons and lays a solid foundation, which teachers build on effectively. In one lesson the teacher maintained pupils' high levels of motivation to create a dramatic enactment where pupils responded to each other's declarations as in a Greek chorus: *The lightning crackles.....The rolling thunder crashes*. Throughout the lesson noise from adjacent areas intruded upon the lesson, but pupils were so thoroughly engaged they strained to listen so they could join in. In discussion they showed good factual knowledge about Ancient Greek theatre.

121. Teachers link history in interesting ways with other subjects, such as English, geography, art and music. Younger pupils learn about the reality of *Guy Fawkes* in literacy lessons using enlarged text for all to see and read together. They write poems about *Guy Fawkes* Night and co-operate to make large friezes. In Years 5 and 6 they learn about *Theseus and the Minotaur* when they read together from a *Big Book* in literacy lessons. In art they make a collage to illustrate the story of *Icarus and Daedalus* and draw Greek pottery. In geography lessons they compare modern Greece with their knowledge of Ancient Greece. They compose music for percussion and voices for the festivals of the gods in music lessons.

122. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject enables them to make lessons interesting for pupils, who respond with enthusiasm and keen participation. Therefore they make good progress in their learning. However, because teachers normally set identical tasks for all pupils in the class, pupils are given no clear focus of what is expected of them. This has an adverse effect on the development of their recording skills. Therefore, although less able pupils receive good support from the classroom assistant or the teacher, the task itself is not always relevant to their needs. Similarly, the most able pupils are not suitably stretched. For instance, in one lesson, because the task was not sufficiently focused to extend their learning, they did not learn the specialised vocabulary of the Greek theatre and did not incorporate it into their recorded work.

123. The co-ordinator for the subject has only recently taken over the role. She ensures that planning in history continues to be well co-ordinated

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

124. When pupils leave the school at eleven, their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Until this year, progress has been uneven, in some areas due to lack of resources. For example pupils have not been able to develop sufficient skills in controlling and modelling. However, a computer suite has recently been opened by removing under-used machines from classrooms to create one. Lessons seen in this suite during the inspection indicate that the pace of learning has already increased. Classes spend at least one hour per week in the suite and good use is also made of the secondary school facilities. The school is now in a good position to do justice to all of the National Curriculum requirements. Progress in attainment since the last inspection has been satisfactory, progress in provision, training and curriculum has been good.

125. In the Foundation Stage there are three computers which are used in turn alongside other activities. Pupils can use the mouse to make things happen in infant adventure games. They match words and pictures and can type their name using a concept keyboard. Many of them can work confidently with little help.

126. In Key Stage 1 standards of attainment are in line with age related expectations. Pupils use art programmes with restraint and control. They consider the final effect rather than covering the screen with shape and colour. Most pupils can print without help. They can type a story, using *Word*, change font and size and use punctuation. Their work is enhanced by the Year 6 pupils who are members of the Information and Communications Technology club. They are able to import pictures from a scanner.

127. In Years 3/4 there are good links to literacy lessons. Pupils use newspaper columns, for example, to print the latest news on their new classrooms. They use spreadsheets and can enter the data from a questionnaire. Pupils understand how to use *page view* before printing. Very effective use is made of the secondary school facilities, for example in a lesson where pupils learned to send and receive e-mail.

128. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a more advanced spreadsheet and can use a formula to work out the costs of a party. Pupils use *Publisher* to design a calendar, they think carefully about which information would be useful and then finish by importing pictures. Teachers are keen to look for links with other subjects; this was seen in an Internet science lesson on the movement of the sun.

129. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good when the teacher has very good subject knowledge. All teachers have developed their skills over the past year, even though the national training package has been delayed. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure in the areas covered by their own classes and it is constantly developing. Lessons in the computer suites are very well planned with clear objectives that are shared with pupils. Lectures are kept to a minimum to make maximum use of time spent on the equipment. The generous contributions of secondary staff are helpful and pitched at the right level for younger pupils.

130. Pupils' attitudes are good; they work hard and enjoy the lessons. They ask questions, but do not waste the teachers' time with unnecessary queries. They are keen to show how well they can manage. Some Year 6 pupils can remember clearly many of the things they did in earlier years. When computers have to be shared, pupils take turns and help each other. This is particularly effective when pupils of different ages are asked to share. The more experienced of the two resists the temptation to grab the mouse and demonstrate; instead they patiently explain and give their partner plenty of time.

131. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator shows determination and drive to implement change sensibly and move the subject forward. Curriculum development has taken into account new guidelines, staff training and the equipment available. Improvements in provision have been well managed. The range of programs currently in use is limited and some items need updating.

132. Teachers keep notes of pupils' progress but there is no whole school assessment system that refers to National Curriculum levels. This was an issue raised in the last inspection and remains so.

133. There is a popular after-school I.C.T club and members of the club have helped to set up the excellent school website. This includes a very informative feature on the school orchestra, using sound and photographs. Many pupils open this site from home. It has been effective in raising awareness about the creative use of new technology.

134. There are good plans for the further development of information and control technology and the use of extra funding from the National Grid for Learning. The school is well placed to build on what has been achieved so far.

MUSIC

135. Only one music lesson was observed in Key Stages 1 and 2 but a lot of music was heard throughout the school. The music curriculum is well planned and pupils throughout the school are encouraged to perform by singing and/or playing a wide range of musical instruments. Their enjoyment of music is evident and as a result pupils attain standards that are high in relation to their age in both key stages. The long standing tradition of musical performance through the school orchestra and choir filters down through the school and even the youngest pupils strive to give of their best in assemblies.

136. The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was very good and the indications are that teaching is generally good. When teaching is very good the teacher has high levels of expertise and the children know that they are expected to contribute to a quality performance. As a result they listen carefully to instructions, learn to appraise and value the efforts of others and learn to read musical notation. In the lesson in Year 5 and 6, there was an atmosphere of anticipation and excitement akin to the gathering of an orchestra with a choir. Other pupils in the same age group were composing music to suggest the atmosphere of a different planet. They were keen to share their compositions and had created an identifiable mood of *their planet*. Lessons are planned well and good links are made with other subject. In the lesson seen the music was celebrating Greek Mythology.

137. The school orchestra and choir are valued traditions in the school and the local community and the school are rightly proud of their school orchestra website on the Internet. Pupils make good use of the opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument through the peripatetic music service of the local education authority. However, the limited accommodation available for additional lessons means that this has to take place in the entrance hall. This creates some congestion and the noise created is a disturbance to the life of the school.

138. Pupils have access to a good range of musical instruments ranging from tuned and untuned percussion to specialist instruments such as clarinets and cellos on loan through the local education authority. Instruments from ethnic minority cultures are less plentiful but they are already on the co-ordinator's shopping list for the future.

139. Music continues to be a strength of the school as it was at the time of the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. Standards in both key stages are high and similar to those reported in the last inspection. Although no lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 observation of lessons in the foundation classes clearly shows that they enter Key Stage 1 with well-developed basic skills and an enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 as is evidenced by the standards observed in lessons containing Year 3 pupils. By the end of the key stage pupils learn to warm up, sometimes to musical accompaniment. They move at different speeds and are aware of the use of space, showing consideration for other pupils. They co-operate well and pay careful attention to instruction and example. Pupils relate their movements to stories, music and poetry. For example they “*swish like a fish*” and so develop a physical education vocabulary. Pupils take swimming lessons and become confident in the water although these lessons are time-consuming and reduce the time available for other essential areas of the curriculum.

141. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils understand the need to warm up before exercising and know that this helps to prevent damage to their bodies. They improve and develop their skills in gymnastics, putting together sequences of movement in a controlled and pleasing way. Connected movements are sometimes used skilfully to add drama and create body stories, which the other pupils can understand and can interpret. For example a Year 3/4 class form letter shapes in a sequence to spell out words. Pupils develop the confidence to experiment with their bodies by moving them in different directions and levels and at various speeds. They learn from the good examples illustrated by other pupils and improve their own performance as a result. Pupils successfully continue to develop their swimming skills throughout the key stage. They learn the rules and skills of basic games such as football, netball and hockey and are aware of the importance of fair play.

142. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good. Teachers understand the subject and plan their lessons well so that learning objectives are clear and challenging. For example one teacher in Year 3/4 stresses the importance of good distribution of body weight to maintain a controlled pose. Teachers build carefully on work done in other physical education lessons and as a result pupils make steady progress over time. They ensure that lessons are balanced and that they include instruction, vigorous activity and use of good teacher and pupil examples. Good use is made of expertise within the school when teachers in Key Stage 2 teach games and athletics as a team. Pupils respond with pleasure and enthusiasm and have positive attitudes to physical education.

143. The physical education curriculum is supported by a good policy, which gives clear guidance on all aspects of the subject. The curriculum co-ordinator has produced detailed plans for all lessons, which are carefully linked to government guidelines. The curriculum is therefore broad and balanced and pupils experience the full range of activities, including swimming. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including netball, football, hockey, rounders, cricket and athletics. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have access to a club, which aims to develop their general physical development. All clubs are popular and many pupils attend them regularly. Extra curricular clubs successfully enhance and enrich the curriculum and help pupils develop their social and moral skills. For example, pupils take part in matches against other schools, which enables them to develop a positive attitude to sportsmanship and playing within the rules. Resources to support the teaching and learning of physical education are satisfactory in quantity and range, are carefully stored and maintained in good condition.

144. The quality and range of the curriculum has been maintained since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. The school has maintained standards of achievement in religious education since the previous inspection. By the time pupils are eleven they reach standards that are typical for their age and match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

146. During the last few years the school has taken action to improve provision for religious education. Teachers now have access to a suitable range of resources covering each of the faiths taught, mainly Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. There are planned links with other subjects. In history pupils study the importance of religion to people in the past, such as in Ancient Greece and Elizabethan England. In geography teachers introduce pupils to different cultures and compare them with our own multicultural society. In literacy lessons teachers use religious stories from *Big Books* as the shared texts for some lessons.

147. The school gives insufficient priority to developing a feeling for the subject in its everyday life. There is no display of posters, books, interesting articles from religious traditions, or of pupils' work in religious education. This is reflected in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development, which although satisfactory, is more visible in the planning than felt in practice. In one lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's questioning revealed a deep lack of understanding among pupils of the concept of prayer. This assessment provided a good starting point for future learning.

148. The quality of teaching is good. The school's approach to planning the curriculum for lessons ensures that pupils learn effectively step by step in their knowledge and understanding as they move through the year groups. Often, however, teachers do not sufficiently use their own initiative to develop pupils' skills according to the needs of their class. They do not always provide pupils with suitable challenges in recording work or encourage an independent approach. For instance, in one year group pupils' recorded work about the Jewish festival of Hanukkah was identical in all three classes. Nevertheless, teachers provide pupils with interesting lessons, which enthuses them to learn well. In Years 1 and 2 pupils worked hard with gusto making *Dreidel* symbols for a Jewish harvest festival game. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher's use of the artist *Dürer's* drawing of *Praying Hands* provided a strong stimulus for the lesson and caught pupils' imagination.

149. The co-ordinator continues to develop the subject. She has contributed towards the development of a planning and assessment initiative in religious education within the local education authority, with plans in hand to develop it in the school. There are to be improved opportunities for pupils to benefit from visits to and visitors from places of worship. Sound leadership puts the school in a good position to improve the subject further.