

INSPECTION REPORT

**BELGRAVE ST PETER'S C of E PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester City

Unique reference number: 120186

Headteacher: Ms J Farnell

Reporting inspector: Pat Kime
25350

Dates of inspection: 1 – 5 October 2001

Inspection number: 230151

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Thurcaston Road Leicester
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Martin-Jones
Date of previous inspection:	10 th March 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25350	Mrs P Kime	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Mathematics Music Physical education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
14214	Ms G Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21858	Rev J Pryor	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education	
25507	Mr L Garner	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Belgrave St Peter's Church of England (voluntary controlled) Primary School is an average sized school serving a socially and economically disadvantaged area. There were 231 boys and girls, aged from three to eleven, on the school's roll. Of these, 44 were attending the nursery part time. Another 21 children are due to start nursery later in the school year. There are a further seven classes in the main school. The local arrangements for admission and for transfer to the reception class disadvantage summer born children because they start as full-timers in reception at a later age than do the others. There were 56 children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception). About six per cent of the pupils were from ethnic minority backgrounds and a further 12 per cent have dual heritage. All these pupils are competent at English. An above average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. When children start the nursery, their level of attainment varies but overall it is below average for their age, notably in social skills and language development. The school has identified 41 pupils as having special educational needs. About a third of these pupils have significant learning difficulties and five of them, an above average proportion, carry statements of special educational needs. Over a fifth of the pupils have some degree of behavioural or emotional difficulty. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has taken charge. Staffing has been unsettled over the last couple of years, resulting in some pupils' progress being slowed for a while. There is now a stable staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Belgrave St Peter's is a school where the pupils flourish in a very caring atmosphere. Standards are rising. Given the school's context, standards are high enough in most subjects. The school is very well led and teaching is good overall. Consequently, pupils are learning well. This is now a good school. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and a good check is kept on how well pupils are getting on in English and mathematics. Pupils are therefore gaining ground at a faster than average rate and standards are now rising.
- The headteacher leads the school very well. As a result everyone is working together well and doing their bit to improve the school and do the best for the pupils.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Pupils respond well to this. The vast majority want to learn. They are well behaved and responsible and they have good relationships with their teachers and classmates.
- The care for pupils' welfare and wellbeing is of a very good quality. This underpins the school's good climate for learning.

What could be improved

- Standards are not yet as high as they should be, at the top of the school, in English, information and communication technology and music.
- The attitude and behaviour of a small number of pupils are unsatisfactory in a few lessons.
- The amount of time for lessons in Key Stage 2 falls short of that recommended nationally.
- The role of the subject leaders in some subjects; they could do more to ensure work is planned to be more demanding as pupils move up the school and that pupils' learning is checked up on.

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 March 1999 when it was judged to be providing an acceptable standard of education. Since then it has made significant strides forward despite a background of unsettled staffing. Good foundations have been laid so the school is now very well placed to continue to improve and to raise standards further.

Improvement on the key issues for action

Improvement has been good on the issues regarding pupils' standards, the weaknesses in teaching and pupils' skills for working independently. Progress has been satisfactory on the issue about the behaviour of some pupils.

Progress on other matters

In the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the quality of care, and the checks on how well pupils are doing there has been very good improvement. Pupils are now achieving higher standards and the leadership and management of the school are much better. The accommodation and the resources for teaching and learning have been improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	E	D	C	well above A average above B average average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	D	E	E	E	
science	B	C	D	C	

The test results do not tell the full story of pupils' academic achievements. The 2000 leavers' education was disturbed by having two teachers in their final year. In the 2001 tests standards in writing improved significantly. This is masked in the overall English results. This year group started Year 6 with gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding and could not catch up in time. The standards pupils in Year 6 are now achieving in English and mathematics are higher than the test results indicate.

- Children are achieving well in the Foundation Stage and, by the end of the reception year, standards are not far short of the national targets. The children's attainment meets the targets for their age in most areas of learning. However they are below expectations in speaking and listening and early reading and writing skills, and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them is limited.
- In Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2) pupils' achievement is good. The 2001 test results (SATs) in English and mathematics were low. However, the present Year 2 pupils are

doing much better. They meet the standard expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.

- In Key Stage 2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) pupils are now achieving well in English, mathematics and science. Standards in mathematics and science in Year 6 are average. In English these pupils fall a little below average. In information and communication technology and music, standards are not high enough.
- The standards of work seen in physical education were above average in both key stages.
- In the other subjects, standards are broadly average in both key stages.
- From 1996 to 2001 the end of Key Stage 2 test results improved at a similar rate to that seen nationally in English and science. The significant drop in mathematics in 2001 means improvement has been slower than the national rate.
- The school has set appropriately challenging targets for the 2002 SATs. The targets are securely based on assessment data and they are likely to be met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; most pupils have positive attitudes to school and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; the vast majority of pupils are well behaved in lessons, around the school and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Good; most pupils accept responsibility and exercise it with a good degree of maturity. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are good.
Attendance	Attendance rates are below the national average, mainly because of the number of pupils taken on family holidays in term time.

The attitudes and behaviour of a small number of pupils who have behavioural difficulties are occasionally unsatisfactory to the point of undermining the effectiveness of teaching.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Satisfactory

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

- Taken overall, teaching and learning are now good. This is not always borne out by the current standards of pupils' work because of the effects of the upheaval in staffing over the last two years.
- Teaching is most effective in Key Stage 1 and Years 5 and 6, with a high proportion of very good teaching in Year 6. Pupils are now learning very well in these years.
- There is less good teaching in Years 3 and 4 than in the rest of the school. However, the teaching of mathematics in Year 4 is currently of a very high quality.
- English and mathematics and the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well.

- The teaching seen in science, design and technology, and information and communication technology lessons was good. The teaching of music by the subject specialist is good but her expertise is spread too thinly.
- In the most effective lessons teachers capture their pupils' interest with challenging work and keep them all on their toes all the time. The pupils respond very well; they try very hard, concentrate well and get a lot done.
- The key reason why some teaching is merely satisfactory and on a few occasions unsatisfactory, is the less effective way some teachers handle pupils with behavioural difficulties. In some classes that contain a significant number of these pupils the teachers' strategies for managing their behaviour are not always sufficiently robust.
- The school meets its pupils' needs well and, as a result, all groups, boys and girls, higher and lower attaining pupils, and pupils with special educational needs, make equally good progress in their learning from their starting points.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; the curriculum meets the national requirements. Pupils cover all the work they should and emphasis is given to developing their literacy and numeracy skills. In some subjects, progression in difficulty is not built into the whole-school planning. There is not enough lesson time in Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; these pupils are fully included in lessons and all other aspects of school life. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons. For the majority of the pupils who have behavioural difficulties the very good pastoral care and the good teaching enable them to benefit from what the school offers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils' needs are met and they progress as well as their classmates.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall; provision for spiritual and cultural development is good and for moral and social development it is very good. The result is seen in the good attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care is very good. Staff follow the headteacher's excellent example of concern for every pupil's wellbeing. Teachers keep good track of where pupils are up to in English and mathematics and this information is used very well to set targets for pupils' achievement. Assessment of learning in other subjects is less thorough and, in a few, it is unsatisfactory.

The school has a good partnership with pupils' parents. It consults them, keeps them well informed and enables them to contribute to their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good; the headteacher leads the school very well. She is clear about where the school is going and works very hard to improve it. She consults and involves all parties and has secured a high level of commitment from staff. She is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. The contribution of subject leaders varies but is satisfactory overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good; governors know the school well and are very involved in its life and work. They have a clear view of their role in supporting and developing the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; staff and governors keep the school's performance under review. Information from assessing the pupils' attainment is used very well so weaknesses are tackled effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Very good; the available funds are spent on the most important things that make a difference to pupils' learning. The use of non-teaching staff to support pupils' learning is very good. The principles of best value are applied well.

The school is well staffed. The accommodation and the resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They find the school approachable. • The school expects their children to work hard and do their best and it is helping them become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive about how their children are getting on. • The amount of homework their children get. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors endorse the parents' and carers' perceptions of the school's strengths. However, their criticisms are not supported. Parents now get very good information about how their children are progressing, with written reports being particularly good. The recently introduced homework arrangements are good and there is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Results in the national tests (SATs)

1. In the end of Key Stage 2 tests the Year 6 pupils' attainment was below the national average in English and science and well below the average in mathematics. The English results mask a significant improvement in standards of writing. The mathematics results were brought down because the pupils entered Year 6 with substantial gaps in their basic knowledge and understanding and could not make up the lost ground. The results in science were below the average. When compared with the results attained by pupils in similar schools* the results were in line with the average in English and science and well below average in mathematics.
2. In the end of Key Stage 1 tests for Year 2 pupils, standards fell from the previous year. This reflected the school's staffing difficulties. This year group had four different teachers during the year. Compared with the national average, the school's results in reading and mathematics were well below average and in writing they were average. When compared with similar schools, the results were below average in reading, average in writing and well below average in mathematics.

**Similar schools are those across the country where between 20 and 35 per cent of pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals.*

Trends in test results and targets

3. The school has faced some difficulties since the last inspection in 1999 and these have affected results in the national tests (SATs):
 - The considerable upheaval in staffing has caused disruption in learning for some year groups. For example, the 2001 Year 2 pupils had four different teachers and standards slipped, despite the school's best efforts to mitigate the effects of this.
 - There has been some unsatisfactory teaching.
4. Few conclusions can be drawn from year-on-year variations or from the trend over the two years since the last inspection. This is because of differences between year groups, such as the number of pupils with the potential for high attainment and the balance of the sexes, as well as the relatively small numbers involved; one pupil represents about three per cent. Over the last six years the science results have improved faster than the national rate. The English test results varied year-on-year but, overall, improvement has kept up with the national rate. In mathematics, the drop in 2001 means that the rate of improvement has been too slow.
5. The school sets appropriately high targets for the SATs results. These are firmly rooted in teachers' knowledge of the pupils and the progress they have made so far and they are backed up by assessment data. The targets for the 2002 SATs are challenging but are nevertheless likely to be met.

The standards seen on inspection and pupils' achievements

6. The standards of work seen on inspection do not reflect the current good quality of teaching and learning. There are two main reasons for this:

- several changes in the teaching staff; for some classes now in Key Stage 2, this has led to an unsettled education;
 - the older pupils still carry a legacy from earlier years when the school did not provide an adequate education.
7. **Standards are rising.** In Key Stages 1 and 2, the standards of work Year 2 and 6 pupils are achieving now are higher than the 2001 SATs results would suggest. Taken overall, the improvement in standards has been good. The efforts put into English and mathematics are now paying off and most of the other subjects have been kept at an acceptable standard, even though they have been 'on the back burner'.
 8. Children enter the nursery with below average levels of attainment overall, because for many social and language skills are poor and they have a limited knowledge of the world around them. By the end of the reception year, most of the children achieve the national targets for children their age (the Early Learning Goals) in most areas of their learning. However, their overall attainment is slightly below the targets because of weaknesses in their speaking and listening and early reading and writing skills and because their knowledge and understanding of the world around them is limited. Children make generally good progress in their learning in the Foundation Stage. In personal, social and emotional development they make very good progress and meet the targets in this area of learning. In communication, language and literacy they gain ground but do not meet the targets in speaking and listening or early reading and writing. By the end of reception, standards in mathematical development, creative development and physical development meet the targets. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is a little below the expected standard.
 9. New teachers have begun in the nursery this year but, given their starting points, children are still achieving well in the Foundation Stage because the teaching is good.
 10. In **Key Stage 1** (Years 1 and 2) pupils are now making gains in their learning at a good rate and are therefore achieving well from their starting points. The standards seen in Year 3 confirm the 2001 Key Stage 1 SATs results but the present Year 2 pupils are set to do better. In **reading and writing, mathematics and science** they are working at the level expected for their age and the vast majority are on course to reach the expected level (National Curriculum Level 2) by the end of the year. These standards represent a considerable improvement on the results of 1999, the year of the last inspection. In view of the quality of teaching, this should pay dividends in the end of Key Stage 2 results over the years.
 11. In most of the **other subjects**, standards in Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with national expectations for the pupils' age. The work seen in physical education was of an above average standard.
 12. Pupils in **Key Stage 2** (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) are also achieving well. This is the result of teaching that is overall of a good quality in Years 5 and 6. Standards in mathematics are much improved. They have recovered from the drop in the last two years' test results and are now higher than in 1999. In English, writing standards have improved considerably. In Year 6, very good teaching enables pupils to make a real spurt in their learning. In Year 6, most pupils are working at the level they should be for their age in **mathematics and science** and a reasonable proportion are likely to reach an above average level by the end of the year. In **English**, standards in Year 6 are a little below where they should be for the pupils' age. Most pupils are working at the level expected for their age in speaking and listening and reading but standards of writing, though much improved, are below average. Furthermore, fewer pupils are

on course to reach an above average level in English by the end of the year than in mathematics and science. This is mainly because of the relative weaknesses in speaking and listening and writing.

13. In most of the **other subjects**, standards are broadly average. However, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in music are below average. The work seen in physical education was above average.
14. The vast majority of pupils achieve satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills; they reach the standard expected for their age. However, their ICT skills are below expectations.
15. All groups of pupils, for example boys and girls and pupils at different stages in their learning, are achieving equally well in relation to their starting points. There are three main reasons for this. Firstly, the school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are achieving well in view of their learning difficulties. This is because they receive good support in class from teaching assistants who are well prepared and understand these pupils' needs. Secondly, for the most part, teachers match work well to pupils' differing levels of attainment so that all are challenged in lessons. Thirdly, the good systems for keeping track of how pupils are doing pick up any early signs of possible underachievement and deal with it as has been done in mathematics and in writing. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are competent at English because their families are not newcomers to Britain. They do as well as their classmates.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Most of the pupils have good attitudes to school; they want to learn and they try hard. They are well behaved and their personal development is good; they are developing maturity and responsibility. This reflects the pupils' good response to the school's provision for all aspects of their personal development. These strengths make a good contribution to pupils' academic achievement because pupils work hard in orderly and purposeful classrooms. However, the attitude and behaviour of a small number of pupils are sometimes unsatisfactory in lessons. The overall attendance rate is below average, with a higher than average rate of unauthorised absence.
17. There are strengths in:
 - pupils' positive attitudes to school and to their work;
 - pupils' good behaviour;
 - the good relationships between staff and pupils and among pupils;
 - pupils' good personal development.
18. There are weaknesses in:
 - the attitude and behaviour of a small number of pupils;
 - the below average level of attendance and the rate of unauthorised absence.

Pupils' attitudes to school and to their work

19. Most of the pupils enjoy school and are keen to play a full part in its day-to-day life. The majority of pupils of all ages are motivated to learn and are very proud of their school and of their work, but a small number lack commitment to their work. Most pupils with special educational needs are determined to succeed and have a good degree of commitment to their work. Pupils relish being given responsibilities and, during lessons, they willingly offer each other help if someone is unsure of what they should be doing. Pupils' positive attitudes are an important factor in their approach to

learning and in the standard of their work. Pupils appreciate having a 'voice' in the running of the school through the school council. They make sensible suggestions, such as how to improve behaviour at lunchtime. Pupils are keen to take part in extra-curricular activities and the 'buddy' support system. Indeed, they have asked if elections for buddies can be held more often so that more pupils can participate.

Pupils' behaviour

20. Pupils respond well to the staff's approach to discipline and to the interesting lessons. They listen carefully and behave sensibly, wait their turn when necessary and listen to each other without interrupting. Pupils are well behaved around the school and in the playground. Many pupils are almost always very well behaved. However, a few who are known to have behavioural difficulties sometimes behave unacceptably in lessons. They call out and interrupt the teacher and other pupils. This means they tend to monopolise the teacher's attention unreasonably and therefore undermine the quality of teaching and the learning of their more motivated classmates. These are usually pupils who have experienced an unsettled time with several different teachers. There were two fixed-term exclusions, following proper procedures, during the last school year.

Relationships

21. Relationships between pupils and with adults are almost always at least good. Pupils trust and respect their teachers and the vast majority want to please them and the staff show respect for the pupils. Consequently there is a warm atmosphere that fosters pupils' positive attitudes to learning and encourages them to work hard. Pupils follow the staff's example of respecting each other's beliefs, cultures and backgrounds. They mix freely and all races and religions are equally respected and valued. There is an excellent degree of racial harmony.

Pupils' personal development

22. The vast majority of pupils respond very positively to the school's very good provision for social and moral development and to the teachers' high expectations. They feel they have a stake in the school and they are mature enough to set their own individual targets for their behaviour and personal development. They are sensible and considerate of others and they take responsibility willingly. For example, they undertake jobs in classrooms and around the school conscientiously, often showing a good degree of maturity for their age. They make sensible contributions to the 'class meetings' with their school council representatives. These 'councillors' raise practical and down-to-earth issues such as the refurbishment of the toilets and the need for more bins in the playground. The playground 'buddies' take their role very seriously and make a good contribution to the school's harmonious atmosphere.

The level of attendance and unauthorised absence

23. Senior staff work very hard to improve attendance and the headteacher is very rigorous in determining whether or not absences can be authorised. Although the rate of attendance is within the top third of Leicester schools, it is just below the national average. The main reason is pupils being taken on family holidays in term time. These pupils are missing their education and there is therefore an inevitable risk that they might fall behind their classmates and not do as well as they could.
24. Since the last inspection, the school has taken steps on the key issues raised. Progress on improving pupils' attitudes has been satisfactory. All parties, including staff, parents, governors and pupils, believe the measures to improve behaviour have

been effective. However more could be done to improve the behaviour of the small number of pupils, most of whom have behavioural difficulties, who still find it hard to control themselves and behave appropriately in lessons. Progress on pupils having the skills to work independently has been good. They now have good opportunities to take responsibility, to work in groups and to find things out for themselves, and investigative work in mathematics and science has improved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. There have been many changes of teachers in the couple of years since the last inspection. Some teachers have worked at the school for only a short time, for instance covering gaps, such as when there was no deputy headteacher. Others have remained on the staff but taken responsibility for different classes or changed their hours significantly. The staffing position has now stabilised. Nevertheless, half of the classes were taught by new teachers, three of them new to the school. The nursery teachers were new to the age group. Teaching is now good and pupils are achieving well but this does not yet show in the results because standards have been adversely affected by the changes.
26. Despite all this upheaval the quality of teaching has improved greatly since 1999. The last inspection found almost 20 per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. There was a key issue for action to 'continue the drive to remove the remaining weaknesses in teaching'. There is now only a very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. This is a good improvement.
27. The good quality teaching is leading directly to rising standards as pupils are now making good progress in their learning. Teaching and learning was good or better in around two-thirds of the 53 lessons observed during the inspection. There was a high concentration of good and very good teaching in Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6. In Year 6 teaching was of a very high quality in most subjects. This strength has a significant impact as pupils are now making rapid progress in the year leading up to the Key Stage 2 SATs. For the most part, the effectiveness of teaching is more closely related to individual teachers' skills than to subjects. However, the teaching of English and mathematics, including the skills of literacy and numeracy, is good. Good teaching was also seen in lessons in design and technology and information and communication technology. Specialist teaching of music is good but, in Key Stage 2, there is not enough of it to bring standards up to where they should be. Teaching is equally effective for the pupils with English as an additional language as for the other pupils.
28. There are several common strengths in teaching and learning in most lessons:
 - the teaching of English and mathematics is good - the effect of this is now evident in rising standards; some teaching of mathematics is excellent;
 - in a fifth of all the lessons observed, teaching was very good or excellent;
 - the use of support staff – they enable pupils with special educational needs to be fully included in lessons and to make good progress;
 - the use of homework to build on what pupils learn in class;
 - in most classes, the way teachers maintain order and keep pupils involved in the work in hand.
29. There are some weaknesses that inhibit the effectiveness of satisfactory teaching and are the main reasons why a small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory:

- teachers' strategies for maintaining good order and managing the behaviour of some challenging pupils;
 - unsatisfactory match of work to pupils' different levels of attainment;
 - careless and unhelpful marking of pupils' work.
30. The most effective teaching is rooted in the teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach and of how pupils learn, their high expectations, purposeful and constructive relationships with pupils, clarity about what the pupils are to learn and thorough planning. Consequently lesson time is used well to push pupils' learning on and resources to aid teaching and learning are used very effectively. Pupils therefore try hard and they work productively on interesting activities that help them understand new work. The following commentary on two of the particularly successful lessons should serve to show how the strengths in the most effective teaching enable pupils to learn at a very good rate.
31. In an excellently taught mathematics lesson in Year 4 pupils made extremely rapid progress in learning to apply their recently acquired skills in mental mathematics to solving problems. The teacher captivated the pupils' interest and desire to learn by using the Chinese Number Triangle and the number patterns within it. For example, early in the lesson she said, 'Maybe we will see later why this happens?'; the pupils were hooked and they worked very, very hard. She used pupils' mistakes very well to improve their understanding and to get the others thinking at a high level. For instance, she pointed out that $18 + 13$ and $20 + 13$ cannot both equal 31 and challenged the children with the question, 'So what has gone wrong?'. Throughout the lessons questions were used not simply to check what pupils had grasped but also to extend and deepen their thinking and understanding and everything was explained very clearly so the pupils knew exactly what they were doing and why. When the teacher suggested pupils could continue working on the triangle over the weekend they were extremely keen to do so. By the end of the lesson, all the pupils could explain what they had learned about patterns in their number work from the group tasks. These had been very well matched to pupils' differing levels of attainment. The higher attaining pupils had formed and tested a hypothesis and they explained how they had proved it.
32. In a very good literacy hour in Year 6, the teacher was very clear what the pupils were to learn and kept a very good focus on these 'learning objectives' throughout the lesson. This led to all pupils making at least good progress in gaining new knowledge, extending their vocabulary, and developing their understanding of how authors use words and different written styles to achieve the effects they want. Very good discipline was firmly rooted in good relationships with the pupils and a determined focus on their learning and achievement. This ensured a good atmosphere for learning in which pupils applied themselves well to work in a co-operative spirit. Again, questioning skills were of a high order and all pupils were challenged by the teacher's questions which were adjusted well to match their different levels of attainment.
33. In some classes there are quite a few pupils with behavioural difficulties and teachers in lower Key Stage 2 do not always use sufficiently robust strategies for dealing with them. They nearly always maintain adequate discipline but often have to give a lot of time over to this. Consequently, their properly planned lessons are not as effective as they could be because the pace of learning is inevitably slowed.
34. Examination of work from last year shows that in Year 4 work is not always sufficiently adapted to meet pupils' different learning needs. In some subjects all pupils in Year 4 did the same work. The higher attainers were nearly always successful at it whilst the lower attainers completed less work and made more errors.

Some marking of pupils' work is not good enough. Some mistakes are marked as correct and there are few comments to help pupils know how to improve. This is in sharp contrast to most marking in the school.

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

The curriculum – the learning opportunities the school provides

35. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets the requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education and gives suitable emphasis to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are implemented well with good teaching so pupils are making good progress in English and mathematics. The curriculum for the pupils in the Foundation Stage follows the national recommendations for this age group. In Key Stages 1 and 2, in all subjects there are at least adequate whole-school plans to ensure that pupils cover all the work they should but planning could be improved in several subjects. The teaching time in Key Stage 2 is below that recommended nationally (23½ hours). It falls short by almost two hours a week.
36. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall but unlike many primary schools, there are no clubs for musical activities.
37. There are strengths in the curricular provision in:
- the very good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship;
 - the good provision for pupils with special educational needs;
 - the planned extended writing and drama to enrich the English curriculum;
 - the investigative work planned into the mathematics and science curriculum.
38. There are weaknesses in:
- the length of time pupils spend in lessons each week;
 - the whole-school planning of work in several of the foundation subjects;
 - the range of work covered in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2.

The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship

39. This provision is made through the school's ethos and through planned activities and teaching. The school council makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social education and to their understanding of citizenship. There is a very good system of class meetings in which issues that pupils want to see tackled are identified for their 'councillors' to take to their meetings. All the pupils, even as young as reception, are therefore involved in suggesting how 'their school' could be better and they learn what it means to make a contribution to the school community. There is a good programme to teach pupils about healthy lifestyles through physical education and science. Appropriate attention is paid to sex education and teaching pupils about the dangers of drug abuse.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs

40. The school makes good provision for the vast majority of those pupils who have special educational needs. Individual education plans are clear about how their learning difficulties will be tackled and what they will be expected to learn. The plans give good guidance to teachers and the teaching assistants who support pupils in lessons. The arrangements for supporting pupils with statements of special educational needs effectively ensure that their needs are met well. Some of the pupils who need to learn to manage their behaviour have not been placed on the register of

pupils with special educational needs. Therefore, plans are not formulated to tackle their individual difficulties.

The planned schemes for extended writing and drama to enrich the English curriculum

41. Good attention is now given to improving the standard of pupils' written work. Pupils have good opportunities to write at length. The English curriculum includes good provision for drama. This work is used to enrich pupils' vocabulary, to stimulate their imagination and to set written tasks in context. These developments are having a positive effect on standards.

Investigative work in mathematics and science

42. Pupils are given opportunities to set up experiments in science and to explore mathematical ideas. This is because opportunities for such work are identified in the whole-school planning. For example, pupils in Year 6 study yeast as a living organism. They learn to draw a conclusion from their observations and experiments. They correctly concluded that yeast needs sugar and liquid in order to thrive.

The length of the taught week

43. The shortfall in the teaching time in Key Stage 2 means that pupils are losing the equivalent of more than two weeks schooling a year. Direct evidence of the effect of this on standards was not available. Nevertheless it would be reasonable to assume that pupils could achieve higher standards and follow a broader curriculum if they spent longer in lessons.

The planning of work in foundation subjects

44. The quality of whole-school planning varies between subjects. In some it consists of little more than a compilation of each class teachers' half-termly plans which have been checked to make sure all the content required by the National Curriculum is covered so pupils are taught the right things. However, the plans do not always give sufficient attention to ensuring that the demands on pupils build up progressively as they move up the school so they develop skills to use and apply their knowledge. Furthermore, appropriate opportunities to assess pupils' learning as they complete each unit of work are not always built in at the planning stage. This makes it harder than it need be for teachers to ensure that the work they plan is matched to pupils' levels of attainment.

The range of work covered in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2

45. Pupils do not undertake sufficient work on the control aspect of this subject and this brings down the overall standards attained. This situation is mainly because, until very recently, there have not been enough suitable resources. The school now has almost all the resources it needs but teachers have not got used to them.

Links with the community

46. These are good and they are used well to enrich the curriculum, to broaden pupils' experience and to help prepare them for life after school. Educational visits and visitors make a good contribution to the curriculum. For instance, pupils learn more about life in the Victorian era when they visit Belgrave Hall. Local police officers contribute to the provision for personal, social and health education, for example raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. The clergy play an active part in school life; they lead assemblies and run the popular drama club.

47. Links with the secondary schools pupils move on to are good. Staff go out of their way to ease the transition. For example, 'learning mentors' are provided and pupils continue work they have begun at Belgrave St Peter's when they move up, even using the same work folders. Less attention has been paid to the transition from home to school when children start nursery.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development, including provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

48. Taken overall, the provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for moral and social development is very good whilst the provision for spiritual and cultural development is good. The quality of this provision is a key strength of the school and pupils respond well to it. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal development which, in turn, contribute to the school being an orderly place and having an atmosphere in which pupils can and do learn.
49. The school has made very good progress in this aspect of its provision since, at the last inspection, provision for spiritual, moral and social development was merely satisfactory. This is largely down to the headteacher who has given a high priority to pupils' moral and social development within the curriculum and school policies, such as that for behaviour, and through the atmosphere she has established in the school.
50. The school nurtures the human spirit well through acts of collective worship (assemblies), religious education, the planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), creative activities, and the quality of relationships the staff establish with the pupils that show them they are all equally valued as individuals. Collective worship was not part of this inspection. Nevertheless, inspectors were invited to assemblies. The religious elements of the school's work, the well planned acts of collective worship, prayers at the end of sessions, and the good quality religious education all contribute to pupils' growing spiritual awareness. The Christian values of this Church of England voluntary controlled school are clearly, but not exclusively, promoted. Staff and governors are committed to Belgrave St. Peter's being a school for children from the whole local community and pupils learn about various beliefs and values and have opportunities to reflect on how they might be relevant to their own lives. Consequently, pupils from backgrounds of different faiths and of none feel included. Some sensitive religious education work is undertaken in other subjects, such as geography. Pupils have some good opportunities to develop self-knowledge. For example, they are helped to consider significant issues about their lives and where they fit into the world. Creative work in art and design, music and English provides opportunities for self-expression and educational visits, including residential ones, enable pupils to learn more about relating to each other and adults, thus increasing their self-assurance as individuals.
51. The provision for pupils' moral and social development are closely related and are closely linked to the school's aims and supported by its ethos. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and to reflect on their own behaviour. The very good management of pupils' behaviour, rooted in the school's behaviour policy, means that pupils understand why certain behaviours are acceptable and others not. An important element of this provision is the way staff encourage good behaviour by providing opportunities for pupils to think about how they behave, for example in class meetings when discussions are handled well. This work is supported in religious education lessons. For instance, pupils discuss the relationships between rules to live by and the teachings in Holy Books. The school council plays an important part in developing pupils' moral and social awareness. It gives all pupils a voice in their school and helps them understand the responsibilities that go with this. Pupils have

good opportunities to contribute to day-to-day school life. For example, they undertake useful jobs such as answering the telephone and taking messages in a responsible manner when the school office is not staffed, being playground 'buddies', and helping the nursery children at playtimes. They take these duties seriously. As a result of this very good provision, the vast majority of pupils develop into confident youngsters who appreciate how communities function, who contribute to the school community and who know how to behave in school and in society at large.

52. The good provision for pupils' cultural development is seen in aspects of work in English, music, art and design, history and geography and in the range of educational visits and visitors. This ensures that pupils have a grasp of British and European culture as well as examples of other cultures found in this country and around the world. Pupils have a good range of experiences introducing them to music, art and drama drawn from European and other cultures. For example, they listened to the Beatles' song 'Eleanor Rigby' in assemblies and a music lesson was based on African drumming. The same breadth is supplied in stories, from classic English tales to the stories of Rama and Sita. Visitors bring experiences of drama and of other cultures to be found in the city. However, the school does not make the most of the very rich cultural mix in its adjacent neighbourhoods as a resource for multi-cultural education. The school makes imaginative use of the Internet to forge contacts with school children in other countries, notably Sweden and Tanzania. In the case of the African contact, pupils collected funds to provide a laptop computer for the Tanzanian school to facilitate the exchange.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

53. The many strengths in this aspect of the school's work contribute to pupils' achievement because they underpin the school's atmosphere, the pupils' sense of belonging, and their good progress in learning. They ensure the conditions are in place for pupils to work well and to achieve, and that pupils enjoy school. There has been very good improvement.
54. There are strengths in:
- the very good pastoral care and the attention to child protection, health and safety and welfare matters;
 - the good checks on pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and the use of assessment data to set targets for pupils to achieve;
 - the good personal support offered to pupils and the good track kept of their personal development;
 - the effective systems for encouraging good behaviour and for dealing with any bullying that might occur;
 - the excellent monitoring of attendance and the efforts made to encourage good attendance.
55. There are weaknesses in:
- the checks on pupils' progress in some other subjects;
 - inconsistencies between teachers in the ways they manage pupils' behaviour and promote good behaviour in their lessons.

Pastoral care, child protection, health and safety, and welfare

56. Good attention is paid to health and safety matters so the school is a safe environment for pupils and staff. Staff create a positive and welcoming atmosphere in

which pupils feel they belong and their concerns are listened to. The arrangements for child protection are very good. Teachers and other staff have benefited from recent training and awareness is high. Staff know what to do if they have any concerns and the 'designated person' is fully aware of her legal responsibilities.

57. Senior staff give a high priority to ensuring that all pupils have high self-esteem and believe in themselves and their ability to learn. They are alert to any differences between different groups of pupils, for example those with dual heritage. Plans are in hand to establish 'nurture groups' to raise some pupils' self-esteem to ensure they are well prepared to make the most of their secondary education.

The checks on pupils' progress and the use of assessment data

58. The positive developments noted in the last inspection report have been built on very well. The school assesses the standards pupils attain and their rate of progress very thoroughly in English and mathematics and effectively in science and uses the information obtained well. Information and communication technology is used well to present this information clearly in an easily understood and accessible format. Staff analyse the pupils' test results carefully and make good use of what they find out:

- they make successful changes to the planned work in order to improve standards in weak areas, for instance the quality of pupils' writing;
- they set appropriate, well-founded and carefully devised targets for individuals, groups of pupils and classes to aim for and for the test results. Targets are shared with pupils and posted on classroom walls and in exercise books. This is a powerful motivator for many and it promotes the pupils' personal development by encouraging them to take some responsibility for their learning. Targets for the Key Stage 2 SATs results have already been projected for each year until 2005 and, if pupils continue to learn at their present rate, standards should rise significantly;
- they identify pupils whose performance is a bit below average but who, with some extra help, could achieve average standards.

59. The same careful attention is not yet paid to checking up on how well pupils are doing in the other subjects. This results in less well-focused planning of work to meet pupils' needs than in English, mathematics and science. In some subjects, for example music and physical education, there is no systematic check on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

60. When children start nursery, the staff check what they know, what they understand and what they can do. These checks are good in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics, and personal and social development. Work is carefully planned to meet the children's particular needs and good ongoing checks are made on how well children learn new work. Effective regular assessment continues throughout the Foundation Stage and children's progress is thoroughly assessed when they move up to reception, so the work they undertake builds effectively on what they have already learned.

61. The good partnership between teachers and support staff ensures that all the staff working with pupils who have special educational needs know how well they have grasped each step of the work and how they are progressing towards achieving their individual targets.

The personal support and guidance given to pupils and monitoring of their personal development

62. Despite several changes of staff, teachers generally know their pupils well and this helps them to monitor their personal development. This monitoring is generally informal but effective and teachers are sensitive to pupils' 'ups and downs'. Teachers constantly encourage pupils to work hard and do their best. The headteacher has a good knowledge of the pupils as individuals, their particular needs and the factors that bear on their behaviour and performance at school and she provides some very good support to those who are experiencing difficulties. Pupils say they like and trust their class teachers and the headteacher.

The promotion of good behaviour, the way behaviour is managed in lessons and the way bullying is dealt with

63. The school has very good systems for promoting good behaviour. These are rooted in the behaviour policy which was produced after consultation with staff, parents, governors and pupils. The classroom staff and midday supervisors have benefited from high quality training. In most classes, teachers implement the behaviour policy well and have effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. They pre-empt potential misbehaviour and quickly nip in the bud any unruliness, impoliteness or disturbance. However, because of staff changes, not all teachers have had the training or been involved in drawing up the school's policy and there are some variations in how effectively teachers implement the behaviour policy. Consequently, there are occasional lessons in which some pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory. The school has very good procedures to minimise the risk of any bullying occurring and any that does happen is resolved quickly and effectively. Pupils and parents have confidence in the school's systems.

The monitoring of attendance and the promotion of good attendance

64. Liaison with the education welfare service has improved over the last year and the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are now excellent. The importance of regular school attendance is stressed in communications with parents. The school is scrupulous in its approach and examines the reasons for absences very closely. Parents are very strongly discouraged from taking their children on family holidays during term-time but many still do so. Last school year saw nearly half the children missing some of their schooling to go on holiday. The school is reluctant to authorise such absences, especially for pupils who already have a poor attendance record. Consequently, rates of unauthorised absence are above average. There is little more the school could do to improve attendance beyond continuing with its rigorous approach.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

65. This aspect of the school's work is good and, as a result, most parents and carers have a positive view of the school and the education it provides for their children and they find the school approachable. They are especially pleased with the way pupils of all races and religions are fully included in school life. The inspectors endorse parents' and carers' perceptions of the school's strengths. The partnership with parents has improved considerably since the time of the last inspection when it was satisfactory.
66. The main strengths in the school's partnership with parents are in:
- the quality of information provided for parents about how their children are getting on and about school life;
 - the extent of consultation with parents and the arrangements for homework.

67. Most of the parents who returned the inspection questionnaire expressed a good degree of satisfaction with most aspects of the school. A significant minority of them were not happy about the information they receive about their children's progress, the amount of homework their children get, and the range of activities outside lessons. These criticisms are not supported by the inspectors. Indeed all these features are at least satisfactory; information on pupils' progress is very good and the homework arrangements are good. Parental criticisms might be based on the past rather than the present situation which compares favourably with other schools.
68. The school is keen to involve the pupils' parents and carers in its life and work and makes every effort to enable them to contribute as partners in their children's education. The links between home and school are good. Most parents support their children's learning at home by making sure they complete their homework. However, few volunteer their services during the school day and some provide little support to their children, for instance in ensuring they complete homework. Nevertheless, parents can be depended on to help on an ad-hoc basis, for example with swimming and educational visits. The school is good at consulting parents and carers about matters that concern them. For example, their views on the behaviour policy and the homework arrangements were sought and taken into account. Parents' and carers' views contribute to the formation of plans for the school's development. The school also provides help and advice on domestic matters that affect pupils' wellbeing and ability to learn. This helps to ensure that the pupils arrive at school in a positive frame of mind and makes it easier for them to concentrate on their lessons and do well.
69. Parents also support the school's work by raising funds. The 'Friends of Belgrave' has recently been established. This organisation arranges social and fund-raising events, such as the Summer Fun Day and discos. The funds raised so far have contributed to the purchase of much needed outdoor play equipment and library books to support the curriculum.
70. Parents and carers want to be kept informed about what goes on at school and attendance at parents' consultation evenings is usually good. They receive very good information from the school. The annual reports on each pupil's progress are clear, concise and very informative. Parents are told how well their children are doing in relation to the national average, what they are good at and where they need to improve. They are also well informed about what their children will be studying so, if they wish, they can provide support at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

71. The school is very well led and managed. Much has been done in the last two years to set in motion things that should bear fruit in improved standards. There is plenty of evidence, in the work pupils are doing and the quality of teaching and learning, that this improvement has begun. This has been achieved despite the many staff changes.
72. There are two key factors in the effectiveness of the leadership and management at Belgrave St Peter's:
- the headteacher - she sets the tone of the school. She has the right priorities, she has a clear vision for how the school should develop, she knows how to achieve her aims, and she works in a very effective partnership with staff, particularly the deputy headteacher, and with the governing body;

- the governing body - governors are on the ball. They make a very strong contribution and provide a high level of support and valuable constructive criticism to the professionals.

The contributions of the headteacher, key staff and the governing body

73. The headteacher provides very good, purposeful leadership and she communicates her vision for the school very effectively. She leads by example as well as consultation. She embodies the school's values and its atmosphere of care and concern for every pupil. This is seen in her willingness to devote time to listening to pupils and in the respect she gives them. She has an open and consultative style and a positive, problem-solving approach. She has taken determined and, for the most part, effective action to eliminate unsatisfactory teaching. She supports the staff, for example by teaching herself in classes where pupils have fallen behind and by including all staff fully in the programme of ongoing training. These strengths have enabled her to get a high level of commitment from staff and governors. As a result, everyone is working together to the same ends, with a clear focus on doing the best for all the pupils. This commitment and shared sense of purpose put the school in a very strong position to continue improving.
74. The deputy headteacher makes a very good contribution. She and the headteacher have a very effective working partnership that is entirely focused on enabling every pupil to achieve as well as they can. The deputy headteacher works very hard to put these aims into practice. For example, she has made a substantial contribution to checking how good the teaching is and helping teachers become more effective. Her very thorough analysis of the test results provides very useful information for teachers and underpins changes that are leading to improvements in standards, for example changes to the curriculum in mathematics.
75. Since the last inspection, a system of subject leadership has been introduced. Each teacher carries responsibility for leading and managing work in a subject. There is a potentially very effective arrangement whereby these subject leaders work in teams led by the school's senior staff as well as undertaking some management tasks independently. The quality of subject leadership and management is satisfactory overall, being very effective in some subjects but not yet satisfactory in others. It is generally better in subjects which have had high priority in the last couple of years, for instance mathematics, where the subject leader's work has made a positive difference to standards. In some other subjects little is done beyond ensuring there is a whole-school plan of work and sufficient resources for teachers to cover the planned work. The unsettled staffing has led to discontinuity in some subjects.
76. The governing body is an asset to the school and it fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors are very well informed about the school and they have a high degree of involvement in decision making and in formulating school policies. They receive detailed information on the school's life and its achievements from the headteacher. Most visit frequently, often spending time in lessons, and some of their observations are very perceptive. Governors have begun to attend meetings with the staff teams responsible for leading and managing work in the various subjects. The result of all these strengths is a body of governors who are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and who work in a very productive, informed partnership with the staff.
77. The school is good at checking and evaluating how effective it is and, when weaknesses are identified, taking action to deal with them. This has happened in English and, as a result, the standard of pupils' written work has improved significantly. In mathematics, the school was slower to pick up on a slip in standards

but has now acted decisively and successfully to overcome the problems. Additionally, a good system is being introduced to ensure greater consistency between teachers in the marking of tests. These strengths mean that the school has identified the right priorities for its future development. However, some subject leaders are not in a position to know much about standards throughout the school, so are considerably less likely to pick up any weaknesses. Senior staff have a very good awareness of the quality of teaching because they observe lessons and look at pupils' books regularly. They help staff to become more effective by giving thorough feedback on lessons, providing good support where it is needed and arranging additional training. All staff are included in the school's arrangements for performance management whereby targets are set and appropriate training is provided to help them to continually improve the quality of their work.

78. Senior staff are alert to the different groups of pupils, how well they are doing and whether there are factors within the school's control that slow down learning for any groups. For example, they have looked at pupils' test results to see if those for whom English is an additional language and those with dual heritage achieve as well as the others, which they do. Differences in attainment can almost always be traced to other more significant factors, usually in pupils' home lives.
79. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. One teacher in each key stage oversees the arrangements for supporting these pupils. Support staff are deployed well so that their time and expertise is used very effectively to enable the pupils to achieve as well as they can. The governing body provides good oversight and the responsible governor takes an active part, alongside staff, in policy making.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

80. The school is well staffed. There are sufficient suitably qualified and experienced teachers who benefit from a good amount of well targeted additional training. There is a generous number of support staff because the school's managers have decided to fund more support and administrative staff than are normally found in a school this size. This is an effective policy for two main reasons. Firstly, it means that in all classes pupils benefit from teaching assistants working alongside teachers. This is particularly beneficial for pupils with special educational needs who are able to be fully included in class lessons. Secondly, the headteacher is freed from unnecessary administrative tasks so she can direct her efforts to activities that make a difference to pupils' achievement. Staff who are new to the school quickly feel part of the community because of the good support they get from the school's managers and their colleagues.
81. The last two years have been a time of unsettled staffing. For various reasons, some teachers have stayed only a short time, for instance filling the gap while a new deputy headteacher was appointed. Others have stayed at the school but moved onto new contracts, for example as a result of changing their hours significantly. Of the five staff appointed in August 2001, only three were new to the school. Even so, this meant that four of the classes had new teachers. All this change has slowed pupils' rate of learning and had a negative effect on standards. Things have now settled down.

Accommodation

82. The accommodation is satisfactory. There are strengths in the good sized hall and the good outdoor accommodation, which has very recently been improved by the installation of a small adventure playground area. The wide corridors outside the classrooms in both key stages offer a good amount of space for additional activities and group work. During the inspection, the corridor area in Key Stage 2 was used well for group work and it houses the new computer suite. However, in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage, the corridor is underused even though the reception classroom is a bit cramped. This limits the reception pupils' opportunities for imaginative play. The classrooms are on the small side and, especially for the older pupils, though adequate, they are rather cramped.

Resources

83. Taken overall the resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are enough resources for pupils to cover the work they should in most subjects. The resources for information and communication technology have only very recently been brought up to scratch with the purchase of new computers and the acquisition of a good number of laptops. There are still a few minor gaps in the equipment for the control aspect of this subject. However, standards have been adversely affected by shortages of resources in the past. The resources for physical education are unsatisfactory. The range of small apparatus is satisfactory but there are not enough of them. The large apparatus for gymnastics is unsuitable for Key Stage 1 pupils. In English there are too few books in the library and in classrooms. In music there is a shortage of tuned percussion instruments.

The school's use of its resources

84. The school makes very good use of its resources to promote teaching and learning. The public funds provided to the school are managed very well. Day-to-day financial administration is good. The school's administrative staff and the headteacher are supported well by the bursar whose services are bought as part of a financial package from the local education authority.

85. The budget planning process is very good.

- Subject leaders identify what they want to spend funds on. They have to justify their plans by identifying how the planned spending will contribute to pupils' achievement and how it relates to the school's overall management plan.
- The headteacher produces a draft budget plan, working closely with the bursar.
- The draft plan is examined and discussed in detail by the finance committee of the governing body and then presented to the full governing body for approval.

Consequently, funds are directed to the right educational priorities.

86. The governing body monitors all the school's financial arrangements and spending very effectively. They receive timely and useful financial information. Consequently, they quickly identify budget headings where spending is not following the expected pattern and make sure alternative arrangements are made.
87. Financial grants that are received for specific purposes, such as to support pupils with special educational needs, are spent appropriately and wisely.
88. The principles of best value are applied well. For example, there is wide consultation about policy decisions; value for money is sought before spending is authorised; staff and governors compare the school's performance with what is achieved in other schools and seek always to improve standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to continue to raise standards and improve the quality of education, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Raise standards in Key Stage 2 in English, information and communication technology and music by:

In English **

- continuing the work to improve pupils' speaking and listening and, in turn, the quality of their writing;
- improving the standard of pupils' handwriting;
- providing even more challenging work for pupils who have the potential to achieve above average standards;
- improving the number and range of books in classrooms and in the library.

(para nos: 12, 117, 121, 128, 134-137)

In information and communication technology (ICT) **

- implementing the plans that are already in place to develop this subject;
- teaching the control elements of the subject more effectively in Key Stage 2 and ensuring the new resources for this aspect of the work are used effectively;
- making better use of ICT in other subjects.

(para nos: 13, 130, 151, 185, 190, 192, 197)

In music

- where necessary, improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject;
- improving standards of singing in upper Key Stage 2;
- making more effective use of the specialist teacher's time.

(para nos: 13, 198, 202)

- (2) Improve the attitude and behaviour of the small number of pupils who sometimes disturb lessons by:
- where necessary, improving teachers' strategies for dealing with pupils who have behavioural difficulties;
 - devising and implementing plans to help these pupils to deal with their individual behavioural and emotional difficulties.
- (para nos: 16, 19, 20)
- (3) Ensure that the length of time for which pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught each week meets the nationally recommended minimum. (para nos: 36, 39, 44)
- (4) Continue to develop the role of the subject leaders and ensure that in all subjects they: **
- know about the standards of work and quality of teaching in their subjects all through the school;
 - devise and implement appropriate arrangements for checking how well all pupils are doing;
 - ensure proper progression is built into the whole-school plans of work.
- (para nos: 75, 77, 174, 178, 185, 203, 207)

** The school has already recognised these issues and has plans, in its school improvement plan, to tackle them.

90. In addition to these key issues for action, the following should be considered for inclusion in the action plan.

- Improving the resources for teaching and learning in physical education.
(para nos: 83, 208)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	11	22	16	2	0	0
Percentage	4	21	41	30	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	15	194
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	46

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	18	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	9
	Girls	15	16	16
	Total	21	23	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (93)	76 (96)	83 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	18
	Girls	14	15	12
	Total	22	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (89)	80 (96)	100 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	18	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	12
	Girls	15	7	17
	Total	24	15	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (63)	49 (67)	94 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	13
	Girls	15	10	16
	Total	24	20	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (58)	65 (67)	94 (63)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	138
Any other minority ethnic group	23

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.9
Average class size	27.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	151

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Total number of education support staff	1.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000–2001
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	£
Total income	465,105
Total expenditure	453,836
Expenditure per pupil	2,008
Balance brought forward from previous year	1,090
Balance carried forward to next year	12,359

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	247
Number of questionnaires returned	88

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	40	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	40	5	3	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	47	3	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	43	19	2	20
The teaching is good.	49	42	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	41	17	2	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	1	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	40	1	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	38	41	5	6	11
The school is well led and managed.	43	36	6	1	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	44	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	41	14	10	11

Other issues raised by parents

Most of the parents who attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector thought that the many staff changes in recent years had had a detrimental effect on pupils' rate of learning. However, they think matters are now improving.

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

91. The Foundation Stage covers education from three years of age to the end of the reception year. Children start the nursery at Belgrave St Peter's C of E School when they are three years old. Attendance at the nursery is part time with the younger children attending in the afternoon and the older ones coming in the mornings.
92. The local arrangements for transfer to the reception class are complex. All children are attending full time by the time they reach statutory school age. However, the amount of time children spend as full-timers in reception varies according to their date of birth. The summer born children miss out because they have a term less full-time schooling than the others. Furthermore, some children move straight from the nursery to Year 1, missing the reception class. Some of the part-timers in the morning nursery class are of reception age. These arrangements mean that children do not all have equal opportunities to learn in the Foundation Stage; this is beyond the school's control. Further up the school there is a high proportion (almost half) of summer born pupils on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs.
93. At the time of the inspection, there were 56 children in the Foundation Stage. Of these, 30 were part-timers of nursery age. A further 14 children, of reception age, were attending the nursery part-time. The reception class comprised 12 children in the reception year and nine Year 1 pupils.
94. When children start in nursery, their level of attainment varies but taken overall it is below average. Social and language skills are well below average for a significant number of children. These children have difficulty making friends and sharing and their speech is poor so they find it hard to communicate in words.
95. The curriculum in nursery and the reception class is properly planned. It follows the national recommendations for the Foundation Stage and the transition on to work from the National Curriculum, and the gradual introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours is managed well. This ensures that children undertake work that challenges them.
96. The children get a good start and they catch up in several areas of learning. By the end of the reception year most meet the national targets for their age (the early learning goals) in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, physical development and creative development. In communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world their attainment, by the end of reception, is below the target. They make good gains in their learning because the quality of teaching is good. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are similar to those at the time to the last inspection. Children with special educational needs are supported well. They are fully included in all activities and they make good progress in the light of their learning difficulties.
97. Two new teachers took over in the nursery this year, just a month before the inspection and responsibility for leading and managing work in the Foundation Stage has been taken on temporarily by the reception teacher. This change has been managed well and all members of the staff team work closely together and have a shared view of what they should be doing and how to ensure the children make progress.

98. The main strengths in the Foundation Stage are:
- good teaching;
 - very good provision for children's personal, social and emotional development so they make very good progress in this area of learning;
 - very effective use of support staff;
 - good provision for children with special educational needs who are fully included and well supported;
 - good assessment of what children know and their rate of progress and the use of this information to underpin the planning of work.
99. There are some weaknesses in:
- the books available in the classrooms;
 - the provision for children to learn through planned play activities;
 - the provision for reception children to learn out of doors.

Personal, social and emotional development

100. The provision for this area of learning is very good and children consequently make very good progress in developing positive attitudes to learning, self-confidence and good behaviour, and in making relationships. As a result, by the end of the reception year, the vast majority of children have achieved the early learning goals. This is a very good achievement since a significant minority enter nursery with poor social skills.
101. In nursery, staff promote this area of learning very well in all their dealings with the children. They gently reinforce the simple rules for behaviour continually so the children come to appreciate the need for agreed standards of behaviour. They create a calm and orderly environment with high levels of supervision so children are guided very well. They support the children when they need it but encourage them to greater independence, for example in putting on coats. They set a very good example of relationships and respect and they insist on children thinking of others. For example, when one child hurt another, the nursery nurse talked to the culprit, explaining what he had done wrong. He then decided to apologise. The success of this work is clear in the greater maturity, independence and responsibility of the children who have had a year in nursery compared with the new starters in the afternoon session.
102. The provision in the reception class builds very effectively on what has been achieved in nursery. Greater independence is expected of the children. By the end of the reception year the vast majority of children have learned to make positive, co-operative relationships with other children and adults and they are well behaved. They have positive attitudes to work and they concentrate well on their tasks, even when not closely supervised. When they are given suitable opportunities, they choose what to do and get the things they need independently. The organisation of the classroom promotes this quite well. For example, there is a writing area for children to work in. On a typical occasion two girls organised themselves to write the words for some songs; one said 'I've written what we need'.

Communication, language and literacy

103. The provision for this area of learning is good. It is taught well, the children make good progress in their learning and are achieving well by building up their learning from their starting points. Even so, taken overall, attainment does not meet the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. This is because, for many, language skills are poor when they start. The children for whom English is an additional

language are as competent at English as the others and they make equally good gains in this area of their learning.

104. Good attention is paid to developing children's speaking and listening skills in the nursery. For example, staff join in the children's play, making judicious interventions to develop their vocabulary and encouraging them to communicate with each other. They read interesting books to the children, talk with them about the contents and encourage them to join in phrases that are repeated. However, many children are not forthcoming and some make comments that are entirely unrelated to the topic under discussion. Circle time in reception provides good opportunities for speaking and listening and it is used well to help children develop the confidence to express themselves. It is a time when all the children sit around with the teacher and have the chance to talk about how they feel and what is on their minds. Even so, by the end of the reception year, some children struggle to express themselves in words.
105. Early reading skills are taught well throughout the Foundation Stage. In the nursery, children develop positive attitudes to books. They willingly choose from the limited selection in the classroom and clearly enjoy this activity. They handle books carefully, turn the pages over in order and generally behave like readers even though they cannot decipher the words. The staff include the written word in most nursery activities and displays and they encourage children to notice letters and words.
106. Work in the reception class builds steadily on the good foundations laid in nursery. The children learn the sounds made by each letter. Staff teach names for the letters and tell stories about them to help the children remember their names and the sound they make. By the end of the year, most of the children work out simple three-letter words such as 'hop'. The average attaining children at the beginning of Year 1 read a familiar simple book together and remember what happens in it. However, they tend to rely on memory and rarely attempt to use their phonic knowledge if they are unsure of a word. Their attainment in early reading skills falls a little below the target for their age. In the reception class, as in nursery, there is a dearth of suitable, attractive books to entice these early readers.
107. In both classes there is some good provision of opportunities for children to write. Correct letter formation is taught so most children learn to form most letters correctly. By the end of the reception year all the children have developed belief in themselves as writers and will have a go. The higher attaining children have achieved the early learning goals in almost all aspects of writing. They spell a few familiar words correctly, write a couple of sentences at a time and separate them with full stops. The average attainers achieve well but do not reach the same level. They write generally recognisable letter shapes but rarely separate them into words. Occasionally they try to write words they remember and get some of the letters right, for example putting 'wet' for 'went'.
108. The staff make efforts to provide activities that encourage the development of children's skills. For example, there are a telephone and notepad in the play area in the nursery and there is a suitably equipped 'writing table' in the reception class. However, more could be done to create imaginative play settings that would further stimulate children to want to communicate orally and through the written word and would lend themselves to extending their vocabulary.

Mathematical development

109. This area of learning is taught well in both classes. The children make gains in their learning at a good rate and, by the end of the reception year, most achieve the early

learning goals. In the nursery, staff take every opportunity to extend the children's mathematical language. For example, when they were printing with a range of items, the nursery nurse constantly put in information about the shapes of the objects they were using and checked what the children remembered. The higher attaining nursery children sort objects accurately according to size but cannot take account of two variables. Staff in the nursery use small amounts of time between activities well to reinforce children's recognition of numbers and to teach number order. The staff have high expectations of what the children can achieve. For instance, in the reception class, it was expected the children would cope with quite demanding work with shapes and they did. They learned about the differences between common two-dimensional shapes in an enjoyable way and, because they were interested, they concentrated well on the work. By the end of the lesson they could almost all sort shapes accurately. Most gave correct answers to questions about the number of sides, faces and corners of different shapes. The higher attainers remember these properties of shapes but most of the children have to get shapes out to check. In this aspect of the work most children are achieving beyond the early learning goals. However, their knowledge about numbers and ability to do simple calculations is in line with the targets for their age. They are beginning to understand the ideas of addition and subtraction so long as they have objects to put together or take away.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

110. Limited evidence was available in this area of learning, which lays the foundations for later work in science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, and religious education. In all aspects of this area of learning the provision is at least satisfactory and, by the end of the reception year, the children take an interest in the world around them and want to know more about it. The children make sufficient progress but their attainment is a little below average. Nevertheless, the Year 1 work seen shows that, by the end of the reception year, they are ready to embark successfully on appropriate work from the National Curriculum in these subjects.
111. In religious education, the nursery children have already learned that 'prayer' is special. They learn about life and customs in other countries. For example, the nursery nurse read a book, 'I is for India' to a group of children. She set a good example of interest in cultural differences and acceptance of them that was followed by the children. The reception children know the Bible is a special book.
112. In nursery, the children have plenty of opportunities to learn about the natural world. For instance, they plant bulbs at the edge of the outdoor play area, where they will be able to watch them grow. The reception children have less access to outdoor activities. Their scientific work is hindered by a lack of knowledge about the things around them. For instance, the Year 1 pupils were unable to classify foods as fruit or vegetables and they did not know the names of some common foods.
113. In nursery and reception, children have good opportunities to use computers and their skills in early information and communication technology work meet the targets, by the end of reception. The nursery is particularly well resourced for this work with three computers.

Physical development

114. The provision for this area of learning is better in the nursery than in the reception class. This is because the nursery children have daily sessions of outdoor play that include opportunities to develop their skill at controlling wheeled toys. Both classes have limited access to suitable climbing equipment.

115. Taking all aspects of physical development into account, the provision is satisfactory and teaching and learning are of a satisfactory quality. Consequently, the children's attainment, by the end of the reception year, meets the targets in the early learning goals. The children make satisfactory progress in developing control over their bodies, their awareness of space and their ability to steer wheeled toys; there are fewer bumps in reception than in morning nursery sessions. However, several children lack manual dexterity, for instance they hold pencils awkwardly. Although suitable materials such as playdough are provided, children get to use only a narrow range of tools.

Creative development

116. Children meet the targets in this area of learning. Provision is sound and children make satisfactory gains in their learning. In both classes, the provision for art and music activities is better than for imaginative play, which could be used more to stimulate children's creativity. The reception pupils develop good observational skills and their self-portraits are of a good standard. Children learn a good range of songs and enjoy singing them. By the end of the reception year, most join in music lessons and sing reasonably tunefully. The higher attaining children have a good sense of pulse; they perform actions to accompany songs and keep time well. The teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall. However, in music lessons the children are not all kept fully involved in music-making throughout; only a few get to play instruments. Not enough is done to create setting for children's imaginative play or to plan what children should learn through such play.

ENGLISH

117. Standards have improved because teaching is now better and the subject is well led and managed well. Teachers are now concentrating on aspects of the subject that pupils find most difficult. The present Year 2 pupils are reaching the standard expected for their age in reading and writing. Their speaking and listening skills are below average for their age; this reflects their limited language skills when they start school. Standards in Year 6 are a bit below average. This is because, although for most pupils attainment overall meets the standard expected for their age, few are on course to achieve a higher than average standard, by the end of the year. For most Year 6 pupils speaking and listening is close to the expected standard and reading meets expectations but standards of writing are poorer. Pupils are now achieving well in both key stages. They are gaining ground at a good rate.

118. Pupils with special educational needs make good gains in their learning, in view of their difficulties. The pupils for whom English is an additional language are not English learners; they are competent at English and they make progress at a similar rate to their classmates. This is borne out by the school's analysis of test results.

119. Staff know what needs to be done to raise standards further and the school is well set up to achieve the necessary improvements.

120. The key strengths that underpin the standards achieved are:

- good teaching, especially in Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2 and good use of support staff;
- good implementation of the National Literacy Strategy as the core of a curriculum that supports the school's ethos;
- good use of assessment data;

- the use of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects.

121. There are weaknesses in:

- standards of writing;
- the challenge to potential higher attainers to do even better;
- the number and range of books.

The quality of teaching and learning

122. Teaching is good overall in both key stages but is more variable, from satisfactory to very good, in Key Stage 2.

123. In both key stages teachers plan work well. They are fully familiar with the National Literacy Strategy and base their plans soundly on its recommendations. This means that reading and writing are taught effectively and pupils are making good progress in developing their literacy skills.

124. Teachers use questions well, particularly in Key Stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2, to challenge pupils to think hard and to express themselves well. For example, Year 6 pupils worked on a passage about the Bermuda Triangle. They discussed the nature of 'mystery' as well as examining the way in which the author tried to direct their thinking. All the pupils made good progress in their understanding of how events can be recounted in words, in their ability to make critical comments on an author's use of language and style, and in extending their vocabulary. In Year 2 the teacher used questions well to encourage pupils to use interesting words to connect parts of the story of 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' in the correct order. She introduced words about the passage of time, such as 'meanwhile' and 'whilst'. The pupils were highly motivated to succeed at their tasks. These gave them good practice at using appropriate words as 'connectives' to produce interesting sentences and they used a good range of such words.

125. Reading is taught well, particularly in Key Stage 1 where pupils get a good grounding. For example, in Year 1 the teacher pays good attention to phonics in the whole-class teaching part of each literacy hour. In each such session the phonic work builds up steadily so the pupils gain confidence. The Year 2 pupils have developed a good range of strategies for deciphering unfamiliar words. They apply their phonic knowledge, find familiar words within long words or break them down into syllables, and, because they understand what they read, they use the context to make informed guesses. The younger pupils have good opportunities to read along with the teacher. Teachers provide a good model of expressive reading and the Year 1 pupils read familiar, repetitive stories well.

126. By Year 4, average and higher attaining pupils read suitably difficult books confidently and fluently and with at least satisfactory expression. As teachers develop pupils' independence in reading in Key Stage 2, they continue to keep track of the progress pupils are making in reading. In some lessons, pupils have good opportunities to use their reading skills, for instance to undertake research using the Internet.

127. The library has only recently been completed. Nevertheless pupils have satisfactory information retrieval skills. Teachers are now making good use of the library for this work. For example, a classroom assistant worked in the library with a small group of Year 1 pupils, introducing them to the simplified version of the Dewey decimal system of classification.

128. Writing is now being taught effectively. The concentration on speaking and listening is paying off. Even so, the Year 6 pupils' writing does not yet fully reflect the quality of their oral contributions in lessons. Pupils learn to write in a range of styles. For

example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils learned to write playscripts. They made good progress in mastering this style and in using punctuation correctly in dialogue. This was because the teachers captured their interest by making the lessons appealing. For instance, puppets were used to help the lower attainers understand.

129. The non-teaching staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those with special educational needs. Teachers plan carefully to make effective use of the support staff's time and they brief them well so they know the purpose of the work pupils are doing and how best to help them. These staff have also benefited from 'in-house' training in literacy work. As a result of these strengths, the general work of the class is supported and pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons whilst doing work that meets their individual needs.

The curriculum and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy

130. The National Literacy Strategy is implemented well, with all classes having a daily literacy hour following the recommended format. The associated guidance provides a helpful structure that supports teachers in planning work over the long term as well as individual lessons. The school's curriculum is now matched to pupils' needs. The provision for developing pupils' speaking and listening is now good, with proper attention being paid to using drama to enrich pupils' language. For example, drama related to the story of the Titanic was very effective and led to a dramatic improvement in the quality of pupils' imaginative writing. In most classes pupils make satisfactory use of the recently acquired computers for wordprocessing and to find information. This work is being developed further, but in some classes progress is slower because some teachers lack confidence with the computers and the programs. Work in English supports pupils' personal development and the school's encouragement of good relationships. For example, Year 5 pupils discussed the characters of Scrooge and Bob Cratchitt in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. This gave rise to a number of thoughtful observations about how people ought to behave towards one another.

The use of assessment data

131. Senior staff have analysed pupils' test results thoroughly to identify why, despite improvements in the provision for English, standards did not rise as expected. Careful examination of pupils' answers revealed weaknesses in writing. Changes were therefore made to the curriculum, to improve the range and quality of opportunities for speaking and listening. This has been effective and standards of writing improved significantly in the 2001 SATs. Assessment data is also used well to provide a secure basis for targets for each year group and for individual pupils. The targets are displayed prominently and used very effectively to motivate pupils to achieve.

The use of literacy skills in other subjects

132. In other subjects, teachers are generally careful to develop pupils' understanding and ease in using specialist vocabulary, for example in science and religious education. As a result, pupils talk with ease and write about a range of topics using appropriate vocabulary accurately.

Standards of writing

133. There are three elements to this, the quality of pupils' written work, their handwriting, and the presentation of their work.

134. Pupils in Key Stage 2 generally find it hard to organise and structure extended written pieces and to develop their ideas in writing. The school has recognised this weakness and taken steps to tackle it, which are already having a positive effect on standards. More planned work in speaking and literacy and more opportunities to write at length are proving successful. The effect can be seen in the significant increase in the number of pupils reaching an average standard in writing in the Key Stage 2 SATs in 2001. In lessons, when pupils are given opportunities for purposeful talk, alongside using the written word, they produce a work of a satisfactory standard.
135. Staff have recognised the need to improve pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their written work and they conduct handwriting lessons. In some classes handwriting is taught carefully and systematically. For example, in Year 1, the teacher made a point of revising the correct formation of 'n' because she had noticed a lot of pupils getting it wrong. After a few minutes of sharply focused teaching, nearly all the pupils formed the letter correctly. However, in several classes handwriting sessions are not frequent enough, they lack rigour, and what is taught is not sufficiently well followed-up and reinforced in other written work. The worksheets given to pupils do not all use a common style. Furthermore, in some classes, the marking of pupils' work does not pay sufficient attention to handwriting and pupils are not helped or challenged to do better. Consequently, despite teachers' efforts, the desired improvement has not happened.

The challenge to potential higher attainers

136. In English, fewer pupils are on course to achieve a high level for their age by the end of Year 6 than in mathematics and science. Pupils who might, with an extra push, be able to achieve highly are not targeted for additional support, although those who are just a little below an average level have extra classes.

The number and range of books

137. There are not enough books and the range is too narrow. Consequently, pupils do not have the opportunities they should to read and enjoy bright, attractive and readily available good quality books to support their learning and help them do as well as they could. Recent improvements have led to the creation of a library which was opened just prior to the inspection. This is a positive move and staff and pupils have begun to make good use of it. However, it, like the classrooms, is short of books.

MATHEMATICS

138. Standards at the top of the school are broadly average in all aspects of the subject (using and applying mathematics; number and algebra; shape, space and measures; and handling data). About 75 per cent of the Year 6 pupils are working at least at the level expected for their age (National Curriculum Level 4) and around 15 per cent have a real chance of achieving a higher level by the end of the year. The subject is very well led and managed and, as a result of this, standards have recovered after falling in the last two years. They are now much higher than suggested by the SATs results in 2000 and 2001. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, in both key stages. All pupils are achieving well and making good progress from their starting points. The key features are:
- teaching and learning are good overall; in some lessons they are excellent;
 - very good leadership and management of the subject and very good use of assessment data have underpinned rising standards and continue to do so;

- standards in the Key Stage 1 SATs in 2001 were very poor but the present Year 2 pupils are doing much better, though not yet reaching an average standard;
- the National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented well but the whole-class work is better than the group work;
- the use of information and communication technology is inconsistent between classes and, overall, though developing, is unsatisfactory at present.

The quality of teaching and learning

139. Of the seven lessons seen, teaching and learning were excellent in two and very good in a further two. They were good in one lesson and satisfactory in two. The work in pupils' books since September broadly reflects this picture. Excellent teaching was seen in Year 6, where pupils are now making rapid progress, and in Year 4 when the lesson was led by another member of staff, a mathematics specialist, working alongside the class teacher.
140. There are several common features in the excellent and very good teaching. Teachers combine excellent subject knowledge with an understanding of how pupils learn mathematics. They pitch work at a demanding level and lessons are intensive as they push the pace along briskly. They involve all the pupils throughout and maintain positive and purposeful relationships with them. As a result of these strengths, there is rarely any misbehaviour because pupils enjoy the lessons. They are interested in the work, sometimes absolutely fascinated by it, and they try very hard.
141. Teaching of this very high quality was seen, for example, in a lesson with Year 6 pupils. They were learning strategies to apply the multiplication facts they already knew to more complex calculations. The session began with a practical activity to check and reinforce pupils' understanding of the significance of the position of a digit in a number in determining its value (place value) and their ability to apply this understanding to numbers up to 1,000,000. The pupils were very keen on this and were eager to respond to the teacher's questions. These were penetrating and probing, showing high expectations of what pupils could achieve, and they pressed pupils into thinking at a high level. For example, superficial or unclear answers were pursued with comments such as, 'explain a bit more to me please'. The teacher gave lower attaining pupils the time they needed for mental calculation so they could contribute to the lesson and were moved on in their learning and speed at calculating. She let pupils know when they were doing well in the work and making progress in meeting their behaviour targets but without slowing the lesson down. This was effective in motivating the pupils, keeping them focused on the work in hand and securing a very high standard of behaviour. When pupils moved to group work, each group was set work that was very well matched to their level of attainment so all pupils had to try hard but, with effort, could succeed. In this lesson all pupils made gains in their mental facility with large numbers, their ability to apply new strategies for calculations independently, and their ability to use what they already knew. For instance, by the end of the lesson, nearly all the pupils understood how to use doubling and multiplication by three to calculate 6×8 and were ready to apply this understanding to multiplication of larger numbers.
142. In a Year 4 lesson, extremely skilful teaching meant that pupils were so enthused by their investigative work on number patterns in the Chinese Triangle that when further work was set for homework a gasp of 'Yes!!!' went up.
143. When teaching is no better than satisfactory, it is usually for one of two reasons. Firstly, in classes containing a significant number of pupils with behavioural difficulties, teachers sometimes have to give quite a lot of time over to maintaining

order. This inevitably reduces the effectiveness of their teaching because it slows the pace of learning for all pupils in the class. In these lessons, teachers do not use the very robust and effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour that were seen in the most effective lessons. Secondly, examination of pupils' books from last year shows that work is sometimes not sufficiently closely matched to pupils' different stages in learning. On these occasions, the more advanced pupils cope with the work easily so do not progress at as fast a rate as they could whilst the slower ones struggle and do not always understand. Furthermore, pupils' work is not always marked carefully enough and the marking does little to help them improve.

144. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in lessons by skilled support staff. Consequently, they make good progress throughout the school and they remain motivated to learn because they are helped to achieve success.

Leadership and management of the subject and the use of assessment

145. The subject leader has only been on the staff for a year. In this time she had made a big difference to the quality of teaching and learning and the standards pupils achieve. She has very good subject knowledge and uses this very well to support her colleagues, for instance in planning work and in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. She gives a strong lead to the drive for improvement and she has a clear overview of work in mathematics all through the school, because she has monitored the teaching and pupils' work. Weaknesses have been tackled quickly and effective action has been taken to overcome them. For instance, the 2001 SATs papers were analysed very thoroughly to determine what had gone wrong. Gaps in pupils' basic mathematical knowledge and understanding were identified quickly and the whole school plans have been adapted so more attention is given to these aspects of the work. Additionally, good guidance has been given to teachers. The systems for checking up on what pupils know and understand and how fast they are making progress are good and the information obtained is used very well. For example, the subject leader produces graphs that show clearly which pupils are progressing at a good rate and the few who are slipping behind. Those who need an extra push are identified and given additional help in small groups.

Standards in Key Stage 1

146. The work seen in Year 3 confirms the 2001 Key Stage 1 SATs results. These pupils suffered from an unsettled year with several different teachers. Only the higher attaining pupils are at the level expected for their age. Most are below where they should be in all aspects of the subject.
147. However, standards in the present Year 2 are much higher. This is because the teaching is better and the class is not suffering the disruption experienced last year. Most of these pupils are well set to achieve the expected standard by the end of the year and the higher attainers are on course to do even better. The majority know quite a lot of number facts up to ten and see the relationships between them. For instance, they understand that if they know $7+3=10$, they also know the answer to $3+7$ and they realise that $10-7$ will be 3. They explain clearly the methods they use to work sums out in their heads. They know the names of common two- and three-dimensional shapes and they are beginning to use standard measures such as a metre.
148. Teachers in this key stage have a good understanding of their young pupils and good rapport with them, yet they expect a lot of them. They find ways of making difficult work understandable and interesting. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the teacher capitalised on pupils' enjoyment of a book they had been reading together and

brought the book characters into the lesson. 'Mrs Grinling' had written to the class seeking help with buying fruit for 'Mr Grinling'. The pupils were very taken with this and worked with numbers up to 20 in this context, hardly realising they were doing 'hard work'. The teachers also successfully vary the tasks they set to take account of pupils' different stages in mathematical knowledge and understanding.

Standards in Key Stage 2

149. The present Year 6 pupils were not as far behind as last year's group when they began their final year. This, combined with the fact that the teaching in this year is very good, means that standards are much higher than last year's SATs results suggest. Last year's dip will not be repeated. The Year 6 pupils have already covered a lot of ground this year. Most of them have a fair understanding of place value to 1,000,000. They have a sound understanding of fractions and decimals. For example, they can convert $25/4$ into $6\frac{1}{4}$ but only the higher attaining pupils can do this in reverse. They work to three decimal points and convert commonly used fractions, such as $\frac{1}{4}$, to decimal fractions. However, many do not 'know their tables' well enough. They understand the difference between perimeter and area. The teaching in this year is so effective that only pupils with special educational needs are working below the level expected for their age. In data handling pupils know and mostly understand the language of probability, mode, median and range, but their graphs are not as accurate as they could be.

The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy

150. Teachers have benefited from good training and support from school staff and local authority consultants. Consequently, all teachers are teaching a daily numeracy hour, following the recommended lesson format, and they are teaching the right things. The whole-class teaching of mental mathematics is particularly good. As a result, pupils are gaining confidence in their understanding of how the number system works, their knowledge of basic number facts, and their ability to use these to manipulate numbers and devise efficient methods for mental calculations. The group work phase of numeracy hours is generally not so well managed. Some teachers tend to give one or two groups rather undemanding work whilst they concentrate on another group of pupils. In the most effective lessons the class teaching is very challenging. Then, when it comes to group work, all groups of pupils are set work that is directly related to the ground covered in the whole-class teaching but pitched at a slightly lower level so they consolidate new learning through practice but do not make excessive demands on the teacher. This means the teacher is freed to work intensively with one group at a time, checking their understanding and pushing them on.

The use of ICT

151. This is variable. There is little evidence in pupils' books to suggest they use ICT to support and extend their learning in mathematics on a regular basis. Nevertheless, in some lessons ICT is an integral part of the work. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on number facts to 20, one group used a computer program to practise calculations. In a very effective lesson in Year 4, the teacher used an overhead projector for demonstrations. This was very successful in keeping all the pupils' attention. In Year 6, pupils used calculators to check their answers when working with very large numbers. However, the use of ICT is not yet systematically planned throughout the school.

152. Despite the dip in standards, there have been significant improvements in this subject since the last inspection in 1999. These place the school in a strong position to continue to raise standards.

SCIENCE

153. Standards at the top of the school are in line with the national expectations for the pupils' age. Most of the Year 6 pupils are well set to achieve the expected level

(National Curriculum Level 4) by the end of the year and a reasonable number are likely to achieve a higher level. The pupils have a thorough knowledge and understanding of the work they have covered. The SATs results have fluctuated over the last few years. This is mainly down to differences between year groups, which are exaggerated because of the relatively small number of pupils taking the tests each year. Each year pupils have done at least as well as those in most other similar schools across the country and they are likely to do so again this year. Throughout the school, pupils are now making good gains in their learning and achieving well because they are taught well. The main characteristics are:

- the quality of teaching and learning is good;
- the skills of scientific enquiry are taught well;
- standards attained in the Key Stage 2 tests (SATs) have been better than in English and mathematics every year since 1998 and a good number of pupils reach an above average standard. The standards now being achieved are similar to those reported at the last inspection;
- the subject is being led and managed well.

The quality of teaching and learning

154. Taken overall, the quality of teaching is good. This is evident in lessons and in pupils' exercise books. Teaching is most effective in Key Stage 1 and in Years 5 and 6. In these classes teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and have good relationships with them. They have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and pupils are making the best progress in learning in these classes. The pupils work hard with a good level of concentration. There have been several changes in staffing recently and the available evidence suggests that this has improved the quality of science teaching.
155. There is a good emphasis on pupils developing the skills needed for scientific enquiry. Pupils are expected to record their work carefully, developing the skills to note their original hypothesis, what they did, their results and the conclusions they drew from them. Pupils are taught to write up their experimental work clearly. This helps them to learn from scientific experiments. For example, the Year 6 pupils looked at beneficial and harmful micro-organisms. They kept clean and dirty slices of cheese and bread in sealed containers and observed the development of mould on their surfaces and they recorded their observations accurately over a period of time. Their teacher used a balloon bursting well to illustrate how a virus bursts and spreads through the body and the pupils learned about how viruses affect the body's health.
156. In a Year 5 lesson about the effect of exercise on the pulse rate the teacher explained the well planned, appropriate experiment and how to carry it out clearly. As a result the pupils undertook experimental work sensibly and concentrated hard when taking the pulse. They made progress in understanding the need for a 'control group' who did not exercise and in understanding that the pulse rate is higher after exercise than before.
157. The teaching in lower Key Stage 2, though for the most part satisfactory, is less effective. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the work done in Year 4 last year shows that not enough was done to match work to pupils' different levels of attainment. As a result, the higher attaining pupils achieved the level of work that they should at their age but others rarely completed a piece of work. Secondly, in the Year 3 class there are a number of pupils who have found it hard to settle after a disturbed year; their behaviour undermines the effectiveness of the satisfactory teaching and affects other pupils' learning.

The standards pupils attain

158. The Year 2 pupils are working at an appropriate level for their age. Their knowledge of the properties of materials is satisfactory. They know that materials can be altered by being twisted, squashed or stretched and they understand that some of these changes are temporary but others are permanent. They have a satisfactory understanding of electricity. For example, they have realised that an electrical circuit has to be complete for a bulb in it to light.
159. In Key Stage 2, pupils are, for the most part, working at the levels expected for their age. The Year 5 teacher has quickly established working practices based on a scientific approach. Pupils in this class conduct experiments sensibly and accurately and understand how to ensure experimental findings are valid. In their lesson about the effect of exercise on pulse rate they drew appropriate conclusions from the results of their experiment. Last year's Year 5 books contain little science work. However, these pupils, now in Year 6, have a sound knowledge of the work they have covered this year and their skills in scientific investigation are satisfactory. In their work on micro-organisms they made informed predictions of what would happen to the different food samples and tested their accuracy against their observations. Most pupils had correctly predicted that the dirty samples would develop mould first.

The leadership and management of the subject

160. A new subject leader has recently taken over. She has settled into the job well as a result of the good support she has received from senior staff. She has already recognised the strengths in the subject and identified appropriate areas for further development. For example, she has seen the need to identify the scientific skills pupils should develop as they move up the school and to ensure that these skills are taught, so that pupils are able to tackle the planned work effectively.

ART AND DESIGN

161. Very little evidence was available because:
- art and design alternates with design and technology and, at the time of the inspection, early in the school year, most classes were studying design and technology and had not done any art and design. This also meant little work was displayed in classrooms;
 - virtually no work had been retained from the previous year, other than a few pencil drawings in sketch books which were generally of poor quality.
162. Consequently, no judgements have been made on the overall standards of art and design and the quality of teaching and learning in this subject.
163. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching was satisfactory but unspectacular. The pupils' learning was satisfactory. They produced work of a broadly average standard but the lessons were routine and, as a result, few pupils were inspired to produce work of high quality.
164. In the Year 3 lesson most of the pupils extended their understanding of colour and their skill at mixing shades carefully. They succeeded in mixing paint to create intermediate shades of orange and purple, adding paint to make the colour progressively deeper.

165. In the Year 5 lesson, pupils developed their aesthetic awareness and their observational skills as they arranged groups of objects prior to drawing them. They made sensible suggestions about how to improve their arrangements. They produced sketches of an appropriate standard for their age.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

166. Three lessons were seen during the inspection and there was some photographic evidence of work that had been completed last year. Standards are broadly in line with those expected in both key stages and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Key features of work in design and technology are:

- pupils study a good range of topics in this subject;
- pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their work and suggest ways to improve it;
- the nationally recommended scheme of work gives teachers good support.

Standards

167. Pupils in Year 1 are studying fruit and vegetables. This is a useful topic as many of them have little knowledge of these foods and their place in a healthy diet. At the end of the lesson, although pupils' knowledge is below that expected for their age, they know more about these foods than before. They identify some vegetables from a spoken clues such as, 'I am green and grow up a long climbing frame!', 'a bean!'. Most suggest ways a ham sandwich could be improved and made more healthy, for instance by adding lettuce, tomato and cucumber.

168. In Year 2, pupils design and make vehicles from cardboard boxes and other scrap material. Their design skills are above average. They produce well drawn, labelled designs for their vehicles. They follow these designs carefully when making the vehicles. Their making skills are satisfactory. For example, they use scissors with a fair degree of skill to cut the card and to make holes in the boxes to allow the axles through. Many of the pupils evaluate their work at an appropriate level for their age. For example, they put the wheels too high on the first versions of their models so they do not touch the road. After looking carefully at this problem, they decide to lower the wheels. Some successfully make the necessary adaptation.

169. The Year 6 pupils are in the middle of a project to design a standing frame to hold a photograph. They have practised techniques to make the frames and they understand that card triangles strengthen the corners. They have started to plan the way they will decorate the frame discussing the materials they will use from the collection provided.

The quality of teaching and learning

170. The quality of teaching was good or better in all three lessons seen. In these lessons teachers provided good opportunities for pupils to work out their own ways of doing things and learn from their mistakes. In response, the pupils took an interest and worked hard so they made good progress in developing the skills needed for designing and making various products. Teachers question pupils well so that they think carefully about the work they are doing and develop their understanding as a result of being required to refine or reconsider their answers. Teachers get on well with their pupils who respond well and display good attitudes to the work they do.

GEOGRAPHY

171. It was possible to see only two lessons in geography during the inspection, both of these were in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on a combination of these lesson observations, examination of pupils' work from last year and discussions with staff and pupils.
172. Standards, in both key stages, are broadly in line with what is expected for the pupils' age. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall resulting in satisfactory achievement. Standards are similar to those being achieved at the time of the last inspection. There is room for improvement and given the level of staff commitment, the quality of teaching and the developing whole-school approach to subject leadership, signs are that it will occur.
173. The key strengths that contribute to pupils' learning and the standards they achieve are:
- high quality teaching in the upper part of Key Stage 2;
 - good use of direct contact with people from areas being studied;
 - the teaching pupils receive in understanding geographical information and evidence.
174. There are some weaknesses in:
- pupils' presentation of their work - it does not do them justice;
 - the lack of systematic arrangements to assess pupils' learning and their rate of progress;
 - the plans for work give little attention to progression in pupils' geographical skills;
 - the arrangements for the subject leader to keep tabs on standards and the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

The high quality teaching and learning

175. The most successful teaching in Key Stage 2 challenges the pupils to think for themselves and to express their ideas and opinions carefully and accurately. This was clear when the Year 6 pupils were recalling comparisons between Belgrade and Birmingham as they studied comparative land use and the development of settlements. The teacher questioned the pupils skilfully so that all pupils were challenged in their thinking and brought on in their learning. She expected and got answers that were considered and based on the available evidence. The pupils made good progress in this and expressed and justified their opinions clearly, showing a good grasp of the reasons for the growth of settlements and the similarities and differences between them. They contrasted the proportion of the population living in flats in the two cities and related this to the demolition of flats locally. Pupils have very good recall of the work they did in Years 1 and 2. This suggests they were taught well in these classes.

Contacts with people in other areas

176. The school has used its Internet connections to make e-mail contact with people in different countries as diverse as Sweden and Tanzania. The pupils are encouraged to think what questions children in these other lands would want to ask them about their lives. They learn in some detail about the similarities and differences between places. This approach adds to the directness of experience that the pupils enjoy and also to their ability to put themselves in other people's shoes. This supports the

school's overall aims and is a significant factor in the well-managed provision for the personal development of all the pupils.

The teaching of about how to use geographical information and evidence

177. The pupils learned how to interpret the information they gather from books, maps, photographs and the Internet. In the lessons seen, good attention was paid to the use of evidence. For example, a group of Year 4 pupils of modest attainment were successfully taught how to use a CD-Rom for research into life in an Indian village. As a result they learned more about everyday life in rural India.

The presentation of pupils' work

178. The work in pupils' books does not reflect the quality of thinking shown in their oral contributions in lessons. For example, in the Year 4 lesson, some pupils made good and sensitive observations about the questions the Indian children in the village they are studying might want to ask them. When they came to write it down the quality of this thinking was masked by poor presentation.
179. Pupils' handwriting is of an unsatisfactory standard and they spell key subject vocabulary incorrectly. Pupils have little written record of the work they have undertaken to help reinforce new learning, to promote a pride in their work and to help them see how to improve their work.

The assessment arrangements

180. Teachers mark pupils' work and they have a broad idea of where they are up to. However, there is no systematic whole-school procedure for checking up on pupils' attainment in different aspects of the subject and their rate of progress. The result of this shortcoming is threefold. Firstly, it makes it difficult for the planning of work and areas for development in the subject to be based on assessment of what pupils have already learned so they make the best progress they can. Secondly, it is hard to track pupils' year-on-year progress. Thirdly, it reduces the quality of reports.

Whole-school planning for progression in geographical skills

181. Teachers cover geographical skills in their lessons and provide opportunities for pupils to use a range of skills for geographical enquiry, such as using maps at a range of scales, using information and communication technology, and drawing conclusions from a range of evidence. In well taught lessons pupils make good progress in developing these skills. For example, in the Year 6 lesson, pupils learned to interpret photographs of contrasting places well. However, the whole-school plans for work do not ensure that such skills are taught at a progressively more demanding level as pupils move up the school. This makes it harder than it need be for teachers to pitch work at the right level for their pupils, taking account of the geographical skills they have already learned.

The monitoring and evaluation of work throughout the school

182. The leadership and management of geography is satisfactory overall. The subject leader ensures there is an adequate whole-school plan for the work so that teachers know which parts of the curriculum they should cover in their classes and that there are sufficient resources for them to do so. However, as yet there are limited opportunities for the subject leader to find out about the standards and quality of the work going on all through the school. This means that planning for future development of the subject is not as sharply focused as it might be on tackling aspects of the subject in which there is the most scope for improvement.

HISTORY

183. It was possible to see only one short history lesson during the inspection. This was in Year 5. Judgements are based on a combination of this lesson observation, looking at the books containing work from the previous school year and discussions with pupils and staff. In both key stages, standards are broadly average. These standards represent satisfactory achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Standards are similar to those achieved at the time of the last inspection.
184. The main strengths are:
- some good, imaginative teaching;
 - the development of pupils' research skills;
 - the lively use of local history.
185. There are some weaknesses in:
- the amount of written work pupils do and the use of ICT;
 - the assessment arrangements;
 - the planning for pupils to develop the other skills they need to use their knowledge fully effectively;
 - the monitoring and evaluation of work throughout the school.
186. For the most part, the weaknesses in history parallel those in geography. However, there are two notable differences. Firstly, there is less use of ICT. Its potential for extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of the historical topics and periods they study and developing their skill at organising and communicating information is not exploited. Secondly, although, as in geography, there is little written record of what they have studied, the work was not so poorly presented.

The quality of teaching

187. Pupils have very good recall of some of the work they have done. This is usually work that had involved them in practical or imaginative activities, such as the drama work on the theme of the Titanic, a joint history and English topic. The methods used in this work were well matched to the pupils' needs and captured their interest effectively. Pupils also recall well the work they have done on the history of Leicester. When they discussed this work pupils revealed a good sense of the past and an ability to put historical events in the proper order. They remembered the 'timelines' teachers had used successfully with them to help them develop this sense of chronology. The lesson seen was on ancient Greece, in particular Greek beliefs and religious practices. The teacher provided a satisfactory range of resources that enabled the pupils to progress in their ability to deduce information from secondary sources and extended their knowledge of this period of history.

The development of pupils' historical research skills

188. Skills in interpreting a range of historical evidence are taught well, especially in Key Stage 2. This enables the pupils to engage profitably in independent research. This is most successful when the resources provided are well matched to the pupils' level of skills in reading and interpreting evidence. While some Year 5 pupils demonstrated a good ability to relate new information they had gathered to what they already knew about the ancient Greeks and their gods, others found difficulty in understanding the information when using the Internet.

Work on local history

189. The study of the history of Leicester caught the pupils' imagination and they remember well the work undertaken as a result of visits to places such as Belgrave Hall. The same was true of some of the work done about World War Two which used accounts from actual people. Both of these topics have given the pupils insights into the past demonstrating how people ought to behave towards each other and how they should not. This supports the school's aims and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and cultural awareness.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

190. Pupils are attaining the standards they should in Key Stage 1 but in Key Stage 2 standards are not high enough. The main reason for this is that, until recently, the resources for teaching and learning were unsatisfactory and teachers lacked the confidence to teach the subject effectively. The quality of teaching is now better and pupils are making gains in their learning at a satisfactory rate in both key stages but the older ones still have some catching up to do. There were weaknesses in ICT at the last inspection. Not enough has been done since to improve standards until very recently.

Standards

191. Standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with those expected for the pupils' age. There was little evidence from last year so there was a limited range of work on which to base judgements. Nevertheless, observation of pupils working with computers and discussions with them indicate that standards of wordprocessing, control and pupils' basic computing skills are where they should be. For example, pupils are familiar with the 'Roamer' (a programmable toy). They successfully plan a series of instructions to make it travel a pre-determined route. In this key stage, pupils use ICT in other subjects. For instance, they work fairly independently on programs that reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. They use the 'mouse' confidently to click on icons and move them purposefully around the screen.
192. Standards in Key Stage 2 are generally below those expected for the pupils' age. This is because, until recently, the school had few computers and some teachers lacked the confidence to teach the subject well. Standards in the control aspect of the subject are unsatisfactory in upper Key Stage 2 because the shortage of resources meant that pupils did not cover the necessary work in previous years. The school is aware that planning now needs to be reviewed to ensure the new resources are used effectively and pupils are enabled to reach the standards they should in this aspect of the subject.
193. However, recent developments have the potential for raising standards:
- the school has recently acquired sufficient desktop computers and a good number of laptops. This means that basic skills in the subject can be taught efficiently to a whole class at once;
 - pupils in Years 5 and 6 now benefit from timetabled teaching sessions in the computer suite. They are getting the 'hands-on' time they need to catch up;
 - teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject has improved. This is because newcomers have good subject knowledge and there has been considerable staff training;
 - the school's plan for improvement includes an appropriate action plan to tackle the weaknesses in ICT and develop the subject.

Teaching and learning

194. Two lessons were observed and the teaching was good in one and very good in the other. The teachers' subject knowledge was good. Both teachers planned the work well to build on pupils' previous learning. In both lessons the very good relationships between teacher and pupils led to good attitudes to the work and the pupils tried hard. Teachers use support staff effectively to help pupils working individually on ICT.
195. In the Year 5 lesson, pupils learned how a design can be created on the screen by combining and manipulating shapes. By the end of the lesson most could flip and rotate shapes so they moved on to learning how to copy and paste and use the edit facility to create multiple shapes.
196. The Year 6 lesson on spreadsheets was linked well to their mathematical work and was one in a series of lessons on the topic. The pupils had to insert information about the length of the sides of rectangles and try to come up with a formula that will automatically calculate the areas of the shapes. Most pupils found this difficult but, because of their interest and good attitudes to the work, they persevered and built successfully on what they already knew.
197. Despite some good examples, such as the Year 6 lesson, ICT is generally not used sufficiently in other subjects. Such work is not planned systematically throughout the school to ensure that it contributes to the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding of ICT and their skills in using it.

MUSIC

198. Pupils reach average standards by the end of Year 2 but standards in Year 6 are below expectations. The main reason for this is that several teachers in Key Stage 2 have limited knowledge of music and some lack the confidence to teach it effectively and pitch work at a high enough level. The subject specialist's teaching is good but she does not have enough time to enable the older pupils to achieve as well as they could. Furthermore pupils undertake only a limited amount of work involving melody. Aspects of the work have improved since the last inspection and standards are now higher in Key Stage 1. However, the standards pupils attain by the time they leave the school are no higher than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in music lessons and supported well so they benefit as much as possible from the work.
199. Attention is given to providing opportunities for pupils to compose music. Consequently, in most classes, standards are higher in composition than in performance. This represents an improvement in composition.
200. In Key Stage 1, standards of singing are satisfactory. Pupils keep in tune when singing in assemblies. Work retained from last year shows that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain an average standard in composing music. They produce simple scores of the music they compose to accompany a poem. These scores show that pupils select percussion instruments thoughtfully to achieve the sound effects they want. A Year 2 lesson was taught very well. The teacher had very high expectations and the subject knowledge and teaching skill to enable pupils to learn well and reach a good standard in composition. They performed a piece they put together as a class and many pupils made good suggestions as to how it could be improved. Year 1 pupils extend their musical skills through dance lessons and most already clap in time to a strong beat.

201. A lesson observed in Year 3, the work retained from last year and the standard of singing heard indicate that, up to Year 4, pupils attain broadly average standards. The Year 3 pupils' composition work is satisfactory. In their lesson, they composed appropriate music to represent different kinds of weather. When they performed their compositions in groups, they had adequate control over the duration of sounds and they co-operated well. In a singing session for all the Years 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher paid good attention to teaching about breath control and the importance of musical phrases in giving shape to a song. The quality of pupils' singing improved in this short session. In this lesson the subject specialist supported the class teachers and played the piano accompaniment. However, the effectiveness of the lesson was slightly diminished because there was no strong model of singing to lead pupils and set a standard for them to aspire to. The Year 4 work from last year shows the pupils had a satisfactory understanding of rhythm and composed reasonably complex pieces with several parts stopping and starting at different points. Pupils achieve well in this aspect of the work, building effectively on the work covered in Key Stage 1.
202. Standards of singing in Years 5 and 6 are below average. A significant minority of pupils show little enthusiasm for singing in assemblies and in joint singing sessions they pay scant attention to their posture even when the teacher stresses its importance. The Year 6 lesson on rhythmic patterns in African drumming was fun and the pupils responded well to this and tried hard. The lesson was very well taught and pupils made very good gains in their learning because the work was demanding for them even though it was at a lower level than expected for their age. By the end of the lesson most pupils succeeded in maintaining their own part in a steady beat as part of a rhythmically complex clapping exercise. The teacher was determined the pupils would achieve. She got them alert by giving a clear focus to their listening and, when she questioned them afterwards, she quickly took the work to greater depth so pupils were stretched. At every stage of the lesson she let the pupils know how well they were doing so they remained motivated.
203. The leadership and management of music are adequate but the stage of development of the subject reflects its lack of priority in the school in recent years. There are no out of school music clubs for talented pupils or those who are enthusiastic about music-making to enable them to go further. There is no systematic check on pupils' attainment and their rate of progress. The subject leader knows what needs to be improved but has had little time to do it. For example, she has not been able to monitor the quality of class teachers' work or help them teach more effectively. There was no evidence of any appropriate use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

204. It was possible to see only four lessons, so overall judgements on standards and the quality of teaching and learning have not been made. In most of the lessons seen the majority of pupils were working at a higher level than expected for their age. This represents good achievement and an improvement on standards at the time of the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning seen varied from very good to unsatisfactory; overall it was good.
205. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in developing their awareness of space, their ability to move sensitively and in time to a variety of music and their control over their movements. The Year 2 pupils are already working at the level expected at the end of the year. In dance they vary the level and speed of their movements, for instance stretching to go up hills and curling up to go down them. In this key stage

teachers use recordings of radio programmes well. They reinforce the instructions and help pupils to work thoughtfully and plan their movements. Their quiet discipline is very effective in ensuring that pupils are very attentive and therefore benefit from the presenters' expertise.

206. The attention to pupils thinking about what they are doing continues in Key Stage 2. Consequently, by Year 6 many pupils' movement is of high quality and they evaluate how well they are performing and strive to improve. For example, in a well organised and briskly paced lesson to develop the skills needed to play basketball, Year 6 pupils practised the passing movements demonstrated by their teacher. As a result of good demonstration and coaching, they developed greater assurance by improving their footwork and grip of the ball. Around a quarter of these pupils have very good games skills. Standards in swimming meet the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2. Around 90 per cent of pupils swim 25 metres unaided.
207. This subject has not been a priority for school development in recent years and the subject leader changed at the beginning of term. Work remains to be done to ensure that the new subject leader knows about standards all through the school and makes a difference to pupils' achievement and that pupils' learning is systematically assessed.
208. There are not enough resources for teaching and learning physical education. There is not enough small apparatus for all pupils in a class to undertake an activity at the same time and the large apparatus in the hall is not suitable for the Key Stage 1 pupils. Plans are in hand to bring resources up to an acceptable level. The physical education curriculum is enriched by regular use of a local outdoor pursuits centre for activities such as canoeing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

209. Two lessons of religious education were observed one in each key stage. The judgements about the subject are also based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils, staff and governors.
210. Standards are in line with expectations for the pupils' age in both key stages. Teaching is good overall and, as a result, a significant number of pupils in each key stage have a good level of religious understanding and awareness. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection and it represents good achievement.
211. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they are enabled to join in fully with all the work.
212. There are strengths in:
 - the quality of teaching;
 - the support provided by the foundation governors;
 - the good planning of work;
 - the monitoring of work all through the school;
 - the subject's contribution to pupils' personal development.
213. There are some weaknesses that inhibit the effectiveness of the good teaching:
 - the lack of systematic whole-school arrangements to assess pupils' learning and their rate of progress;

- too much reliance on discussion at the expense of written work, especially with the older pupils;
- the limited use made of the rich multi-faith and multicultural immediate neighbourhood.

The quality of teaching

214. The teaching is good. The teachers have a good grasp of the subject and they challenge the pupils to think deeply about the topics studied. In Year 5, after thinking about and discussing notable people who regarded their talents as God-given, and thus to be used for the service of others, pupils wrote prayers or poems on the theme. A significant proportion of their writing demonstrated a higher than average level of spiritual and religious awareness. The pupils discussed their writing with a good level of understanding and an engaging matter-of-factness. The pupils in Year 2 knowledgeably and sensibly discussed the relationship between sets of rules by which people live and the Holy Books, such as the Koran, from which they have been derived. They used a very well designed booklet on Islam produced by the teacher as a learning resource.

The support of the foundation governors

215. In this Church of England voluntary controlled school there is a close relationship between religious education and collective worship assemblies. The foundation governors and staff of the local parish contribute significantly to them. Ideas explored in religious education lessons are developed by the local clergy in collective worship to the benefit of both aspects of the school's work.

The planning of work

216. The newly devised whole-school plan for the work is securely based on the local syllabus. It provides the teachers with a good tool for developing the quality of work still further and ensuring that all the required work is covered.

The contribution of religious education to pupils' personal development

217. Religious education makes a very important contribution to the school's very good provision for personal development. All the areas identified in the syllabus of religious education for schools in Leicester are given appropriate weight in the planning and teaching of the subject. The study of religions other than Christianity is handled with care and the pupils are enabled, and encouraged, to be sensitive to the range of beliefs and customs represented in the school and the wider community. The work in religious education plays a significant part in ensuring that pupils develop the ability to work sympathetically with people from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures, some of which are represented in the school community. The pupils also develop their own response to the religious ideas that they study. In many cases these are clearly spiritual in content and deeply felt and they contribute to pupils' growing awareness of, and sensitivity to, what others believe and how they behave as a result of their beliefs. A good and useful link is maintained between the subject and the acts of collective worship. Prayers and other pieces of writing developed in lessons are chosen by pupils to read out in the assemblies.

The assessment arrangements and the monitoring of work

218. At present there are no systematic arrangements for measuring pupils' progress or the standards they achieve. This means teachers cannot be sure how their pupils measure up against the requirements of the syllabus or compared with those in other schools. Furthermore, it makes it harder than it need be to base plans for developing the subject on a full appraisal of which aspects of the school's provision are most and least effective. Nevertheless, the subject leader keeps a sufficiently close watch on what is going on to ensure that the plans are followed. The intention is to use a nationally recognised assessment system. When implemented, this should enable

staff to readily make sound judgements about pupils' progress and set appropriate targets for improvement.

The balance between discussion and written work

219. The quality of discussion is good because this element of the work is taught well. However, written work is an important part of religious education and pupils do not do enough. This reduces the opportunities for them to learn effectively by reinforcing new learning and consolidating what has already been covered and by seeing where they could improve. This has most impact with the older pupils.

The use of the rich resource of the immediate neighbourhood

220. While the school is developing the range of religious artefacts and other physical resources to support religious education, there is proportionately less done to use the rich multi-faith and multicultural human resources of the institutions in the near neighbourhood, apart from the local church. There is a growing collection of objects associated with the study of India which also provides insights into the Hindu and Sikh religions which are studied in the school. Many of these artefacts have been selected by pupils during shopping and study trips to the local shops. This sort of activity could be extended further.