

INSPECTION REPORT

GARDNERS LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHELTENHAM

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 131249

Headteacher: Mr Charles Welsh

Reporting inspector: Mr David Owen - 1957

Dates of inspection: 26 - 29 March 2001

Inspection number: 131249

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gardners Lane Cheltenham Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Jackson
Date of previous inspection:	Cleeve View Infant School: 11 May 1998 Elmfield Junior School: 2 March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
David Owen 1957	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Design and technology.	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements.
Peter Brown 9744	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?
Tom Prosser 22669	Team inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; History; Physical education.	How well is the school led and managed?
Ann Shaw 18524	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage; English as an additional language; Art and design; Music; Religious education.	
Fiona Ruddick 28007	Team inspector	English; Geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well are pupils taught?
Peter Sudworth 2700	Team inspector	Special educational needs; The special educational needs unit; Equal opportunities.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gardners Lane Primary is situated in Cheltenham. With 243 boys and girls on roll, aged four to eleven, it is average in size compared with primary schools nationally. The pupils live in a mixture of council, housing association and privately owned properties. 43 per cent of families are entitled to Income Support and 50 per cent of pupils live in single parent families. Although the range of abilities of the children entering the school is wide, overall attainment is below average on entry. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 34 per cent which is 50 per cent above the national average. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, 1.6 per cent, is average. 44 per cent are eligible for free school meals compared with the national average of 20 per cent. Seven per cent are from ethnic minority families and three per cent speak English as an additional language. There are 22 pupils for every teacher, including the headteacher, which is broadly in line with the average for England as a whole. There is integrated pre-school provision which includes part-time education for twelve children who have special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Gardners Lane Primary is a good school. It is well led and managed and much effort has been put into raising standards in literacy and numeracy. The teaching is good, the pupils learn well and they make good progress in lessons. They have very positive attitudes to school and they are well behaved. There are very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare. Apart from information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are at least average in all subjects. The headteacher, governors and staff are thoroughly committed to further improvement. Pupils of all abilities achieve well despite the above average incidence of special educational needs, the limited support which some parents are able to give their children and unsatisfactory attendance. The school works hard to improve these latter factors and has established good relationships with the parents. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management is good and these factors contribute well to the pupils' achievement.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and it is very good in the Foundation Stage. As a result the pupils learn well and their attitudes to school are very good.
- The school makes excellent provision for the pre-school pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils of all abilities achieve well throughout the school.
- There is an extensive range of learning opportunities with good attention to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour.
- The school links very effectively with parents and keeps them well informed.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2.
- The extent to which pupils carry out investigations and personal and group research.
- The role of curriculum managers. [This is already in the school improvement plan].
- The attention given to subjects other than English, mathematics and science.
- The organisation and administration of special educational needs.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Following inspections of Cleeve View Infant School in May 1998 and Elmfield Junior School in March 1998 there was a successful amalgamation to form Gardners Lane Primary School. Bearing in mind that it is less than three years since the previous inspections the school has made good progress in addressing all the key issues. In particular, teaching has improved and the school has continued to raise standards of attainment. There is now more challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Assessment procedures have been improved and the school has produced guidance for parents on how they can best support their children's learning. The work of subject managers has improved, most noticeably in English and mathematics, where teaching is now monitored throughout the school. However, there is still room for improvement in the co-ordination of other subjects. The provision for information and communication technology in Key Stage 2 remains a weakness and the pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities to research and investigate.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

In 2000, in comparison with schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools, the results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below average in mathematics. Compared with those found nationally, results were also well below average in English and science. However, in comparison with similar schools the results are average in science and below average in English. Inspection findings indicate that as a result of good leadership, effective organisation and good teaching standards are now rising very rapidly in Key Stage 2. The school achieved the target in English which it set for the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000. However, it did not achieve the standard specified for mathematics. It is typical of the school that there was a very rapid analysis of the reasons for this, which has resulted in a particular emphasis on written problems and the speed of mental calculation this year. As the school has been in existence for only two and a half years it is not possible to compare its rate of improvement in standards with schools nationally. However, over the last two years there has been a considerable improvement in the schools' results at the end of Key Stage 1. Although in 2000, these were below average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics, in all three cases they were well above average when compared with similar schools. Standards have also risen in science and the results were average as measured by the teachers' National Curriculum assessments.

With the very good teaching which they receive and the good progress which they make, most children in the Foundation Stage will reach the nationally specified standards in six areas of learning by the time they are five. This will represent very good achievement for many of these pupils in the context of their below average attainment on entry to the school. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the achievement of all pupils, including the most able, is good. In most subjects they reach the standards expected by the ages of seven and eleven. The only exceptions are mathematics, where standards are above what is expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1, and information and communication technology where standards are below the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2. Lack of inspection evidence made it impossible to judge standards in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils are very enthusiastic. They are interested and involved in their lessons and other activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils are well-behaved in lessons and as they move about the school. There is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and the pupils are very courteous. They show a good understanding of how their actions affect other people. However, a lack of opportunities means that they do not show initiative to any great extent.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The attendance rate is well below the national average and unauthorised absence is high. This is due, in the main, to the frequent absence of a small group of pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and as a result the pupils learn well. 97 per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better with 71 per cent of it good or better. 36 per cent was very good or excellent and 3 per cent was unsatisfactory. The teaching is consistently very good in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teaching is at least satisfactory, and often good, in all subjects; it is good in English and mathematics, where the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Science, religious education, and physical education are taught well throughout the school. The teaching of history, music, and art and design is satisfactory. It was not possible to make valid judgements about the quality of teaching of information and communication technology, design and technology or geography.

The teaching has many strengths. For example, the teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and the quality of the pupils' work. Their subject knowledge is good and they manage pupils well. As a consequence pupils understand the work they are doing, they have very good attitudes to learning, they behave well and they acquire new skills and knowledge effectively. The pupils with special educational needs are very well taught in the Foundation Stage and well taught in the rest of the school. In English and mathematics the more able pupils are very well taught. A weakness in the teaching is the fact that the pupils are only given limited opportunities to carry out personal and group research. Whilst time is generally used well, in Key Stage 1 there is inconsistency in the time that lessons start after the morning break.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Mostly satisfactory at Key Stage 2 but the information and communication technology curriculum is not fully covered. Although the good provision for English and mathematics is having a positive effect on standards there has been insufficient attention to developing other subjects. There are very good relationships with other schools and colleges.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for pre-school pupils with special educational needs. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, whilst the management of the provision is satisfactory overall and the pupils are well taught, there are weaknesses in organisation and administration.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school supports these pupils effectively. They are well taught and they make good progress throughout the school. Their achievement is good and they attain appropriate standards.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. However, there is a lack of planned opportunities for pupils to appreciate cultural diversity within Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall, with very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and for promoting good behaviour. There are very good arrangements for child protection.

The parents and carers have a very positive view of the school. The school has very effective links with them, providing very good information about the children's progress and the curriculum. Voluntary helpers in school make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and the school works very hard to involve parents in their children's work. However, some parents do not give sufficient support to their children as they learn at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership and clear educational direction. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team. The subject managers for literacy and numeracy give good leadership but the work of other subject managers is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide good support. They help to shape the work of the school and, apart from not ensuring a full curriculum for information and communication technology, statutory duties are fulfilled. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Very effective action is taken to set targets for improvement. There is a very strong, shared commitment to improve. There are good arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of teaching in English and mathematics but this is much less well developed in other subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses financial and other resources well. An appropriate set of educational priorities is supported through sound financial planning. Good day-to-day administrative procedures are in place. The principles of best value are applied well.

The systems for inducting new members of staff are good. The strengths of the teaching and non-teaching staff are very well matched to the needs of the school. Members of the non-teaching staff make a significant contribution to the life of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good quality of the teaching, and the fact that pupils are expected to work hard. • The school helps their children to become more mature. • Their children are making good progress and they like school. • The children are well behaved. • The school is led and managed well. • The school works closely with parents. They are kept very well informed and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is inadequate provision for homework. • The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside of lessons.

The inspectors' judgements support the parents' and carers' positive views. No evidence was found to substantiate the concerns of a minority of parents. Homework makes a good contribution to the progress made by pupils and the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The children entering the school have a wide range of abilities but their overall level of attainment is below average. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good overall and consequently the children make very good progress. By the age of five the majority of the pupils in the Reception class will achieve the nationally specified Early Learning Goals, in the six areas of learning. Overall, standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection. The pre-school pupils with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage make very good progress.

2. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 7 were below average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics in relation to all schools nationally. However, when compared to similar schools the results were well above average in each case. Although a below average proportion achieved the higher level in reading and writing, an above average proportion achieved this level in mathematics. The teachers' assessments in science in 2000 indicated average attainment, although a below average percentage reached the higher level.

3. When compared with schools nationally, the 2000 test results for Year 6 pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below average in English, mathematics, and science. In comparison with similar schools the results were below average in English, well below average in mathematics and average in science. The proportion achieving the higher level was well below average in English and science and very few achieved this level in mathematics.

4. As the school has been in existence for only two and a half years it is not possible to compare its rate of improvement in standards with schools nationally. However, there have been substantial improvements over the last two years in the National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have also risen in science as measured by the teachers' National Curriculum assessments.

5. In the Foundation Stage the children achieve very high standards in relation to their abilities. Overall achievement at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is judged to be good. This is attributable, in the main, to the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage and the good teaching throughout the rest of the school. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are now rising very rapidly in Key Stage 2. This has come about because of a number of factors including improvements in the quality of teaching, a specific school emphasis on literacy and numeracy, extra classes for pupils in Year 6, setting arrangements for pupils in the same year, and the effective introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. Underpinning these factors is the very good leadership provided by the headteacher, the senior management team, and the good contribution made by the subject managers for English and mathematics. A constraining factor on achievement at both key stages is the fact that not all parents are able to support their pupils fully at home.

6. The school analyses test results on the basis of gender and, whilst there have been no significant differences in English and mathematics at either key stage over the last three years, the

boys have performed less well than girls in science at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is seeking to improve the attainment of boys by using sport to motivate them.

7. The school sets itself targets in English and mathematics, based on the predicted performance of each pupil by the end of Key Stage 2. The school achieved the target for English, which it set for itself in 2000. However, it did not reach the specified target for mathematics. An analysis of responses to the test papers and the use of other test materials revealed that last year's candidates were weak at written problems and were not fast enough when calculating mentally. The school has successfully focused on these two aspects of the mathematics curriculum during this year.

8. As judged during the inspection, the pupils at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 reach standards in line with the national expectations, for seven and eleven year-olds, in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Standards are also average in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 although they are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. This discrepancy is due to the fact that very considerable changes in the teaching of the subject throughout Key Stage 2 have not yet had time to make a full impact at the end of the key stage. The school also has a well above average proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register and this inevitably has an impact on the standards achieved.

9. In science the standard of work is in line with what is expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Standards are in line with expectations in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 1 but they are below average at the end of Key Stage 2 mainly because the pupils do not have access to the full range of the information and communication technology curriculum. Both seven year-olds and eleven year-olds reach standards in religious education that are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

10. By the end of both key stages the pupils' attainment in art and design, geography, history, music and physical education are in line with expectations. This is also true of design and technology at the end of Key Stage 2. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards of attainment in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 1.

11. The school has improved standards of attainment in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. At the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the standard of the pupils' work is now better in science. Standards have also improved in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, and in history and music at the end of Key Stage 2. However, in information and communication technology standards have declined at the end of Key Stage 2.

12. Pupils on the special educational needs register have varying degrees of difficulties. Their literacy and numeracy skills are below average and sometimes well below and a few have combined learning and emotional/behavioural difficulties. At both key stages most of the children make good progress in their learning and their achievement is high because of the well targeted teaching which matches their prior attainment. Boys and girls, the higher attaining pupils, and those with English as an additional language achieve well.

13. In the Foundation Stage the children develop some of the skills necessary to learn to read. They understand the parts of a book and read stories together with the teacher. They make good progress in their understanding of number and can count ducks out of a bowl of water. They design and make curtains for a baby's nursery, they compose lullabies, and draw maps to show the way to school. They become increasingly skilled in physical activities, such as dancing, and in painting, cutting and sticking.

14. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to read from books of an appropriate level of difficulty with some confidence, and they are able to work out unfamiliar words by sounding out the letters. In Key Stage 2, they enjoy using technical vocabulary specific to a subject and, by Year 6, many are mature writers. They can confidently produce a diary for Lady Macbeth ! By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are reaching above average standards in mathematics when, for example, they tackle written 'problems'. By the age of eleven standards are in line with the national expectation. However, many pupils are particularly skilled at calculating mentally. The more able, for example, deal confidently with equations such as $59=5x + 14$ in their heads.

15. The pupils' work in science is characterised by careful observations and appropriate attention to fair testing when carrying out experiments. In Key Stage 1 they compare themselves with baby visitors to the class and in Year 6 they have a clear understanding of the link between producers and consumers in relation to a food chain. Key Stage 1 pupils begin to use appropriate technical language, in information and communication technology, such as mouse, files, font and keyboard. However, by the age of eleven standards are below average because pupils have not been taught some aspects of the subject including the use of e-mail, the Internet and control technology. Furthermore, in Key Stage 2, information and communication technology is not used well to support learning in other subjects. In Key Stage 1 pupils understand some of the symbols used in Christianity, Islam and Judaism. By the end of Key Stage 2 when they talk about religion, they express their views with maturity and confidence.

16. In Year 2 the pupils use information and communication technology well to create intricate patterns and designs in art. In Year 3 the pupils have made sculptures to improve the school environment. Key Stage 1 pupils show appropriate skills in design and technology, as they modify their designs subsequent to their own evaluations. By the time they reach Year 6, they show a mature approach to the subject, as they construct models of temples using mainly everyday household materials. By the age of seven many pupils can successfully compare the area in which they live with a contrasting one, and in Key Stage 2 some carry out independent research in geography. However, these skills are not well developed in all pupils mainly because of lack of opportunity. The pupils in Key Stage 1 can recall details about changes that have taken place in the home since Victorian times. In Key Stage 2 they develop a satisfactory understanding of other periods including the Romans and the Ancient Greeks.

17. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn to recognise the lengths of sounds and use their voices to represent time patterns. This is extended in Key Stage 2 to an understanding of pulse, rhythm and beat. Year 2 pupils can bounce a ball with accuracy as they move around, and a few can bounce a ball with either hand. By Year 6, they can make appropriate use of their skills of throwing, bowling and catching in a cricket activity.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils, within all age groups, display very positive attitudes to school in general and learning in particular. In class they are enthusiastic and they constantly seek opportunities to demonstrate newly acquired skills and knowledge. They are keen to participate in planned activities whether of a curricular or extra-curricular nature. They are committed to their own self-development and most are aware of their own personal improvement targets.

19. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are good and, when the quality of teaching is particularly high, behaviour is frequently very good. Pupils listen attentively and display courtesy to fellow pupils, adults and visitors alike. Disruption to lessons is rare and, in the few instances which

were observed, teachers responded quickly and effectively. Noise levels in class rarely rise above acceptable levels, providing an appropriate environment in which learning can take place. Behaviour in the playground is good, with pupils spending their time purposefully and with full regard to the needs of others. There were no observed cases of bullying, sexism or racism, or any other form of oppressive behaviour. Pupils display a good understanding of the impact that their actions have on others, and they also show respect for the values and beliefs held by fellow pupils. During the last year three boys have been excluded, on two separate occasions, for short periods of time.

20. Although the pupils with special educational needs often have good attitudes to work there are a small number who exhibit behavioural problems and who lack perseverance and concentration. They are well managed by the teaching staff and learning support workers.

21. Relationships between pupils are good and they work constructively together. They relate with ease and comfort to both teaching and non-teaching staff, which provides a good basis for both academic and social development. They evaluate the work of themselves and others capably. For example, in a Year 6 physical education lesson pupils were able to judge the performance of others with perception and sensitivity. The pupils respond satisfactorily to a limited range of opportunities to display independence, initiative and responsibility. Many of these opportunities are simple tasks such as taking a register to the secretary. However, the recently formed School Council is providing a useful opportunity for pupils to develop higher levels of personal responsibility and initiative.

22. School attendance, although improving, is not yet satisfactory, and still falls significantly below the national average. The overall level of attendance at the school is adversely affected by a minority of pupils who are not yet responding to the positive initiatives being implemented by the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1. It is now good overall, very good in the Foundation Stage, and good in each of the other two key stages. In the Foundation Stage all of the teaching was very good or better with, 17 per cent of it outstanding. In Key Stage 1, all teaching was satisfactory or better, 50 per cent good, 28 per cent very good and 6 per cent outstanding. In Key Stage 2, a very small percentage, 5 per cent, was unsatisfactory, 38 per cent satisfactory, 38 per cent good and 19 per cent very good.

24. The teaching of the basic skills of English and mathematics is very good in the Foundation Stage and good in the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has put a great deal of energy and in-service training into improving the teaching of literacy and numeracy over the last two and a half years and this has proved effective in raising standards in each of these two subjects. There has been a concentrated effort in teaching letter sounds and how they blend together. As a result, most pupils' reading ages have increased beyond initial expectations. Writing skills have been improved and this is noticeable in the quality of work in Years 2 and 6 in the period leading up to the national tests. Many in Year 6 use a considerable depth of language to make their work more interesting and perceptive. Similarly, in mathematics the teaching of numeracy skills in line with the National Numeracy Scheme has improved standards over the last two years, particularly for the upper junior pupils. Pupils in Year 6 who are identified as having particular skills in mathematics are provided with extra lessons to enable them to extend their ability well beyond the expectations for their age group.

25. During the inspection the quality of teaching was generally good in religious education and in science. In physical education teaching in the majority of lessons was good or very good but occasionally it was unsatisfactory. The teaching of history, music, and art and design is satisfactory. It was not possible to make valid judgements about the quality of teaching in information and communication technology, design and technology or geography.

26. The management of pupils is often outstanding in the Foundation Stage, generally very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. This results in very little inappropriate behaviour which might distract other pupils and slow the pace of learning. It provides an atmosphere in which all pupils can learn effectively. The teachers in the Foundation Stage have a very good knowledge of the requirements of that age group and this is one of the strengths of the school.

27. The quality of teaching for children with special educational needs in the Foundation Stage is very good and it is good elsewhere in the school. As a result, these pupils make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and good progress throughout the rest of the school. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 teachers make particularly good arrangements to match the work to the pupils' capabilities in literacy and numeracy. The learning support workers have good skills. They are used well throughout the school to give pupils appropriate guidance. They work to very good effect with small groups and individuals. The pace of their lessons is brisk and purposeful and the pupils make good progress in these sessions.

28. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are taught well in very small groups in the early stages. Continuing support is provided as the need arises thereafter. These pupils make very good progress at first and good progress as they move up through the school.

29. Many children under five come into the school with skills below those expected for their age. Because of the very good teaching in the Foundation Stage, the children learn very well and make very good progress. The good quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 sustains good progress through the school, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In Years 5 and 6, there is a good level of challenge for higher attaining pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy. In subjects other than English and mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

30. In most lessons, pupils apply themselves well, finish the tasks set and produce a pleasing volume of work. Homework is often well used to consolidate learning particularly in Years 2 and 6. Planning is generally sound which helps lessons to flow smoothly. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject they are teaching. This enables them to ask questions which challenge the pupils and make them think more deeply about their answers. Pupils in some lessons are encouraged to research their work from reference books in the library or other sources, but lack of access to the Internet limits what they can find out. Most of the time pupils work to instructions from the teacher. This is usually well done but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn to work independently.

31. In English, mathematics and science tasks set for each group mostly take into account what the pupils can already do. However, in some of the other subjects, all pupils attempt the same task. This is appropriate when the task is sufficiently open, so that pupils of all abilities can show what they know and understand. Otherwise, the activities may be too easy for some or too difficult for others and their progress is consequently limited.

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

32. Overall the curriculum is sound in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and it has improved since the last inspection. However, in Key Stage 2 not all aspects of information and communication technology are covered. This apart, the provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and, for religious education, it is in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Statutory requirements with regard to daily acts of worship are met. The school provides a very good curriculum for the Foundation Stage.

33. In recent years, the school has successfully focused on raising standards in English and mathematics and the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been implemented well. However, other subjects have been given less time as a result of this emphasis. This is now being reviewed to allow pupils to develop and expand in a wider sphere. Each subject has an appropriate policy statement. There are schemes of work and lesson planning is based on these. However, this does not always work well at the moment since there is unnecessary repetition of work in information and communication technology, history and music.

34. Some pupils are withdrawn from their classes on a regular basis, for extra support in literacy or for music tuition, and miss out on lessons in some subjects as a result. At times in Key Stage 1, the drinking of milk takes too long which results in the loss of valuable teaching time. Apart from the problems caused by withdrawal, the pupils with special educational needs have a suitable range of curriculum opportunities. In lessons, work is usually well matched to pupils' capabilities. However, the special educational needs policy does not adequately reflect current arrangements and procedures, and it is insufficiently detailed.

35. The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for children under five years of age in most areas of the curriculum but there is insufficient facility for outdoor play. For pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 there is a good range of different activities, both in and out of the classroom. In Key Stage 1, pupils have the opportunity to use the nearby college of higher education facilities for swimming and gymnastics. For pupils in Years 3 to 6, there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities including choir, netball, rugby, football and gardening. Violin and recorder lessons are provided and, at the pupils' request, instruments for a proposed guitar club have been purchased. For Year 6 pupils, after-school sessions are run each week to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.

36. The school provides a good level of personal, social and health education. The policy on sex education is well established and Year 6 pupils have recently been doing a project on drug abuse, with considerable input from a local consultant. Members of staff have training every year on drug awareness and this adds to the depth with which it is handled in school. Each class has time set aside to discuss any problems the pupils may encounter like bullying or wider issues such as drinking and driving.

37. The school has very good relationships with other primary and secondary schools in the area and particularly strong links with the nursery which shares the same campus. A scheme has been devised to share facilities with other primary schools, for example information and communication technology suites which this school does not have. Students from the secondary school and a local independent school come for work experience which gives pupils a valuable opportunity to meet and mix with a wide range of young people. There are strong links with the wider community. The local

vicar visits the school regularly and, in an interesting project, the pupils have designed a new playing field area. Local people who might be affected by this were invited to come to school to discuss the pupils' plans. This gave pupils a valuable opportunity to mix with a wide variety of people, to put forward their point of view and to listen to that of others. The pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to talk to members of the police, fire and ambulance services which helps them to become aware that they are part of the whole community and that they have rights and responsibilities.

38. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their spiritual development is fostered well in assemblies and in lessons by the provision of many opportunities for them to appreciate and reflect on the complexities of the world. For example, Year 2 were amazed to learn that tadpoles sometimes eat other tadpoles. Good attention is paid to the pupils' moral development in all school activities, and most pupils are well aware of the effects their actions may have on others. The pupils in Year 5 have produced some thoughtful work on the concept of 'Friendship'. School performances, the choir and class activities all allow pupils to mix with each other and to listen with respect while others speak. The provision for the pupils' social development is also good and is strengthened, for example, by mixing with a wide range of people who come into the school on a regular basis. The provision for cultural development is sound overall. In art the pupils learn about the work of famous artists, and the understanding of Year 6 pupils was fostered well when they visited a local theatre for a day to take part in workshops and see behind the scenes. At both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils learn something of other cultures in religious education. This is given extra impact by giving pupils who belong to faiths other than Christianity a chance to speak from first-hand knowledge. Although this work illustrates the fact that Britain is a multi-cultural community this aspect of cultural development is not emphasised sufficiently throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. Overall the school takes good care of its pupils. Detailed health and safety procedures have been established and these are closely monitored by the premises sub-committee of the Governing Body. A detailed written policy fully complies with statutory requirements, providing information concerning responsibilities and procedures for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and adults. Regular safety inspections are carried out, and risk assessments undertaken when significant hazards are identified. Appropriate procedures are in place for the reporting and investigation of accidents. Teachers are fully aware of health and safety implications, and there is a strong emphasis on these in physical education lessons; for example, the potential hazards arising from the lifting and movement of equipment are clearly explained to pupils.

40. Procedures for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the member of staff with designated responsibility, and all teaching staff have received training in the procedures. A comprehensive child protection policy has been drafted which provides practical advice for members of staff. The procedures are effectively underpinned by close liaison with appropriate external agencies, including Social Services.

41. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. A part-time attendance officer monitors attendance throughout the school on a daily basis, and identifies pupils with a high absence record and those for whom an adequate explanation for non-attendance is lacking. Follow-up telephone calls are made to parents or carers and, where necessary, letters are dispatched highlighting the particular problem. An education welfare officer visits the school twice weekly and, in appropriate cases, makes personal visits to the child's home. A weekly attendance analysis is prepared which is used as a basis for monitoring progress and initiating follow-up action. However, as yet these very positive measures have not had a significant effect on overall attendance levels.

42. Procedures for managing behaviour are very effective, providing an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. A detailed behaviour policy has been adopted which clearly explains procedures and stresses appropriately the importance of good behaviour being publicly acknowledged and rewarded. The system of merit marks, leading to house points, effectively promotes good behaviour, and a clear and coherent system of sanctions is applied consistently and is fully understood by pupils. An anti-bullying policy has been prepared which identifies clearly the different forms bullying can take and also explains, in full, procedures to be adopted should a problem arise.

43. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory and the educational and personal support afforded to pupils is good. Teachers are sensitive to their needs and are effective in providing guidance and encouragement. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, as is the use of this information to guide curricular planning. Systems in place to monitor and support pupils' personal development are good, and pupils grow in confidence and independence as a result of the effective support mechanisms in place. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good. Support staff are deployed effectively to assist special educational needs pupils develop to their full capacity. Good arrangements are made to support pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and the school has extra learning support workers for identified pupils. In the Foundation Stage there is an identified learning support worker for pupils with special educational needs, and her work is of very good quality. The records for special educational needs are good in the Foundation Stage but records are not consistently kept of pupils' phonic knowledge and letter blends in Key Stages 1 and 2 for children whose progress is slower than others.

44. Formal assessment tasks are set every half term in English, Maths and Science and in one other subject. The results of these tests are recorded in the teachers' assessment books and this provides an overview of the standards and progress made by all pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school uses a number of external assessments in addition to their own. These include a 'baseline' assessment on entry to the Reception class, optional National Curriculum tests in Key Stage 2 and tests from the National Foundation for Educational Research. An assessment booklet is also used in English and mathematics. The results of these tests, together with those from the statutory tests for seven-year-olds and eleven-year-olds, are closely analysed and the information is used in planning to meet the academic needs of all pupils. Records of individual pupil progress are kept in all subjects and these follow them throughout the school. In this way teachers have a good understanding of the potential of their pupils and plan their work appropriately. Pupils and teachers set targets together and these are reviewed to determine whether the targets have been met. Marking is frequently used well. It is constructive and analytical and it contributes well to the quality of work and presentation, especially in Year 6.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents are very positive in their views of the school. They believe that their children receive a good standard of education and that the school provides very good information about their children's progress and school developments in general.

46. The school has established very effective links with parents, particularly with respect to informal face-to-face contact. Teachers make themselves available immediately before and after the school day, and this ready access is welcomed by parents as an effective means of discussing day-to-day issues.

47. The annual report to parents, issued by the Governing Body, meets all statutory requirements, and provides a very good summary of school activities during the previous academic year. It is well presented, easy to read, and includes an imaginative pen-portrait of each individual governor.

48. The quality of written communication to parents is very good. Reports cover the whole curriculum and provide detailed information on the progress being made and set development targets for the future. They are written in a reader-friendly style and provide a very good basis for face-to-face discussion at parents' evening. Parents attending a fund-raising meeting held during the inspection felt very well informed about the progress being made by their children at school.

49. Parents' involvement in school activities makes a sound contribution to the academic and social development of pupils. Effective help is given in the classroom and with school visits but only by a small minority of the parents and carers. The Parent Teacher Association gives significant and valuable financial help but participation is again limited to a small number.

50. Not all parents provide their children with appropriate support with regard to their learning. Where, however, pupils are given practical assistance with reading and other skills, attainment levels rise. The school is addressing this matter by running open evenings in numeracy and literacy, sometimes in collaboration with other local primary schools. Assistance is given to parents and carers on how to contribute effectively to their children's learning.

51. Arrangements to involve the parents of pupils with special educational needs in the review of individual education plans are inconsistent, and there is not always a shared home/school partnership to tackle the targets on individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school is good. The headteacher, ably supported by his senior management team, provides very clear direction for the work of the school and further improvement. The senior staff and the governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ensure that their work is appropriately focused on raising standards through continuing improvements to the quality of teaching and of pupils' learning.

53. Two years ago the school decided that the main curriculum focus was to be on raising standards in numeracy and literacy. Curriculum managers for English and mathematics have made good use of national initiatives to guide their work and they have been influential in raising standards. They have skilfully advised colleagues on specific aspects of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy.

54. As recognised in the school improvement plan, the role of other subject managers is less well developed. They work conscientiously to support their colleagues, but not all have been able to gain a clear understanding of how well pupils are doing and how well their subject is taught. In particular, the school has not successfully addressed the issue of raising standards in information and communication technology, a weakness identified in the last inspection. Consequently, standards in this subject, by the end of Key Stage 2, are still unsatisfactory.

55. Teaching and standards of attainment are more effectively monitored than was the case at the time of the previous inspection. In literacy and numeracy the monitoring of teaching is good; all teachers are observed termly by the headteacher and the relevant subject co-ordinator. However, very little observation of teaching has taken place in other subjects. All subject managers, as well as the headteacher, monitor teachers' termly planning and evaluate it in relation to the subject schemes of work and policies. Examples of pupils' work are also seen by the subject managers and levels of achievement are discussed at both formal and informal staff meetings.

56. Apart from the fact that the school does not provide all aspects of the National Curriculum for information and communication technology, the Governing Body fulfils all statutory requirements. Since the last inspection, governors have maintained their good understanding of all issues concerning the life of the school. The establishment of a new school through the amalgamation of two schools has been carried out successfully under their guidance. Working with the headteacher, the Governing Body sets realistic targets for the pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests.

57. The governors' strong interest in the school is directed successfully towards ensuring that its mission statement is reflected in its work. Governors have established links with subject managers and regularly visit and work in the school. The dedicated leadership of the chair of governors provides strong motivation for governors to support the school in providing all pupils with good quality education.

58. The leadership of special educational needs is satisfactory overall but there are some weaknesses in administration and organisation. The individual education plans are of good quality in almost all classes and provide precise targets for improvement. However, centrally held individual pupil files are not arranged in date order; there is a lack of written evidence to support reviews and to record progress; targets are not always reviewed on time; and parents are not sufficiently involved in the reviews and in the sharing of targets. The special educational needs governor is well qualified, he is well informed about the pupils on the special educational needs register and he visits frequently. He is aware of the need to be more analytical in monitoring this aspect of the school's work.

59. There are sufficient teachers and learning support workers to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught effectively. A good range of qualifications and experience also contributes positively to the teaching provision. Staffing levels are good for special educational needs. Learning support workers have received a range of appropriate training. They work well in classrooms and make an important contribution to the effective teaching, pupils' progress and the good behaviour observed in lessons and throughout the school.

60. Classrooms have been refurbished very well and new corridors have been built as a result of the amalgamation of two schools just under three years ago. Consequently, the accommodation has improved considerably since the two inspections which took place in 1998. Furniture is modern and generally new, and corridors as well as classrooms are carpeted. There is a library, a room for music and drama and a number of rooms suitable for the teaching of small groups. There are good storage facilities.

61. The surface of the playground undulates, and on wet days does not allow free drainage for water, resulting in puddles which restricts games and other activities. This, together with the lack of immediate access to a field, has a detrimental effect on pupils' physical development. There is also a lack of outdoor provision for the physical development of children in the Foundation Stage. The learning resources have been maintained at a satisfactory level since the last inspections. The school is very clean and tidy so that pupils and staff work in a pleasant environment.

62. Financial planning is sound and is closely linked to the school improvement plan. The latter is good and it is an effective tool for reviewing, maintaining and developing the school; its prime goal is the raising of standards. The staff and governors are appropriately involved in strategic planning. The governors' finance committee works closely with the senior management team to prepare and monitor expenditure very carefully throughout the year, in relation to school needs. The latest audit report in 1999 reported that in general terms the school's financial systems are operating satisfactorily; the recommendations within the last audit report have been carried out. Specific grants are used very effectively, and the headteacher and governors apply the principle of best value when setting priorities and in the purchase of learning resources. The money carried over from the last financial year has been allocated appropriately. Good administrative procedures are in place and the school secretary provides excellent support to the headteacher, governors and the school staff on day-to-day matters. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to raise standards of attainment, improve the pupils' personal development and develop the quality of education the governors, headteacher and staff should improve:
- a) standards of attainment in information and communication technology in Key Stage 2, particularly by ensuring that the pupils:
 - are provided with a full curriculum including the use of e-mail, the Internet and control technology; (Paras. 9, 11, 15, 32, 54, 56, 32 and 138)
 - have proper opportunities to use information and communication technology in other subjects. (Paras. 50, 30, 114, 139 and 147)
 - b) the extent to which pupils carry out investigations and personal and group research. (Paras. 16,30, 90, 114, 126, 128 and 139)
 - c) the role of curriculum managers, as indicated in the school improvement plan. (Paras. 54, 55, 115, 120, 124, 141 and 153)
 - d) the attention given to subjects other than English, mathematics and science by ensuring that each subject:
 - is given a proper allocation of time; (Paras. 33 and 141)
 - is developed progressively throughout the school. (Paras. 33, 133 and 140)
 - e) the organisation and administration of special educational needs by:
 - improving filing systems; (Para. 58)
 - reviewing the targets for individual education plans on time; (Para. 58)
 - keeping written evaluations of the progress the pupils have made; (Para. 58)
 - improve the involvement of parents by sharing targets with them and involving them in the review of individual education plans. (Paras. 51 and 58)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

64. The school should also consider the need to:
- improve attendance. (Para. 41)
 - use teaching time to full effect particularly by making sure that the drinking of milk in Key Stage 1 does not take too much time. (Paras. 34 and 101)
 - ensure that the withdrawal of individual pupils from lessons does not compromise their entitlement to a full curriculum in all subjects. (Paras. 34 and 152)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	32	35	26	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	243
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	107

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	86

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	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	9	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (41)	86 (62)	93 (56)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	15	16
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	24	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (59)	86 (68)	89 (65)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	19	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	9	13
	Girls	16	11	16
	Total	21	20	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	54 (61)	51 (55)	74 (64)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	15	13
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	26	33	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67 (64)	85 (67)	79 (70)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	9
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	3
White	225
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.8
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	121.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.8

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	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	430542
Total expenditure	442306
Expenditure per pupil	1748
Balance brought forward from previous year	92812
Balance carried forward to next year	81048

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	255
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	36	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	44	7	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	48	17	0	1
The teaching is good.	60	38	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	36	6	1	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	6	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	46	44	3	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	47	7	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	38	14	3	10

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

RECEPTION

65. Children are admitted to the Reception class in September. Two thirds have attended the independent nursery attached to the school. The induction period is appropriately short and by the October half term all the children are in school full time. Baseline assessment takes place within the first seven weeks and results show that the majority of children enter with standards of attainment below the expected average.

66. There is a very strong liaison between the school and the Nursery and the children make many visits to the Reception class before they come to school. The Reception teacher also visits the Nursery to meet the children and Nursery staff thereby creating positive and professional relationships. Parents are encouraged to take part in these visits and they are introduced to the school routines and the Foundation Stage curriculum. As a result of these initiatives children settle quickly and happily into the Reception class.

67. The quality of teaching is very good and often excellent, particularly of the basic skills. Children quickly develop very positive attitudes to their learning and make significant progress. The very high standards of teaching in the Foundation Stage is a significant factor in the very good progress made across all the curriculum areas by the children, including those with English as additional language and those children with special needs. As a result it is expected that the majority of the children will achieve the nationally specified Early Learning Goals for the end of the Foundation Stage in all six areas of learning.

68. The reception teacher and the learning support worker are very caring, listening with respect to the children, teaching them to become independent, to behave well and to show concern for others. This is reflected in the very good behaviour that the children show in the classroom and around the school, for instance when they go to and from the daily assembly. The teacher and the learning support worker plan the work in line with the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum and ensure that it is suitable for all of the children whatever their abilities. Continual daily assessment takes place providing information to staff and parents on the social and academic progress of the children. Attainment, especially in language and numeracy is analysed effectively. Resources are satisfactory and are used appropriately to enrich the very good learning that is taking place. Consequently standards have risen since the last inspection. During the inspection some children reached very high standards of attainment in literacy and numeracy.

Personal and social development

69. The children respond very happily and positively to the colourful and stimulating environment that enhances their personal and social development. The teacher values the children's work, encouraging and supporting them so that they persevere with a task until they succeed. As a result the children gain in confidence and self-esteem and become increasingly independent when, for example, they change their clothes for a physical education lesson. The very good teaching, and especially the very high expectations of the teacher and the learning support worker, ensures that the children make

rapid progress in their personal development. It also encourages very good attitudes to all aspects of school, and the children work and play together well.

Communication, language and literacy

70. For the majority of children the standards of attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage are expected to be in line with the Early Learning Goal. This is an improvement since the last inspection when only a few children achieved a similar level. The teacher's exceptional creativity and sense of humour are put to very good use in literacy sessions. The children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, respond enthusiastically to the phonic games and can recognise and name initial sounds and blends. They learn very well, and they understand that words can rhyme. Most children make very good progress and many are beginning to read. The teacher makes very good use of voluntary helpers, including governors and parents who listen to children read on a regular basis. The children are starting to learn library skills and they know the difference between a story and an information book. Some can also name parts of a book, for example, spine, contents, title and index. They learn to select books to take home and are developing a love of reading. The children can hold their pencils correctly writing their names and simple words. The children with special needs make very good progress. The teachers constructive and supportive remarks encourage further development. The computer is used daily to reinforce language and literacy skills.

Mathematical development

71. It is expected that a large majority will achieve an average standard by the end of the Foundation Year. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The children can count to twenty and some can recognise numbers to fifty. They enjoy trying to guess the number held by the teacher and ask detailed questions; for example; 'Is the number odd or even?', 'Can it be counted in tens?', 'Does it come before or after the number?' Very good use is made of the classroom environment to build mathematical vocabulary and understanding. For example, on the number table there are questions such as 'How many corks can you hold in your hand?' 'Can you hold more or less than the teacher?'. The children recognise and name common three-dimensional shapes, they can order and match objects, and are developing a very good understanding of pattern in number. In response to the very good teaching very good progress is made by children of all abilities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. At the time of the inspection the children were learning about 'minibeasts'. They observed and recorded their impressions of a snail with care and painted colourful butterflies, explaining that these animals need sun and rain to survive. They also learnt that plants require soil and water to flourish. They worked very co-operatively, making butterflies using play dough, and learning the names of the parts of a butterfly's body. The teaching is very good. For example, a group of high achieving children were very well supported as they learnt how to control a computerised robot in order to estimate distance and direction. All the children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and the majority will attain the expected standard by the end of the Reception Year.

Physical Development

73. The children make very good progress in their physical skills in response to very good teaching. The majority will meet the Early Learning Goal by the end of the year. They can move and use space appropriately, controlling and curling their bodies in a cocoon shape. They use the soft play apparatus in the nursery room but there is little opportunity to develop their physical skills outside the classroom due to lack of space and resources. In class the children use scissors, pencils brushes and glue very skilfully and with great care.

Creative Development

74. Many very good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their creative abilities through carefully selected games and other resources. The children are very successful at exploring colour, texture and pattern by looking at wallpaper and attempting to reproduce it. They learn a great deal about symmetry when painting butterflies. In music, the children enjoy singing and learn to use percussion instruments to describe the weather, playing in response to a pictorial symbol. Within the classroom the children use their imagination in the role play area, developing their speaking, listening and dramatic skills very well. They learn to communicate and talk about their feelings, for instance when looking at the colours and symmetry of a butterfly's wings. They are very well taught and, as a consequence, they make very good progress in all aspects of creative development. They are on track to reach the appropriate Early Learning Goal by the time they leave the Reception class.

PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

75. The school provides part-time education to twelve pre-school children who have special educational needs and who have been referred mainly by the Health Authority. Most of these children have speech and language disorders or general developmental delay but some also have physical disorders. The children attend the school for a maximum of three sessions each week, but many attend their local playgroup for other sessions. A wide area is served and the children are transported from up to 20 miles away. The children integrate with other pre-school children from the local community.

76. Excellent provision is made for these children within the school's 'Early Years Centre'. This Centre provides for parents and their children from 0-4 years through a wide range of support, including crèche facilities, adult family education, parenting sessions, special therapy, drop-in facilities and 'tiny tots' provision. It is the base for community workers and early learning family support. The nurseries in the centre provide for 90 children between the age of two years nine months and four years.

77. The children are taught by a teacher who is well-qualified for the role. She is supported by an adequate number of well-qualified and experienced staff. The quality of the staff responsible for the children with special educational needs is particularly good.

78. Relationships between the children and the staff are excellent and the children are assured by the calm and well organised unit. They make very good progress because of the consistently very good teaching, which relates to the precise plans drawn up for individual children with special educational needs. For example, one child had difficulty in pronouncing the letter 's' at the end of words. In one session the teacher focused on a specific activity, integrating the child with a few other children to form a small group. The child had to place picture cards, which represented domestic objects into appropriate rooms of a large house represented on a large piece of card. Through careful questioning, for example, "Where are you putting the - ?" the child was repeatedly enunciating the sound 's' as in 'house'. Children who have special difficulties are constantly encouraged to speak by responding to skilful questioning which sometimes requires them to describe what they are doing and to speak in sentences.

79. The school receives good support for planning and activities from speech therapists. The records of the children's progress are thorough, and the filing system ensures a clear view of concerns and progress.

80. The children make very good progress in their personal, physical, creative and social development as a result of the well planned activities. Their behaviour is very good. They are developing a lively interest in story and a small number of children are moving on to a knowledge of letters and letter blends. Each individual is tracked and challenged according to his or her needs. As a result they are constantly engaged in learning either through self-chosen activities or activities in which they interact with an adult. A significantly good feature is the way in which members of staff involve themselves in the children's play to further learning.

81. Planning is good. It is based on national guidance for young children's learning and statements and questions to test the children's success in the activities are an integral part of planning. Each adult is clearly aware of her specific role in the activities.

82. The daily activities are well planned and relate to a theme. Resources are well prepared, set out in advance of the children's arrival, and engage them in a range of purposeful creative, practical and table-top activities. Members of staff intervene well in the children's activities to develop individual knowledge and understanding. As a result, the children's concentration skills and levels of perseverance improve and they are able to sustain their activities and gain the most from them.

83. Story time engages the children's interest, sometimes with practical exemplification, as when the story of 'the five little ducks' is told. Children learn the correct way to hold a book during such activities and appreciate that text carries meaning. They learn to follow a simple story and take much interest in the illustrations, which reflect the story. They learn to count ducks when they are produced from a bowl of water and to determine the number of ducks when 'one doesn't come back'.

84. The children work purposefully and use all their senses when they bake biscuits, count in the spoonfuls of flour and sugar, feel their texture and mix together the ingredients by hand and later observe the change of state.

85. Resources for the children are generally very good and include a generously sized soft play room. However, the lack of computers is a weakness. Within the security of this excellent, well-managed and coherent provision, the children make very good progress, not only in tackling their individual difficulties, but also in their general social development and confidence. The provision produces very good results and is a very good support, not only to the children with special educational needs, but also the whole community.

ENGLISH

86. In the national tests in 2000, the school's results for pupils at the age of seven were below the national average for all schools in reading and broadly in line with this in writing. This represents an improvement from the previous year. In comparison with similar schools, the results were well above average. For pupils at the age of eleven, last year's results were well below the national average and below that of similar schools. This was similar to the results in 1999. However, the standard of the work seen during the inspection is higher than this would indicate and the school is now on track to improve considerably on last year's results. In both key stages the work overall in reading, writing, and oral work, is broadly in line with the expected level for pupils' ages. There is a significant number who are above this level but similarly, there is a sizeable minority who are below. Since the pupils enter the school with standards below the expectation for their age, this represents good achievement at both key stages.

87. Standards in speaking and listening are below average on entry but the pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. By the end of both key stages they are in line with what is expected nationally. In Key Stage 1 most pupils listen attentively to adults and other children in English and in other subjects. They listen carefully in shared reading sessions and make good contributions to discussions about the story. In Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy using technical vocabulary, such as Year 6 pupils who used words specific to both history and design and technology as they designed a model Greek temple. Although there are annual school drama performances, insufficient use is made of drama and role play in the classroom to offer pupils a different way of learning subjects. This gap also limits their progress in speaking and listening.

88. Overall the pupils make good progress in reading. Most pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to read from books of an appropriate level of difficulty with some confidence. Most are able to work out unfamiliar words by sounding out the letters. Many are able to see common patterns of letters within words. Most can understand what they are reading and some begin to make a guess at the meaning of words they do not know. Handwriting and presentation of work is not generally neat and some pupils' letter formation is so small that it is very difficult to read. A minority are able to write long imaginative stories in which there are logical sequences of events. The use of simple punctuation is normally accurate. Some use speech marks correctly and realise that writing in capital letters emphasises the point, as in 'SHUT HER IN PRISON!'. This often adds liveliness and depth to characterisation. However, there is also a minority who can only write a few connected sentences and a few who are still copying sentences. Spelling is not very secure for most pupils and they are not yet using their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to help them with unfamiliar words. Most can spell new words with assistance but lack the confidence to try by themselves.

89. As they move up through the school, pupils' presentation and handwriting improves. By Year 4, many can write arguments for and against an issue, or information about different processes such as bread making. Many in Years 5 and 6 take pride in neat work, which is usually dated and titled, but not all join their letters correctly. In Year 5 some creative work resulted from writing Haiku, poems in the Japanese style, on the theme of Spring. By Year 6, many show a remarkable maturity in their writing. A wide variety of writing is attempted which includes letters, plot summaries, the retelling of stories and book reviews. Some amusing work resulted from a review of the stories of Roald Dahl, which was written to imitate his style of rhyme and rhythm. Interesting 'diaries' cover anyone from the Cyclops to Lady Macbeth. Punctuation becomes more accurate and spelling is recognisable if not always correct. Work shows evidence of planning and drafting before the final edition is produced. Most pupils' work shows good progress from term to term.

90. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements in speaking, listening and reading for pupils in Key Stage 1. The standards are now in line with rather than below the national expectation for the age group. In Key Stage 2 standards have been maintained. The amalgamation of two schools has encouraged more effective continuity for pupils from the start of school to the end of Year 6. The implementation of the National Literacy Scheme has given lessons a better structure. Pupils concentrate on their work more effectively and behaviour in class is always acceptable and often very good. The library area has been greatly improved. It is well set out, stocked with a wide variety of fiction and non-fiction texts and is used regularly, except recently during the flooding of the building. Fiction books are labelled to indicate the degree of difficulty. Each class is timetabled to have library sessions and the pupils are taught how to research information. Most pupils in the upper juniors can use the Dewey system to find books they want. However, pupils are given few opportunities to apply these research skills in other subjects.

91. The quality of teaching is good overall. Fifteen lessons were observed of which all were satisfactory or better. In 33 per cent the quality of the teaching was very good or, in one case, outstanding. Where teaching is most successful, lessons start briskly so that pupils' attention is immediately engaged. Sound planning ensures that the lesson flows smoothly with an appropriate balance of teacher in-put to pupil activity. Class management and control eliminates distracting behaviour and pupils have a good atmosphere in which to learn. This is strengthened by very good relationships between adults and pupils, which helps to give pupils the confidence to answer without fear of ridicule. The use of humour or games often adds to the general enjoyment and makes it easier for the pupils to learn. In many lessons, the teacher shares with the pupils what it is hoped they are going to know by the end and this helps pupils to see the point of the lesson. Also, at the end there are opportunities for them to discuss how successful they have been. This adds to the pupils' sense of achievement and gives the teacher a chance to assess how well the lesson has gone.

92. Where the teacher has good subject knowledge, questions are set at a suitably challenging level and examples of phraseology or sentence construction are given. This extends the pupils' use of accurate language and encourages them to think more deeply. This was seen particularly in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were skilfully led into discussing the problem of drinking and driving and were able to come up with some very mature reflections on this important issue. Good use is sometimes made of the pupils' own background knowledge to add to their understanding. An example of this in Year 2, was the comparison of the age of grandparents to that of a fully grown oak tree. The work set in class for each group usually matches what they already know and the time given to complete it is realistic. As a result, all can gain a sense of achievement when the tasks are completed. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to identify what makes a particular piece of writing good and this helps them to improve their own work.

93. There are some weaknesses in lessons that are otherwise sound. Sometimes the pace is inappropriate and the pupils do not learn as well. In some lessons the text the pupils are reading is too small for all to see and they cannot therefore join in. Occasionally, teachers' subject knowledge is insecure and incorrect information is given.

94. The subject is well managed with both subject managers having a clear view of what is being done now and what needs to be done in the future. The National Literacy Scheme has helped the school to focus on areas which need further development, particularly in Key Stage 2. The monitoring of teaching and planning is good, extra classes contribute well to raising standards in national tests, and assessment arrangements are good with appropriate records kept. Individual targets help to ensure good progress in reading. An effective analysis of national tests helps to pinpoint areas which need attention. History, religious education and geography are used particularly well to support the pupils' learning in English. However, information and communication technology is used in a very limited way to support progress in literacy.

MATHEMATICS

95. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 were above average in comparison with all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. An above average proportion achieved the higher level 3. The results at the end of Key Stage 2 were well below average in comparison with all schools and in comparison with similar schools. Very few pupils reached the higher level 5.

96. The Key Stage 1 results show a substantial improvement compared with 1999 and inspection evidence strongly suggests that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is now showing a big improvement. A small number of pupils may well achieve level 6 in the National Curriculum tests this year, which represents exceptional achievement. A number of factors are responsible for the raising of standards in mathematics. The school has placed a heavy emphasis on the subject and it is very well led by the two subject managers. They have given good support to their colleagues in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The subject is well taught throughout the school and teaching is sometimes very good in Year 6. In addition to the 'booster' classes provided by all schools, there are after-school sessions for Year 6 pupils to improve their attainment and a setting arrangement on one day per week enables one of the subject managers to teach the most able group of Year 6 pupils. Finally, homework is used well to support the progress of pupils of all abilities.

97. Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils are currently reaching above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. In both key stages the pupils conduct investigations and carry out practical work satisfactorily and the majority have an appropriate understanding of the mathematical content of lessons. They carry out mental and written calculations well. Throughout the school, pupils use a range of strategies when they calculate in their heads and they can often explain the methods they use.

98. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have a good understanding of the number system. They appreciate how two-digit numbers are recorded and they know addition and subtraction facts up to 20, with some knowing facts beyond this. They recognise numerical patterns and use these to help them carry out mental calculations. They can identify whether they need to add or subtract when they are given a written 'problem'. They appreciate the connection between doubling and halving. They can deal with 'equations' involving addition and subtraction. The more able have no difficulty in finding what number should be in the box in $9+6+\square=18+2$. They can also work out what operation \square represents in $4 \square 1=3$. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils have a satisfactory repertoire of strategies to employ when carrying out calculations mentally. These strategies are supported by appropriate factual knowledge; for instance what happens when a decimal number is multiplied or divided by 10 or 100. The more able can deal with equations such as $3x - 14=22$ comfortably in their heads. Most of the Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of relationships in number; for example, they know the connections between fractions, decimals and percentages. The pupils generally use their knowledge effectively; for example, to calculate complex areas. At the end of both key stages the pupils have sound knowledge of the measures, data handling and shape.

99. The quality of teaching is good and often very good in both key stages. Consequently pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers make good progress in lessons. Most of the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. They have appropriate expectations of the pupils and they know their capabilities well. These factors enable them to prepare appropriate activities which motivate the pupils, generate enthusiasm and facilitate their developing knowledge and understanding. The teachers ensure that there is a good balance between teacher-directed and practical activities and they encourage the pupils to use and explain their own methods, particularly when calculating mentally. As a consequence the quality of learning is good in most lessons in both key stages, and the pupils respond well to the genuine interest and respect which the teachers show them.

100. In the best lessons, through skilled questioning, observing and listening, the teachers find out what the pupils know, and then use this information as a starting point for further teaching in order to take the pupils' thinking forward. Learning support workers are used well to support groups of pupils

and individuals in lessons. This includes the good support given to the pupils with special educational needs.

101. The effective use of resources is a major feature of mathematics teaching, as are the planning and preparation of lessons. This good organisation ensures that little time is wasted. However, the start of lessons in Key Stage 1 is sometimes delayed as the pupils take a long time to drink their milk after morning break. Information and communication technology is used to some extent, with particularly good use of calculators in Year 6. The pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to work in response to effective class management - a universal element in mathematics lessons.

102. A particularly good feature of some lessons is the way in which teachers pay attention to the pupils' thinking; they celebrate it, reinforce it and encourage pupils to share their thinking with others. This contributes, not only to learning, but also to the pupils' confidence. The subtle use of language when talking to the pupils sometimes encourages them to try harder. For example in one lesson for Year 3 the teacher not only said 'well done', she also said 'that was a good strategy'. This clearly identified 'strategies' as the important element and the pupils were well aware that they were to think in that lesson! In a lesson for higher attaining pupils in Year 6 the teacher encouraged the pupils to use their own methods whilst at the same time stipulating that the methods should be logical. The response of the pupils was good with one saying, for example, 'We could put those two right angled triangles together and then find the area of the rectangle that they make'.

103. In some lessons the teachers motivate the pupils by making the mathematics meaningful and interesting. This includes, for example, considering the practical difficulties in carpeting a room which mean that just finding the area of the room is not usually sufficient. The teachers often make good use of investigative methods to help pupils understand standard parts of the mathematics scheme of work. This was seen, for example, in the work of a less able pupil in Year 2 who had been asked to write down as many ways as possible to make 60. Similarly, in a lesson for pupils in Years 4 and 5 the pupils investigated how the perimeter of a shape can remain the same but the area can change.

104. Mathematics makes a good contribution to literacy and the teachers encourage the use of correct mathematical vocabulary. In virtually all the lessons observed, there were good opportunities for speaking and listening and, in many lessons, the pupils were required to make sense of text. In Year 6 one boy noticed a 'red herring' in a question the teacher had written on the board; this was the redundant phrase underlined here 'Miss M. wants to replace her carpet and has seen a beautifully patterned carpet at £10.45 per square metre'.

105. Good attention is given to the teaching of numeracy and the teachers successfully develop the pupils' skills in mental calculation. They ensure that they teach the pupils specific strategies for calculating and provide good opportunities for them to develop their own methods

106. With the support of the subject managers the teachers are using the National Numeracy Strategy well. There is very effective monitoring of standards and of teaching through the observation of lessons, comprehensive assessment and recording systems, the analysis of results and examinations of teachers' planning.

107. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Standards of attainment have risen at the end of Key Stage 1 both in relation to inspection evidence and in relation to National Curriculum test results. Although the test results in 1999 and 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2 were not as good as those found in 1998 inspection, evidence clearly indicates that the school has been very successful in raising standards this year. They are at least as good as the standards reported in the last inspection.

SCIENCE

108. In 2000, the teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicated that standards in science reached by seven-year-olds were close to the national average at level 2 but well below in relation to those reaching the higher level of the National Curriculum. The results for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were well below the national average but in line with the average of similar schools. Since the amalgamation in 1999, test results indicate an overall improvement in the standards achieved by the pupils. Standards seen in lessons during the inspection show an improving position. Attainment is now in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages.

109. Standards attained by the ages of seven and eleven are the result of good teaching, and a significant emphasis on observation and accurate recording. Pupils in Year 1 learn about growing plants and after predicting what might happen if growth conditions are varied they observe and record the results of their experiments. The comparisons that pupils in Year 2 have made between themselves and the babies that have visited the class demonstrated not only that they have been very observant, but also that they could use this information to recognise the changes that they have gone through since they were born.

110. The pupils' skills of classification, identification and observation are developed in Key Stage 2. In Year 3, in establishing a fair test, and in Year 5, in work on air, pupils observed and recorded accurately the results and observations made. Good discussions were observed in Year 6 among pupils who were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of a food chain and the link between producer and consumer. Teachers foster pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to science by devising activities where pupils have to share ideas and co-operate to achieve their outcome. For example, in Year 4 pupils have to work collaboratively in investigating friction and in finding how its influence can be reduced. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is demonstrated effectively in their work. During lessons teachers move amongst the groups and use good questioning to check on pupils' understanding.

111. It was reported in the previous inspection that in many lessons, especially with the older pupils teachers did not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to be challenged effectively. This area of concern is being addressed, and throughout the school work at different levels is provided in an effort to challenge the needs of all the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within the classroom. Overall pupils make sound progress in lessons and satisfactory progress by the end of Key Stage 2.

112. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They enjoy lessons, particularly the practical sessions. Teachers plan lessons well and share with the pupils what they want them to learn. This ensures that the pupils are clear what it is they are learning and that they make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding.

113. Pupils' books show appropriate coverage of all aspects of science and presentation is satisfactory. Most books show good progress but this is less evident on the few occasions where teachers use unnecessary worksheets or when pupils copy down the same work. This does not allow teachers to have a clear view of what pupils can achieve and slows down their learning. Marking is not always satisfactory. Few teachers make comments about what pupils need to do to improve their work, or relate the marking to the learning intention for the lesson.

114. Pupils generally make effective use of their literacy and numeracy skills in their scientific work. By the age of eleven pupils take care when recording their observations and measurements and when drawing charts and tables. The use of information and communication technology in science is underdeveloped and is a weakness. Pupils are not often provided with the opportunity to use information and communication technology to help them gather evidence, carry out independent research, or to record their work in the form of graphs and charts.

115. The subject co-ordinator is aware of what is necessary to improve attainment. The scheme of work has been linked to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidance and teachers are beginning to use the expectations written within the scheme to guide their planning and set appropriate standards. Resources are of satisfactory quality, very well organised, and easily accessible to all staff. On-going assessment within the classrooms is sound and the practice of assessing at the end of each term is now established.

ART AND DESIGN

116. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and they are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. There are some colourful displays of art around the school that relate to other subjects, for example in Year 2 information and communication technology is used to create intricate patterns and designs whilst in Year 3 the pupils made sculptures to enhance the school environment.

117. In Key Stage 1 pupils use their observational skills when examining textures and materials. They note the colour and size of different plants and remark upon the rough or smooth feel of the veins and leaves, before making their own leaves using paper, assorted pasta, seeds, tissue paper and glue. Pupils of all abilities work very co-operatively, discussing what they need and how to go about the task. They make satisfactory progress in their artistic knowledge and skills.

118. Sketch books are used on a more regular basis by pupils in Key Stage 2. They produce a variety of drawings and sketches including cartoons. Appropriate links are made with history, such as a Norman fighting scene; in geography good sketches of homes and shelters in many environments are produced by Year 6 pupils. Satisfactory progress is made but the work across the key stage is often marred by poor presentation.

119. Across both key stages the teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good, especially when techniques are explained clearly and expectations are high. In these lessons the pupils learn well and make good progress. Lessons are planned well and resources are organised effectively for the requirements of the tasks set. The pupils are taught to appreciate the works of other artists and this makes a sound contribution to their cultural development.

120. The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily providing advice and ideas to staff where needed. She is in the process of rewriting the policy and scheme of work to link with the advice from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. She would like to base the work on the topics covered during the year. Non-contact time is not provided for the co-ordinator to evaluate work in the classrooms nor around the school. As a consequence her knowledge of the work of her colleagues is somewhat limited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Limited inspection evidence made it impossible to judge standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, based on the one lesson seen, an examination of past work and photographs, and discussions with pupils, the standards attained are as expected for eleven year olds. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection. However, it is not possible to make a reliable judgement on the progress which pupils make as they pass through the school.

122. Work by pupils in Year 3 included an opportunity for them to learn about solid shapes as they deconstructed commercial boxes and then made their own to hold three chocolates. The quality of their work was satisfactory as was that of Year 4 pupils who made purses to clear design criteria. There were indications that the pupils have a sound understanding of the designing, making and evaluating process. Evaluations had, in some cases led to design modifications; one pupil had written 'I liked my design but I had to move the press stud down because it was too far up and the money would fall out'. In Year 6, where pupils were involved in constructing models of Greek temples, there was a considerable range of expertise amongst the pupils but overall standards were in line with expectations.

123. It is not possible to judge the overall quality of teaching but there were some very good elements in the one lesson seen. The teacher encouraged the pupils to make decisions and interacted with the pupils very well. This involved questioning, listening, supporting, advising and instructing in order to take the pupils' thinking forward. At times the whole class was appropriately drawn together to consider a particular point, such as how to make a 'column' made of straws and elastic bands stronger. The management of the pupils, and consequently their behaviour, was exemplary.

124. The subject manager is able to perform her role in only a limited way because of the school's priorities to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. She is not able to monitor the quality of teaching and learning but nevertheless she does have some knowledge of what happens in design and technology throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

125. Standards of work by the age of seven and eleven are broadly in line with the national expectation for the age groups and all pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject. By the age of seven many pupils are able to see the main differences between the area in which they live and a contrasting one, for example the imaginary Isle of Struay. They can identify, partly by studying aerial photographs, that Cheltenham is very much more densely populated and has much more traffic. Some attempt to draw maps of Struay but not all can identify different geographical features, such as a beach.

126. By Year 4, many pupils understand the factors which cause settlements to grow up in particular locations. Most can find places on a map using four figure-grid references. They conduct surveys successfully. For example, some pupils conducted a noise survey in the school and were able to link the number of people using an area to the noise level. They were then able to represent their results on a graph to compare different parts of the school. By Year 6, many pupils show a developing maturity in their understanding of geographical concepts. Some good work resulted from the compiling of brochures to attract visitors to an area. Many pupils are able to suggest the various leisure activities which different locations could offer. For example, mountainous or coastal areas. Some carry out independent research when a topic is being studied but these skills are not yet secure in all pupils.

127. Since the previous inspection there have been improvements. Resources, including atlases, globes, aerial photographs and computer software have been purchased. The scheme of work has been extensively altered in line with guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. With the amalgamation of the two schools there is now a clearer view of how to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. Standards of attainment have been maintained.

128. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both of which were in Key Stage 1. It is not therefore possible to judge fairly the overall quality of teaching in the school. Of the two lessons seen, one was good and the other very good. In each a debate was set up very successfully in which each side had to represent either Cheltenham or an island as the best place to live. This exercise proved to be fun and therefore provided a good learning opportunity. However, the noise survey apart, most of the work throughout the school is directed by the class teacher and there are insufficient opportunities for research or for pupils to develop their own initiative.

129. Subject management is sound. There is a good level of collaboration between the two key stages which ensures continuity of learning as pupils move through the school. The two subject managers keep a watchful eye on the weekly planning of each class teacher to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered appropriately. Although there has been little recent training for the staff, the new scheme of work has given the staff more confidence. Formal assessment takes place at least once annually and teachers carry out their own informal assessment on an ongoing basis. There are good cross-curricular links with literacy and mathematics; for example, in the interpretation of graphs. Weather studies provides a good link with science, and in history the pupils use mapping skills in deciding where invaders came from and how towns grow up.

HISTORY

130. Provision for history is satisfactory and attainment by the age of eleven meets the national expectation; an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school. By the age of seven attainment is in line with that expected for the age group, with some of the pupils having detailed knowledge and real enthusiasm for the facts of the topic they are studying. They can recall details about the Golden Hind, the life of Guy Fawkes and the changes that have taken place in the home since Victorian times. History is brought alive in Year 1 by the appearance of a learning support worker dressed as a Victorian maid. The questions formulated prior to the visit and answered by the 'maid' help to enhance the pupils' understanding of the changes that have taken place and how life was in that period. The pupils are able to handle good quality resources and this encourages them to pose questions and stimulates very good discussions.

131. In Key Stage 2, pupils study changes in life-styles through the ages. For example, they look at the Romans in Year 3 and they learn about their food and their way of life. In Year 6 they study Ancient Greece and in assembly these pupils share with the whole school some of the information they have gathered. They present their report on the Greeks in the form of a diary reading, which is supported by the enactment of a sketch. In all classes historical time lines are on display, contributing to numeracy as well as history, and pupils by Year 6 have a sound understanding of chronology. They have a satisfactory sense of past events and societies changing over time and are aware that circumstances in the past are different from their own.

132. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers plan in detail interesting and worthwhile activities for pupils. They are enthusiastic and bring the subject alive. They have satisfactory subject knowledge and lessons are delivered at a brisk and challenging pace.

Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject and the work in their books is generally produced with care.

133. The subject is co-ordinated effectively and there is an appropriate scheme of work and a useful policy. Resources are well organised and storage is good. Good use is made of visits to centres that support learning within the subject. However, there is a danger of repetition of work in the coming school year unless there is a review of the curriculum plan. The co-ordinator evaluates all planning but does not have the opportunity to carry out a periodic monitoring of teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Only one complete information and communication technology lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on this and on evidence from samples of work, displays, plans and school documents, from informal observations, and from discussions with the subject managers, learning support workers, teachers and pupils.

135. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring new knowledge, skills and understanding as they move from the Reception class to Year 2. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is not sufficiently secure across all aspects of the subject and they make unsatisfactory gains in their learning over the course of Key Stage 2. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in Key Stage 1 but have slipped in Key Stage 2. Progress was judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection. National expectations have been raised over the last three years but the school's standards have yet to reflect this.

136. By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils have developed satisfactory levels of mouse control. They know the main function keys on the keyboard and use them and the mouse to control a program. With some help they can type in text and open programs that they want to use. They begin to use appropriate technical language, such as mouse, files, font and keyboard.

137. Younger pupils in the Reception class begin to learn how to control a floor robot making it go forward and backwards by entering a series of commands. In Year 1 pupils use the computer to write captions, to describe artefacts and to present information. Pupils independently use listening centres in literacy lessons, putting in story cassette tapes in and operating the start and eject buttons. Pupils in Year 2 are becoming confident in using a CD-ROM from the Windows menu and can drag an icon with the mouse. Pupils are beginning to use information and communication technology to record information in the form of graphs and charts and they use paint programs to create their own pictures. The use of computers to enable pupils to explore aspects of real and imaginary situations is underdeveloped. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress.

138. By the age of eleven standards are below average. In word processing pupils reach the expected standard and the digital camera is used well by pupils. However, other aspects of their work are significantly less well developed. Pupils in Year 6 do not have the necessary skills and knowledge because they have not been taught systematically. The teaching of word processing and simple programming is established, and this is leading to some improvement in standards in these areas. Very little evidence was found of spreadsheets being used. There is little use of databases, of the more advanced features of the word processor or of software to operate small devices through the control box. Overall, there are too few opportunities to use information and communication technology to create and investigate patterns, explore simulations, create and interpret information, communicate electronically, capture data and present work in the most effective way. Standards in all these areas are lower than they should be. The progress that pupils make within this key stage is unsatisfactory.

139. Where computers are used to support learning in other subjects the level of competence is satisfactory. However, the use of information and communication technology in this way is at a low level. During the inspection no pupils were observed using information and communication technology to carry out any research work in relation to their assignments or interests. This is an area that is underdeveloped throughout the school.

140. Little direct teaching was observed during the inspection, and there is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching. Planning provides clear objectives for each lesson. However, expectations are not always high enough, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Due attention is being paid to the development of skills but there is no record or checklist of what pupils have already learnt and there is some evidence that work is being unnecessarily repeated. Assessment does not make a sufficient contribution to teachers' planning.

141. The subject is managed by two co-ordinators who are knowledgeable and skilled. School priorities have to some extent limited the development of the subject and very little whole-school training has taken place. Evidence overall indicates that there are two main weaknesses in the teaching of information and communication technology. First, some teachers do not have the necessary subject knowledge to teach skills to the required level. Secondly, the current arrangements for teaching the subject are ineffective, as pupils do not have sufficient time or regular access to the computers. During the inspection the computers were seldom in use in the morning and not fully used in the afternoon.

MUSIC

142. Only two lessons were observed during the course of the inspection, but through discussion with pupils and the two co-ordinators, standards at the end of both key stages are judged to be satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school, quite correctly, has focused on raising standards in the core subjects and has only recently introduced a new scheme to provide topic-related musical activities that are readily accessible to non-musicians. Standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are about the same as those found in 1998 but standards by the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the last inspection.

143. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn to recognise the lengths of sounds and use their voices to represent time patterns and to create a musical effect. They use un-tuned percussion instruments satisfactorily to imitate the sounds of the weather and they enjoy playing to their friends. Pupils are able to play in a steady rhythm to accompany a song about the weather.

144. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to build upon their musical skills and knowledge. They learn the names of notes on the staff and use this knowledge to help them compose accompaniments to street cries. They persevere and work co-operatively together to build up a four beat rhythm, learning to adapt and improve upon original ideas. The tonal effect is satisfactory but the pupils receive insufficient advice on how to hold and use beaters to achieve a better tone quality.

145. Pupils throughout the school sing well and enjoy performing, as was demonstrated during an enjoyable hymn practice. The older pupils sang in two parts and the younger pupils answered a musical phrase, coming in at the correct time and place. All pupils sang very well and with expression against a syncopated rhythm and a difficult accompaniment, as for example, in the hymn 'He's alive.' The excellent behaviour of all pupils in the assembly furthered their musical appreciation and added to their spiritual and social development.

146. The quality of music teaching is satisfactory overall and, as a consequence, the pupils make sound progress throughout the school. Teachers plan effectively, organise resources well and question pupils to develop their listening, appraising and thinking skills. Informal ongoing assessment of pupils' progress is effective and in addition formal, planned assessment is usefully recorded in the teachers' record books. The peripatetic teachers who provide instrumental tuition to pupils in Key Stage 2 enhance the music curriculum.

147. There is a music policy in the school and two comprehensive schemes of work. An annual musical production and a Carol Service enhance the learning and performing opportunities for all the pupils including those with special needs and English as an additional language. However, information and communication technology is not used effectively to support learning in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

148. Attainment by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is broadly in line with national expectations for pupils in each age group and satisfactory progress is made. These standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. For example, in games progress is sound; most pupils in Year 2 can bounce a ball with accuracy as they move around, while a few can bounce a ball with either hand. However, a few lack co-ordination and can only do one bounce at a time with either hand. By Year 6 pupils can catch a small ball accurately and skilfully, keeping their eye on the ball. They were observed using this skill to help them in throwing, bowling and catching the ball during a cricket activity on the playground. Pupils are also learning to develop sensible rules for their own games, which they then play.

149. Attainment and progress in gymnastics is sound in both key stages. By Year 6 most pupils are at the average level and can balance on different parts of the body with accuracy and develop a sequence of movements across the floor and on apparatus. They know the basic rules for carrying out gymnastics movements safely.

150. Teaching is good overall and has a positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. In the majority of lessons teachers are particularly good at balancing clear instructions with encouraging pupils' thinking. Teachers generally plan good learning opportunities, where pupils are challenged at appropriate levels, to extend their intellectual, physical and creative effort. They focus well on basic skills development and make good reference to pupils' earlier learning. Pupils make good progress within most lessons as they practice the new skills that they have been taught. However, some of the teaching is unsatisfactory. This occurs when the activity is undemanding and the pace is too slow. In one unsatisfactory lesson the resources chosen were unsuitable; balls were too large for the pupils to handle and nets were too high for the pupils to reach.

151. Pupils throughout the school have access to a broad variety of physical activities. These include gymnastics, dance, games, athletics, swimming and outdoor adventurous activities. The school has developed very good relationships with the neighbouring college of higher education where prospective teachers train. The pupils have access to some of the resources on the campus and, in return, the school provides pupils to help with the training of the students. One swimming lesson at the college, involving Year 1 pupils, was observed; every child had a personal student tutor to teach them how to swim. The sharing of resources and skills in this manner benefits pupils' learning and development.

152. Pupils are taught about the important contribution which physical activity makes to a healthy lifestyle and about the effects of exercise on their bodies. It was however noted that in more than one lesson pupils were withdrawn from physical education lessons to carry out additional work in subjects such as English and mathematics. This is a regular occurrence.

153. The curriculum co-ordinator monitors planning but he does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching. A useful scheme of work and an appropriate policy are in place. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school does its best to overcome the problem of the undulating playground and the lack of a school field. Physical education is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, especially games, and the pupils take part, quite successfully, in area competitions in football, netball, rugby and athletics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. The attainment of pupils in religious education at the end of both key stages is in line with the levels expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they study the major faiths of the world.

155. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn about the symbols of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. They reflect upon the reasons God made the world and the importance of caring for the environment. In one lesson pupils visited the school garden to see if it could be improved for the creatures that live in it. Many suggestions were made and pupils listened respectfully to the ideas of their peers. Good progress was made in their spiritual, moral and social development. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils talk with maturity and confidence about religion expressing their own views. They are aware of the need to be tolerant and respectful of faiths other than their own. This makes an appropriate contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

156. The school has made it a priority to improve the quality of the spiritual experiences of pupils and this is evident in the assemblies and the class lessons where emphasis is placed upon caring and listening to one another. The school library has a good collection of religious books that are used for investigative research and reference by pupils in both key stages.

157. The quality of teaching is good and as a consequence the pupils learn well. Teacher's planning takes due regard of the different learning needs of their pupils. The effective use of resources, the pace and timing of lessons and the consistent approach across the school contribute well to progress in the subject and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Work is often linked to other subjects such as art and design, English and mathematics, as in a lesson on symbolic representations. Pupils gave thoughtful answers to the effective questions of the teacher and later produced carefully drawn shields with symbols that represented themselves. A good link is made with geography as pupils are made aware of the environment being God's world.

158. The good teaching, especially the effective management of classes, ensures that the pupils develop positive attitudes and that they behave well. The two co-ordinators work hard to foster the caring attitudes displayed by the pupils and this also contributes to good behaviour and to the pupils' moral and social development. The school plans to develop links with the families who have English as an additional language in order to provide increased opportunities to foster respect for the faiths of different cultures.