

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **LLANGROVE C E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Llangrove, Ross on Wye

LEA area: Herefordshire

Unique reference number: 116896

Headteacher: Mrs M D Price

Reporting inspector: Hugh Protherough  
8339

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 230687

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Infant and junior                         |
| School category:             | Voluntary Aided                           |
| Age range of pupils:         | 4 – 11 years                              |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed                                     |
| School address:              | Llangrove<br>Ross on Wye<br>Herefordshire |
| Postcode:                    | HR9 6EZ                                   |
| Telephone number:            | 01989 770322                              |
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| Appropriate authority:       | The governing body                        |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mr J Price                                |
| Date of previous inspection: | 8 <sup>th</sup> December 1997             |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members |                  |                      | Subject responsibilities  | Aspect responsibilities  |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 8339         | Hugh Protherough | Registered inspector | Equal opportunities<br>Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage<br>English<br>Information and communications technology<br>Music<br>Physical education<br>Special educational needs | What sort of school is it?<br>How high are standards?<br>How well are pupils taught?<br>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?<br>How well is the school led and managed?<br>What should the school do to improve further? |
| 14083        | Andy Anderson    | Lay inspector        |   | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development<br>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?<br>How well does the school care for its pupils?  |
| 13205        | Janet Edwards    | Team inspector       | Mathematics<br>Science<br>Art and design<br>Design and technology<br>Geography<br>History   |  |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a very small primary school serving the village of Llangrove and its surrounding communities. There are seventy pupils on roll comprising 34 boys and 36 girls, all of white ethnic origin. There are far more girls than boys in the current Year 6; the opposite is the case in Year 4. Most of the pupils have benefited from a period of pre-school education at the local playgroup. The abilities of the children entering the school cover the full range, but are generally slightly above average. The background of the pupils is generally favourable; none are entitled to free school meals and only 11 per cent are on the register for special educational needs, well below the national average. *The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils with special educational needs.*

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

By the time they leave school, the pupils are achieving standards in mathematics and English that are well above the national average. Taken overall, the quality of education provided is good, but is strongest in Key Stage 2. The leadership is secure and gaining in stature and confidence. A secure Christian ethos has been established and the staff, governors, parents and children work well as a team. There is a coherent plan for school improvement and systems are in place to ensure that priorities are tackled properly and the results thoroughly reviewed. The headteacher has encouraged prudence so that the governing body has eliminated a previous large deficit. There is now scope for imaginative expenditure to improve the staffing and enrich the curriculum. However, as a very small village school, the costs of education are typically higher than usual thus the school offers satisfactory value for money.

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

- By the age of eleven standards in English and mathematics are well above average.
- The lessons in Key Stage 2 are challenging, motivate the pupils and set a brisk pace for learning.
- The children enjoy school, behave well and work hard in their lessons.
- The headteacher's leadership is strong and purposeful. She is building a staff team that continues to improve the quality of education provided.
- The school takes very good care of its pupils. The teachers know their pupils well and use this information effectively to help them plan their lessons.
- The governing body has a good oversight of the work of the school.

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

- The planning and implementation of some aspects of the new Foundation Stage for pupils under the age of five.
- The arrangements for the teaching of design technology and information and communications technology.

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

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

Since the last inspection carried out by HMI in 1999, the school has continued to make good progress. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are now well above the national average in both English and mathematics and above average in science. The teaching improves in pace and demand as the pupils move through the school and has improved since the last inspection. It is satisfactory in the Foundation

Stage and in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. There is now a high proportion of very good teaching at the upper end of Key Stage 2. One of the reasons why teaching has improved is that the teachers are starting to make much more effective use of their very good knowledge of the pupils and of the good range of assessment data collected across the school. The pupils' work in information and communications technology moves forward steadily, but more still needs to be done to ensure its wider use across the whole curriculum. The headteacher, staff and governing body have successfully established a common vision for the school that is reflected in an appropriate improvement plan that sets out clear targets, time scales and criteria for judging success.

## STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with |      |      |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
|                 | all schools   |      |      | similar schools |
|                 | 1998          | 1999 | 2000 | 2000            |
| English         | A             |      | A*   | A*              |
| mathematics     | C             |      | A    | A               |
| science         | C             |      | B    | C               |

| Key                |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Excellent          | A* |
| well above average | A  |
| above average      | B  |
| average            | C  |
| below average      | D  |
| well below average | E  |

*The results for 1999 are omitted because fewer than ten pupils took the tests.*

In last year's tests the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved standards that were well above average in English and mathematics. Their results in English were amongst the top 5 per cent of schools both nationally and in comparison to those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. In science, standards were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools.

The statistical analysis of the school's results in the national tests must be treated with caution because the number of pupils in each year group is few and seldom greater than fifteen. For instance, the trend in results suggests that improvement is slower than the national picture. However, this is caused by the steep dip in the results of 1999 when a very small cohort of pupils contained a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. A deeper analysis reveals a more positive picture because on average the performance of both boys and girls in English and mathematics is a term or more ahead by the time they leave school at age eleven. The inspection findings confirm that last year's high standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are being maintained in English and mathematics. Standards in science continue to be above average.

Last year's results at the end of Key Stage 1 show that in comparison with the national average standards were very high in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. This year the proportion of pupils working at the expected level is slightly lower because a quarter of them are on the register of special educational needs. However, these pupils are making good progress because the teachers make effective use of the individual education plans to ensure that the work of literacy and numeracy is matched closely to their abilities and needs.

The school has reached the stage where it can identify appropriate and challenging targets for each individual pupil. The accumulated data provides an appropriate and realistic set of public targets for the school but these need to be treated with caution because one pupil can often amount to as much as ten per cent. About a half of the cohort, including many higher-attaining pupils, are on course to exceed the expected levels in English and mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect                                 | Comment   |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | Good. Pupils of all abilities enjoy school; they work hard and try their best.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | The pupils behave in exemplary fashion both in and out of class. They treat each other with consideration and provide a polite and friendly welcome to visitors.  |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils of all ages get on well together. The older children take their responsibilities seriously and look after the younger ones. They enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, who treat them with sensitivity and respect. |
| Attendance                             | Above average   |

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils:  | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Satisfactory       | Satisfactory   | 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 the teaching continues to improve. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is now good throughout the school and this is reflected in the improved standards in English and mathematics. Of those lessons observed during the inspection 18 per cent were very good, 43 per cent good, 32 per cent satisfactory and 7 per cent [two lessons] were unsatisfactory.

The teaching is strongest in Key Stage 2. The teachers know their pupils very well because arrangements for assessment have improved. As a result, they have high expectations of what each pupil is capable of achieving, tasks are matched closely to individual abilities and the lessons set a brisk pace for learning.

In Key Stage 1, the teaching is satisfactory. The best lessons observed were in the teaching of literacy and numeracy where the teachers' planning is clear and well focused. The deployment of a teacher to work with the current Year 2 in English and mathematics is effective. The small number of pupils involved helps the teacher to ensure that there is a consistent challenge for each individual.

The school is still getting to grips with the new Foundation Stage curriculum. These children work in a mixed age class that also contains Year 1 pupils. The arrangements for teaching literacy and

numeracy work well because each morning a skilled teaching assistant supports the teacher very effectively. However, some of the lessons to develop the youngest pupils' physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are not as effective as they might be. The teacher's plans are not always clear either about what it is that the children are expected to learn or how this might best be achieved.

A particular strength observed throughout the school is the way that the teachers support the pupils with special educational needs. In almost every lesson, the strategies recommended in each pupil's individual education plan were clearly in evidence so that brisk progress is being made towards realising their targets. The work of the teaching assistants is a particularly effective feature of this good provision. Equally important is the emphasis given to challenging the higher-attaining pupils. This is evident, for instance in the teachers' setting of additional work or research and in their encouraging the many musical pupils to take maximum benefit from the very good quality of instrumental tuition provided by the local authority music service. However, the school's approaches to the teaching of the skills of design and technology lack rigour. Similarly, the teaching of information and communication technology does not always build progressively on the pupils' prior knowledge and skills.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

| <b>Aspect</b>   | <b>Comment</b>  |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | Satisfactory. The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum.  |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs   | Good. The school community takes great care to ensure that the needs of these pupils are met in all aspects of their work and play. The teachers are careful to set appropriate work and with the help of the learning support assistants provide effective support that helps these pupils make good progress towards the targets within their individual education plans. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong.  |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | Very good. The arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils are thorough and effective.   |

The teachers have made a sound start to implementing the Foundation Stage curriculum, but some aspects require improvement. The school continues to improve its links with parents and enjoys strong support from the local community. The teachers make themselves readily available to meet with parents and the annual reports on the pupils' progress are very good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher continues to move the school forward. She receives increasingly effective support from a committed staff team who help to develop the curriculum, check standards and manage resources.                                  |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities             | The governors have a much-improved oversight of the school's curriculum and the resources at their disposal. They fulfil their responsibilities in full and the quality of their annual report to parents is very good.                        |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Good. There is careful evaluation of performance based upon the thorough analysis of assessment data and other important evidence collected at first hand from around the school. This is used effectively in planning for future improvement. |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | The school makes full and effective use of its resources in accordance with the priorities of the school development plan. There are simple, but effective, systems to check that what is spent is improving the quality of education.         |

The levels of staffing are good, and a good number of effective learning support assistants play a major role in supporting teaching around the school. The school grounds and buildings are attractive and well maintained. They make a significant contribution to the quality of education offered by the school. The levels of educational resources are generally good because the governors use their budget wisely and the staff and children take care of equipment. The provision of books is good and the school has laid appropriate plans to increase further the number of computers.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most   | What parents would like to see improved   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been a vast improvement in the quality of education offered by the school.</li> <li>• The children enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is very good.</li> <li>• The teachers make learning fun and encourage all children so they can find something they are good at.</li> <li>• The school is welcoming and friendly. It's easy to talk with the teachers and get involved in their children's education.</li> <li>• The children feel safe, secure and valued.</li> <li>• The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents are anxious about mixed age teaching involving Reception and Year 1 pupils.</li> </ul> |

The inspection team agrees with the very many positive views expressed by the parents, particularly in regard to the significant improvements brought about over the past three years. They also agree that some aspects of the teacher's planning for the Foundation Stage require improvement.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. The last three years has seen considerable improvement in the standards achieved by pupils attending the school. The exception was in 1999 when a small cohort, which included a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, caused a steep dip in the otherwise positive trend of rising standards.
2. In last year's tests, the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved standards that were well above average in English and mathematics. Their results in English were amongst the top 5 per cent of schools both nationally and in comparison to schools where a similar proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. In science, standards were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. Any statistical analysis of the school's results in the national tests must be treated with caution because the number of pupils in any one-year group is few and seldom greater than fifteen. However, deeper analysis of the wider picture over a three-year period shows that on average the performance of both boys and girls in English and mathematics is a term or more ahead by the time they leave school at age eleven.
3. Last year's results at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards were very high in comparison with the national average in reading and mathematics and above the national average in writing. This year the proportion of pupils working at the expected level is slightly lower because a quarter of them are on the register for special educational needs. However, these pupils are making good progress because the teachers make effective use of their individual education plans to ensure that work in literacy and numeracy is matched closely to their abilities and needs.
4. The school is making much more effective use of the information it gathers about the children's performance in tests and other assessments. As a result, the teachers now identify appropriate and challenging targets for each individual pupil. The accumulated data provide an appropriate and realistic set of public targets for the school but these need to be treated with caution because one pupil can often amount to as much as ten per cent. For example, the targets for the current Year 6 hide a significant strength in that around a half of the cohort including many higher-attaining pupils are on course to exceed the expected levels in English and mathematics.
5. The inspection findings confirm that standards of literacy and numeracy at the end of Key Stage 2 remain well above average. Analysis of the pupils' work reveals particular strength in the way that boys and girls of all abilities make good progress over the course of a school year. This is because the teachers track their progress assiduously and set challenging targets for each individual. As a result, in both key stages the higher-attaining pupils are reaching levels that exceed the national expectation. The pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs receive good support in class from the highly effective learning support assistants. This helps them make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
6. The children enter the school at the age of four and are assessed around five weeks after the start of their first term. The results of these assessments indicate that the children's

ability levels are generally slightly above average. They receive a sound start to their time in school and make steady progress. As a result, the vast majority is on course to meet the early learning goals set out in the Foundation curriculum. They achieve best in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical and social and emotional development. However, their progress in a small minority of lessons relating to some aspects of their physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is not always as fast as it should be.

7. The strength of the pupils' literacy skills supports their work in many other subjects of the curriculum. The pupils are articulate, thoughtful and discuss sensibly. Most learn quickly to read and write with accuracy and, by the end of Key Stage 2, with increasing fluency. They turn readily to pen and paper to record their thoughts and ideas.
8. Mathematics is taught effectively and the school has made a successful start to the introduction of the national numeracy strategy. The teachers have a secure grasp of the subject and expect the pupils to master basic number skills at an early age. This is achieved through frequent practice and quick fire mental sessions within the mathematics lessons. The teachers expect the pupils to make use of their mathematical knowledge in other subjects, such as science, in ways that help to reinforce learning. As a result, the pupils are confident in handling numbers and enjoy their lessons. Standards in mathematics continue to remain generally high throughout the school.
9. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in science are above average. This is because the teachers have improved the quality of their lessons by ensuring that the pupils have greater opportunities to carry out investigative work from an early age. For example, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 are setting up tests to check which types of soil allow water to pass through. Those in Year 6 understand how to devise a fair test to determine the conditions necessary for seeds to germinate. By the age of eleven, the pupils are thinking scientifically and using their knowledge and experience to good effect.
10. There is some strength in the pupils' work in subjects such as history and in the achievements of higher-attaining pupils in music. Standards in the other non-core subjects of the National Curriculum are generally in line with the levels expected at the end of both key stages.

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

11. The pupils' attitudes and their enthusiasm for the school are good. Their behaviour, personal development and the relationships within the school are very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The vast majority of parents believe that the school maintains high standards of behaviour and is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
12. The pupils' enthusiasm and their attitudes towards learning are good. Nearly all of them consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. However, in the early years a few have not yet fully adapted to life at school. Most pupils are confident, motivated and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and suggestions. In class, they settle down quickly, work diligently, and are capable of sustained periods of concentration. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved.

13. Overall, standards of behaviour are very good. The vast majority of pupils behave very well and act in a mature and responsible manner. Their behaviour in classrooms and in assemblies is consistently very good. The children work and play in an environment that is completely free from oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism. The high standards in the pupils' personal discipline, and the good class management of the teachers and support staff have positive effects on the standards of attainment achieved. However, a few of the younger children have underdeveloped social skills, for example, calling out and exhibiting restlessness in class, which can occasionally disrupt lessons. The pupils move around the school in a very quiet and orderly manner. Their behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is very good. There were no exclusions in the academic year prior to the inspection.
14. Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults whom they come into contact with, and also to one another. The children play extremely well together in mixed age and gender groups. Pupils of all ages are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. They show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies they show appropriate reverence for the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads respectfully during periods of reflection and prayer. There is no deliberate damage to school property and a remarkable absence of litter around the school site.
15. The pupils' personal development is very good. They are learning a wide range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. The pupils support local and national charities and are learning to be aware of those less fortunate than themselves. They take part in a good range of out of school visits and encounter an appropriate variety of visitors. The children respond well to the opportunities provided for taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms. In some lessons, when not subject to direct teaching, pupils were observed working independently, either individually or in groups, and staying on task. Where opportunities for taking on formal responsibilities around the school are offered, they respond in a very mature and sensible manner. For example, the pupil librarians have produced an entertaining and informative school newspaper. Older children sit with, and look after, the younger ones during assemblies, which makes a major contribution to the calm and orderly atmosphere of the occasion.
16. The levels of attendance are good and are broadly in line with the national average. There is very little unauthorised absence. The pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a low level of recorded lateness. Most pupils come to school on time and the lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly.
17. The high standards maintained in behaviour, attendance and punctuality are strong features of the school and have a positive impact on standards achieved.

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

18. The quality of the teaching continues to improve. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is now good throughout the school and this is reflected in the improved standards in English and mathematics. Of those lessons observed during the inspection 18 per cent were either very good or excellent, 93 per cent satisfactory or better and 7 per cent [two lessons] were unsatisfactory.

19. The strongest teaching is found in Key Stage 2 where most lessons are of good quality. There is also a high proportion of very good teaching in the class containing Years 5 and 6. In both of the classes in this key stage, the teachers know their pupils very well because relationships are very positive and the arrangements for assessment have improved. As a result, the teachers have high expectations of what each pupil is capable of achieving, tasks are matched closely to individual abilities and the lessons set a brisk pace for learning. A good example of this was in a literacy lesson with Years 3 and 4 when the teacher took great care to welcome back to class a pupil with special educational needs who had been absent. She told the class that they would have to bring the child up to date and through a series of incisive, well-targeted questions enabled the pupils to show the large amount they had learned about fables in the previous two days. The newly returned pupil was delighted to recognise one or two of the tales and the teacher listened carefully and encouraged his response. This is a further telling example of strong emphasis placed on ensuring that pupils of all abilities feel valued and included in learning.
20. A further example of the good teaching in Key Stage 2 was observed in a Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson. Here it was evident that the teacher's own strong subject knowledge contributed to the brisk pace of the lesson and the rapid gains in pupils' learning. Once again the teacher's questioning in the early stages of the lesson rapidly revised the pupils' previous learning about angles before the introduction of new knowledge and techniques. The new material was explained cogently and demonstrated effectively so that by the end of the lesson the overwhelming majority Year 6 pupils were confidently using 360 degree protractors to measure angles ranging in size from acute, through obtuse to reflex. They measured accurately to within a tolerance of one degree.
21. In Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage (for pupils under the age of five), the teaching is satisfactory. The recent appointment of an additional teacher to work with the current Year 2 in English and mathematics each morning is effective because the small number of pupils involved helps the teacher to ensure that there is a consistent challenge for each individual. Similarly in the mixed-age class with Year 1 and Reception the presence of an effective teaching assistant means that a satisfactory range of appropriate activities is offered for each age group. In these lessons, the teachers' planning is generally clear and well focused. They set out plainly what they want the children to learn and they match the group tasks accurately to the abilities of the pupils. For example, after reading a play about a woodcutter who is offered three wishes by a gnome, the challenge of writing a list of their own wishes clearly motivated the higher-attaining pupils in Year 1. Meanwhile, the lower-attaining pupils worked hard to check if the list of words they had been given could really be made from the letters of words such as 'narrator' and 'gnome.' In this case, the teacher's careful preparation of boards with magnetic letters helped the pupils considerably in the successful completion of the task.
22. Having listened to the story of the woodcutter, the reception-aged pupils worked successfully with the teaching assistant. Her thorough involvement with the teacher's planning meant that she knew exactly what to do. She has a good understanding of the published scheme that is currently in use to help to teach the children the sounds of letters. She made an effective introduction of the letter sound 'f' and then helped each group of children complete a variety of other appropriate tasks. For instance, the higher-attaining pupils are already confidently manipulating play dough into the shapes of letters and using these to create simple three letter words. Later on the children had the opportunity to select a task from a range of suitable activities, such as listening to a story cassette or constructing a simple

collage using papers and paste, before sharing their work with friends during the whole-class session.

23. Although the teaching of literacy and numeracy is secure, the school is still getting to grips with planning other aspects of the Foundation Curriculum. For instance, some of the lessons to develop the youngest pupils' physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world are not as effective as they might be. The teacher's plans are not always clear either about what it is that the children are expected to learn or how this might best be achieved. **This is a key issue for action.** The appointment of the new teacher means that each afternoon the reception-aged children can now be taught separately from the Year 1 pupils, though often within the same classroom. However, these arrangements have only been in operation for a few weeks and are still at an early stage of development. In the two unsatisfactory lessons the children acquired little new learning. The teacher talked for too long and the children were left frustrated because they did not have a proper chance to get involved in the potentially interesting activities that had been planned.
24. A particular strength observed throughout the school is the way that the teachers support the pupils with special educational needs. In almost every lesson the strategies advised in each pupil's individual education plan were clearly in evidence so that brisk progress is being made towards realising their targets. The work of the teaching assistants is particularly effective in supporting this good provision. For instance, one provides Additional Literacy Support [ALS] for the few pupils that struggle to read and write with fluency. She has very positive relationships with these pupils and in return they work hard and do their best to improve. Equally important is the emphasis given to challenging the higher-attaining pupils. This could be seen, for instance, in the teachers' setting of additional homework or research and in their encouraging the many musical pupils to take maximum benefit from the very good quality of instrumental tuition provided by the local authority music service.
25. The school's approaches to the teaching of design and technology lack rigour. The current arrangement by which design technology is taught intensively over a day or so and then left for a period of time does not support the progressive development of the skills and techniques necessary for this subject. Similarly, the current deployment of the school's computers hinders the effective teaching of information and communication technology. In other words, it is difficult to arrange for all pupils to observe the demonstration of new programs and then to have the opportunity to practise them immediately afterwards. However, the continuing improvements in the school's resources for this subject and the imminent training programme for the staff are good indicators of the school's commitment to improve this aspect of its provision. **These are key issues for action.**

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

26. Since the last inspection, the teachers have continued to bring about further improvements to the school's curriculum. There is now a more systematic approach to ensuring that the children's learning is developed in a generally coherent fashion for most subjects of the National Curriculum. The teachers have responded positively to the national guidance that supports curriculum planning and in particular to the initiatives for planning the teaching of literacy and numeracy. For example, the analysis of the pupils' past work reveals that there is now thorough coverage of the many different styles of writing suggested for the literacy hour.

27. There are many difficulties inherent in planning the curriculum for the wide range of age and ability within a small school. However, the school's well considered two year rolling programme of work is providing a helpful framework within which the teachers can develop more detailed plans for each half-term. Their subsequent lesson planning generally reflects a good grasp of the skills and knowledge that the pupils need to master in most subjects. A significant strength is the way that the teachers successfully modify the content and tasks within lessons so that pupils of all abilities, including the few with special educational needs, receive equal access to the full breadth of the curriculum. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2 the teacher planned carefully so that the requirements of individual education plans might be successfully met during group reading with a group of lower-attaining pupils. Similar sensitivity is shown in the way that the use of Additional Literacy Support is carefully organised to dovetail with the literacy hour. Thus, those pupils in need of additional support attend the opening of the lesson, but receive their specific support during the time allocated to group work.
28. The school has made a satisfactory start to the introduction of the new Foundation Stage curriculum, but recognises that there is still some way to go. This is especially the case with some of the planning of activities for developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and some aspects of their physical development. **This is a key issue for action.**
29. A particular strength of the current curriculum is the good range of educational visits and visitors used to support the children's learning. For instance, the school works closely with a group of other small schools to provide sporting and cultural activities, such as the current dance and drama project. Recently, the school spent a week conducting a survey of the birds that visit the school grounds and devised a simple database with the help of a governor. The inspection team agrees with the views of many parents who feel that these sorts of activities help to bring the children's learning alive, as well as bringing the children into contact with a range of other adults and teachers with different backgrounds and expertise.
30. It is clear that the school's curriculum has a far greater breadth and balance than at the time of its first inspection and now meets the statutory requirements. A new policy sets out the school's satisfactory arrangements to ensure that the pupils receive regular personal and social education, including appropriate opportunities for sex education and raising their awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
31. The provision for the pupils' personal and social development is good. All members of staff are committed to raising the pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem so that they willingly attempt increasingly challenging tasks. There is a sound personal, social and health awareness programme and promotion of physical exercise through a range of sports and dance activities. The whole-school assemblies are well planned to enhance the pupils' self-awareness and help them to develop a set of values firmly based upon the school's secure Christian ethos.
32. The provision to foster the pupils' spiritual development is good. School worship provides regular opportunities for pupils to reflect and consider important issues such as our individual roles as part of God's creation. In some lessons, such as English, art and design and physical education, there are occasional opportunities for the pupils to extend their appreciation of issues in a spiritual dimension as they discuss their feelings with the teachers. For instance, the ill health of a favourite horse was dealt with sensitively by a teacher who listened carefully to a young pupil's fears about the possible death of a close animal friend.

33. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is another strong feature of the school and reflects the continuing improvements that have been developed since the last inspection. The school aims set out high expectations for the pupils' personal development and the clear and appropriate policy for managing behaviour is consistently applied. In particular, all members of staff provide good role models for the pupils. They take a keen interest in their pupils and during lessons are swift to draw attention to those who are polite and attentive. On those rare occasions when a pupil's behaviour falls beneath the expected level, the teachers are careful to criticise the behaviour, not the child. They also provide regular opportunities for the children to assume responsibility for small tasks around the school such as tidying the library or getting out resources for lessons. As a result, most pupils are developing a good understanding of right and wrong actions and speak sensibly about their role and responsibilities whilst at school.
34. The curriculum contains a sound cultural strand. This is enhanced through participation in local music and drama events and visits to places of educational interest, such as Goodrich Castle and the Caerleon Centre. In addition, interaction with the local community ensures that the pupils develop a secure sense of their own local identity. The development of the pupils' awareness of other cultures is also supported by the good range of literature used in English lessons and their work in geography and religious education that includes consideration of other world faiths, such as Islam.

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

35. The school very effectively supports its pupils and the staff strive hard to promote their welfare. The headteacher places a very high priority on pastoral care and provides very good leadership in this aspect. The teaching staff are very approachable and totally supportive. The non-teaching staff are dedicated, committed and provide very good support for both teachers and pupils. All staff, teaching and non-teaching alike, have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them conscientiously and consistently. Very good provision is made for medical and first aid requirements, and the arrangements for dealing with routine matters, such as minor accidents are very good. Conscientious teachers, who are alert and vigilant, supervise the children very well at breaks. Experienced midday supervisors undertake lunchtime supervision, and the standard of care is also very high.
36. The school makes very good use of its non-teaching classroom assistants to support the pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is a very good awareness of the related issues throughout the school. There are also very good procedures for health and safety. They are well known and understood by all members of staff who consistently demonstrate safe working practices in lessons. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously and all the required safety inspections and checks, including risk assessment, are regularly carried out and properly recorded. One minor, potential safety hazard was brought to the attention of the headteacher during the inspection.
37. The school has very effective procedures in place to promote and monitor discipline and good behaviour. The teaching and non-teaching staff have high expectations of behaviour, and discipline is administered well. However, there is an occasional inconsistency in the handling of a tiny minority of pupils in the early years who are experiencing difficulty in settling into the classroom routines. The school is aware of this, and appropriate procedures

to deal with it are being developed. Attendance is regularly monitored, absences correctly recorded and appropriate follow up action taken.

38. The headteacher, class teachers and the support staff know their pupils very well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal and academic needs. The procedures for monitoring and recording the pupils' academic progress and personal development are good. The class teachers monitor their pupils' progress well; they keep comprehensive and detailed records, including assessment files and portfolios of children's work, on individual pupils. The assessment information is used in the process of curriculum planning, and where particular needs are identified either one-to-one tuition or extra homework is provided. Appropriate targets are set and individual education plans provided for pupils with special educational needs.

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

39. There are effective links with the parents, who generally have high expectations and positive views of the school. The majority of parents consistently expressed a high level of satisfaction with almost all aspects of the school. A small minority of parents do not agree that their children get the right amount of work to do at home or that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team judged that the provision for extra-curricular activities was good and that the use of homework was at least satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The parents support homework, in particular home reading. The school enjoys the active support of the majority of parents. There is a small, but committed, number of parents who regularly help in the classrooms and accompany the children on out of school trips. A strong and active parents, friends and teachers association (PFTA) organises and runs social and fund-raising activities for the school. Some parents expressed the opinion that the school does not work closely with them. The inspection evidence did not support these parents' views. The school is very welcoming, the staff are extremely approachable, and parents were regularly observed talking to teachers at the start and close of the school day.
40. The day-to-day communication between the school and home is very good. The school and the PTFA send out regular newsletters and other communications to parents about specific events and activities. The school publishes an attractive and informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish a comprehensive annual report. Parents are given an informative annual progress report and offered appropriate opportunities to attend meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The reports consistently indicate what the pupils can and cannot do, the progress being made and where difficulties are found. They also set targets for improvement. A small number of parents do not agree that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. Some of them indicated that they would like the opportunity to attend a formal consultation meeting in the spring term. The inspection evidence did not support these parents' views and the quality of information provided for parents, particularly about the pupils' progress, was judged to be very good.
41. Overall, the school's work is considerably enriched by its links with parents and this partnership has a positive impact on pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. Since the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school have continued to develop in strength, stature and effectiveness. As a result, the quality of education continues to improve and standards are higher.
43. The headteacher works tirelessly and leads by example. She encourages her small staff team to work together in planning the curriculum, checking standards and monitoring the quality of their teaching. There has been significant improvement in the leadership's approaches to gathering and recording information about the pupils' progress, so that teachers now have access to a wide range of test and assessment data on which to base their planning.
44. The benefits of involving all teachers in these management processes are clearly evident in the effective arrangements for organising the provision for the pupils with special educational needs. The teachers hold a meeting once a term to discuss the progress of all those pupils on the school's register for special educational needs. Their records are updated and any modifications to teaching arrangements agreed. Diary dates are fixed for any review meetings with parents. Consequently, all the teachers have a good overview of the specific needs of individual pupils and there is agreement about how to tackle both their learning and their behavioural needs.
45. The special educational needs co-ordinator [SENCO] manages the central records extremely efficiently. Her file is well ordered, thorough and complies fully with statutory requirements. Great care is taken to ensure that all the teachers keep copies of the individual education plans of the pupils they teach. These are used effectively when planning lessons. There is good evidence that parents are consulted regularly about their children's progress with good arrangements for both formal and informal review. The school has also established effective links with a wide range of external support agencies that provide specialist guidance, such as the schools' psychological service.
46. The school has an acute awareness of how it has improved in recent years that is shared by the parents and the wider community, but it is not complacent. There is also a keen appreciation of the need for further refinement. The school has made a success of its introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, but the leadership is aware that the introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum requires further attention, as does the use of information and communications technology across the curriculum. These initiatives, along with many others, are clearly identified within the school improvement plan that sets out clearly the current priorities of the staff and governors. This plan successfully replaces the previous OFSTED Action Plan, although the headteacher and governors are still experimenting with its format.
47. The headteacher receives strong backing from the governing body. Over the past three years, the governors have worked hard to ensure that they are properly trained and up to date in their knowledge of their responsibilities. They show a strong commitment to their school and many visit lessons regularly in order to find out at first hand about the school's curriculum. They listen carefully to the headteacher when planning for future school development, but are not afraid to ask tough questions when important issues arise and when prioritising their school improvement plan.

48. Careful consideration is always given to the ways that expenditure will benefit the education of the pupils and help to raise standards. For instance, the provision of a learning assistant in each class involves considerable expense, but there is good evidence that this policy is having an extremely beneficial influence upon the quality of education provided. The school makes appropriate use of its notional special educational needs budget to support this development. The governors have also made a good start to ensuring that similar 'best value' judgements are applied to the purchase of other goods and services. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities in full.
49. The new school secretary is noticeably increasing the efficiency of the school administration by taking on a wide range of responsibilities. This is vitally important in a small school where the headteacher teaches for much of the week. A major improvement is the way that the potential of the office computer is now being realised. The secretary can now provide the headteacher and governors with accurate financial information. The pupil records are stored securely in electronic format and a good start has been made to loading an up-to-date photograph alongside the personal data relating to each pupil.
50. The school has good staffing levels. The very recent introduction of an additional teacher to work with Year 2 in the mornings and to support the teaching of the reception and Year 1 pupils in the afternoons is already paying dividends. The three teaching assistants all make a valuable contribution to the teaching around the school, including the provision of Additional Literacy Support for the few pupils that require it.
51. The school building and the attractive, spacious grounds are well maintained and used effectively to support the teaching of the curriculum. The school has a good level of resources. The library provides an increasingly wider range of reading material for the children and there are appropriate plans to increase further the number of computers.

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

52. In order to build further on the many recent improvements carried out at the school the headteacher, governors and staff should now:
- (a) Improve the provision in the Foundation Stage for developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development by:
    - ◆ planning in greater detail the knowledge, skills and understanding that are to be established in each lesson.(Paragraph 23, 28, 54)
  - (b) Improve the arrangements for the teaching of design technology and information and communications technology by:
    - ◆ identifying greater opportunities for the pupils to incorporate the use of computers in their learning, especially in the area of control technology; (Paragraph 109)
    - ◆ ensuring more frequent teaching of the design technology curriculum so that the pupils' skills can be developed more systematically. (Paragraph 102, 104)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 29 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 8  |

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

|           |           |      |              |                |      |           |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
| 0         | 18        | 43   | 32           | 7              | 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*

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>                                    | YRec – Y6 |
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)      | 70        |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 0         |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Special educational needs</b>                                    | YRec – Y6 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs       | 0         |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 9         |

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <b>English as an additional language</b>                | No of pupils |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0            |

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>                                | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 8            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 7            |

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| School data               | 3.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

#### **Unauthorised absence**

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
|                           | %   |
| School data               | 0   |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|  | 2000 | [ ]  | [ ]   | [ ]   |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | Reading | Writing  | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | [ ]     | [ ]      | [ ]         |
|   | Girls    | [ ]     | [ ]      | [ ]         |
|   | Total    |         |          |             |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 89 (88) | 90 (100) | 89 (94)     |
|   | National | 83 (82) | 85 (83)  | 90 (87)     |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English  | Mathematics | Science  |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above   | Boys     | [ ]      | [ ]         | [ ]      |
|   | Girls    | [ ]      | [ ]         | [ ]      |
|   | Total    | [ ]      | [ ]         | [ ]      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School   | 89 (100) | 85 (100)    | 90 (100) |
|   | National | 84 (82)  | 88 (86)     | 88 (87)  |

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

The Key Stage 1 table left blank because fewer than ten pupils took the tests.

### 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 | 4    | 9     | 13    |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | [ ]     | [ ]         | [ ]     |
|   | Girls    | [ ]     | [ ]         | [ ]     |
|   | Total    | 12      | 13          | 12      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 92 (60) | 100 (80)    | 92 (80) |
|   | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69)     | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments                       |          | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above   | Boys     | [ ]     | [ ]         | [ ]     |
|   | Girls    | [ ]     | [ ]         | [ ]     |
|   | Total    | 12      | 12          | 12      |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School   | 92 (80) | 92 (80)     | 92 (80) |
|   | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69)     | 80 (75) |

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

The numbers of boys & girls reaching level 4 are omitted because fewer than ten of each took the tests.

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 0            |
| Black – African heritage        | 0            |
| Black – other                   | 0            |
| Indian                          | 0            |
| Pakistani                       | 0            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 61           |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0            |

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

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 3.4  |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 21.4 |
| Average class size                       | 24   |

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

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 3  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 45 |

### *Financial information*

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year                             | 1999-2000 |
|  | £         |
| Total income                               | 157 444   |
| Total expenditure                          | 141 067   |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 2 106     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 5 469     |
| Balance carried forward to next year       | 21 846    |

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 70 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 40 |

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 73             | 25            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 55             | 32            | 5                | 3                 | 5          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 63             | 37            | 0                | 0                 | 0          |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 45             | 35            | 7                | 5                 | 8          |
| The teaching is good.  | 58             | 33            | 7                | 0                 | 3          |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 48             | 37            | 8                | 3                 | 4          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 68             | 29            | 3                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 58             | 33            | 7                | 2                 | 0          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 55             | 30            | 15               | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 88             | 10            | 2                | 0                 | 0          |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 73             | 20            | 5                | 0                 | 2          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 48             | 32            | 10               | 5                 | 5          |

## **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**

53. There are currently twelve pupils in their reception year who are taught in a class with ten Year 1 pupils. The children begin attending school full time in September if their fifth birthday falls before the February half term break; otherwise in January. Most have attended some form of pre-school education such as the local playgroup. Although the abilities of the pupils cover the full range, the results of the school's baseline assessment reveals that their attainment on entry is generally slightly better than average. None of these children have been identified as having special educational needs.
54. The teacher receives strong support each morning from a teaching assistant. This enables appropriate provision to be made for the development of the pupils' language, literacy and mathematics skills. The very recent appointment of a new, additional teacher has led to increased flexibility in the teaching arrangements each afternoon so that the pupils in the Foundation Stage can receive an appropriate curriculum. There are signs that this is starting to work well. However, at this early stage there remain areas for improvement, most notably in some aspects of the planning and teaching of the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and the provision for their physical development. **This is a key issue for action.**

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

55. The arrangements for the pupils' personal, social and emotional development are good and most exceed the targets set out within the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Many of the children starting school already know a good number of their classmates because they have attended the same local playgroup. The school also ensures that all new pupils have good opportunities to visit and attend school on a part-time basis before they enter full time. As a result of these effective arrangements, the children quickly settle into the routine of school.
56. Relationships within the class are mostly extremely positive. The vast majority of the children are polite, considerate and know how to take turns and share books and equipment. The reception-aged children are helped in this by the frequent presence and good example of the pupils in Year 1. At the time of the inspection, one or two of the most recent intake occasionally found it difficult to listen for extended periods and occasionally behaved inappropriately by trying to distract others. However, the teachers and teaching assistant cope with this effectively by setting clear and consistent expectations of what is acceptable behaviour and by seeking to reinforce positive messages about what is helpful and considerate.
57. The children are developing a keen sense of their part within the school community. This is helped by the careful consideration given to the way that the youngest pupils are cared for in aspects of daily routine that might otherwise overwhelm them. For instance, during worship the reception children are mixed and each is seated alongside an older pupil who is responsible for looking after them. This works very well and helps the younger pupils get used to the patterns and practices of daily worship.

58. The majority of the reception children are confident in conversation with adults and each other. They happily explain their work, the class routines and the reasons for class rules. Many offer opinions in forthright manner. For instance, when one pupil was writing on the whiteboard he spotted someone ignoring him; 'I don't like your behaviour X, really.'
59. The children show good levels of developing independence. They select from a range of appropriate activities and get out and put away equipment carefully. They know the importance of personal hygiene and dress and undress themselves for physical education with little fuss.

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

60. The overwhelming majority of the children are articulate and confident in their speech. They happily explain their work to visitors, discuss what they find easy or difficult and talk readily about life at school. Many are equally confident when sharing news in front of the whole class. However, their listening skills are not as universally well developed because one or two pupils still find it difficult to understand that they need to listen to the views of others.
61. The teaching generally provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their speaking and listening through the use of group discussions, carefully structured conversations over work and the occasional use of role play. The quality of this work is at its best when there is an additional adult to guide activity. For instance, when the teaching assistant introduces new work on the sounds of letters through the published scheme favoured by the school. On these occasions the pupils are skilfully led into the early stages of reading and writing through a variety of interesting and purposeful tasks, such as making the shapes of letters in play dough. The higher attainers use these letters to build simple three letter words.
62. The children are clearly enthusiastic about books and many have already made a good start in learning to read. The vast majority follows the teacher's reading of stories such as 'The Three Wishes' and some make sensible predictions about what might happen next. When they hear old favourites such as 'Good-night Owl, they all join in the repeats at the right moment.
63. Both the teacher and the teaching assistant carefully model the teaching of writing. The reception children are sensibly involved in parts of the literacy hour when there is an analysis of word groups and the patterns in spelling, and are also able to see how letters are formed. The children then write their own thoughts and news in a variety of settings and also have more focused exercises where the teaching assistant checks that correct letter formation and the sounds of letters are mastered at an early stage.

### **Mathematical development**

64. The pupils' are clearly on course to meet the targets of the Foundation Curriculum in regard to their knowledge and understanding of number and shape. Much of their current work focuses upon two-dimensional shapes where they have made good gains in their learning. For example, they make effective use of sponge printing techniques to create pictures with a range of shapes such as circles and squares. One pupil explained that he is able to make a rectangle by cutting his square shape into two.

65. The teaching in this type of activity is effective because the classroom assistant is careful to extend the pupils' understanding by using mathematical language and asking relevant questions, for instance, 'How many squares have you printed?' and 'Are there more circles than squares?' As the pupils finished this printing, they further developed their work by matching shapes and by using three-dimensional shapes for constructing models. Once again this provided further useful opportunities for the assistant to check the pupils' understanding.
66. The teachers take care to ensure that counting and sorting activities feature prominently during the course of each day. It was therefore possible to see that most of the reception pupils count confidently sets of objects up to ten and understand how to add on one or two more and how to take some away.

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

67. Most of the pupils are developing a good understanding of the world around them. Many have already travelled extensively outside this country and there was rapt attention when one boy returned from Florida complete with his diary of drawings and souvenirs that he 'read' to the class. At other times the children were observed making confident use of cassette players to listen to stories on headphones and the class computer to carry out simple simulation games.
68. However, the teaching does not always build successfully on this good foundation. Much recent work has focused upon the differences between day and night and light and dark. In the lesson observed, the teacher questioned the children skilfully so that they were able to recall a great deal of their previous work about light sources and making shadows with torches. It became clear that their levels of understanding in this area meet the early learning goals. However, little new learning took place because the teacher was not sufficiently clear about what she expected the children to achieve during this lesson. She read expressively an appropriate story about the contrast between the different animals that are awake at the night and day, but didn't mention the key word 'nocturnal' that was included within her plans. The subsequent task of creating two contrasting collages of night and day had the potential to inspire and motivate, but the pupils had no chance to show what they could do because the teacher spent too much time talking about the work.

### **Physical development**

69. The majority of the pupils demonstrate good levels of manual control when using pens and pencils, and in handling tools such as scissors and glue sticks. They paint and print with confidence and use materials such as play dough with imagination.
70. It is clear from informal observation of the children at morning and lunchtime breaks that their spatial awareness and general physical co-ordination are at least in line with the targets set out within the Foundation curriculum. However, the one lesson of physical education observed was unsatisfactory because the plan lacked a clear focus and the teacher kept the children inactive for far too much of the time. The children had been indoors all day because it was wet and windy and they needed to exercise vigorously. Although the early stages provided that opportunity with some well-conceived chasing games, the subsequent work on stretching movements away from the body or close to the body was not properly explained. As a result, several children became restless and stopped paying attention. The teacher attempted to control this by cutting short opportunities for practical work and getting the class

to watch one or two children show what they had done. However, this simply resulted in more pupils losing interest.

## **Creative development**

71. There is generally sound provision for the children's creative development. The teachers provide an appropriate range of opportunities for the children to draw, paint and print. They sometimes make three-dimensional models and use a range of other large-scale equipment to build and construct. The class role-play area enables the children to use their imagination to explore other characters and worlds.
72. One lesson provided strong evidence of the importance placed upon music as part of the children's creative development. They have learnt a good number of nursery rhymes, such as 'Hickory Dickory Dock,' and 'Ring a Roses', that they sing tunefully and with confidence. During the lesson, the teacher got the children to pay attention to how the volume of their voices affects the performance. They varied this to good effect and by the end of the lesson were also adding actions to their songs.

## **ENGLISH**

73. Although the small number of pupils taking the tests each year means that the statistical analysis of results must be carried out with caution, it is quite clear that since the last inspection standards in English have continued to rise. By the end of Key Stage 2, they are now well above average.
74. In last year's national tests, the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved results that were in the top five per cent nationally and were equally high in comparison to similar schools. The results also indicate that the pupils had made very good improvement since taking their Key Stage 1 tests. An analysis of the results of the past three years shows some dramatic swings in the performances of boys and girls. However, taking their results as a whole it is evident that on average both boys and girls leave school with skills and knowledge in English that are about two terms ahead of the expected level.
75. The reason why the results are so strong is that the improved approaches to assessment are helping the teachers to establish a much closer match of task to the abilities of the pupils. Thus last year a large number of the higher-attaining pupils achieved results beyond the expected level. Similarly, the teachers take great care to help the few lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to do their best and achieve to the maximum of their potential. This year there is a wide spread of abilities, but a significant proportion of the Year 6 pupils are working beyond the expected level and standards continue to be well above average.
76. In last year's national tests for seven-year-olds, the pupils' results in reading were well above the national average in comparison with both the national picture and similar schools. Their results in writing were above the national average and in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. This year's cohort at Year 2 contains a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs, but standards remain slightly above average because a few higher-attaining pupils are working beyond the expected level.
77. The improvement in test results and the generally good quality of the teaching observed during the inspection are both firm indicators of the school's successful implementation of the national literacy strategy. The teachers have a secure understanding of how to teach the basic skills of literacy, and this is frequently enhanced in lessons by their own personal

enthusiasm and wide-ranging knowledge of books and literature. As a result, the lessons are often a successful synthesis of well-informed discussion and debate, varied and stimulating reading tasks, and writing for a wide range of purposes.

78. For instance, the current study in Year 2 of 'All Pigs Are Beautiful,' by Dick King-Smith is providing the pupils with valuable insights into how to extract important information from a text. The teacher knew this particular text would motivate some of her pupils because of its subject matter. As a result, the children were interested from the outset and worked very hard. Most of the pupils read the text confidently and the teacher's careful questioning swiftly established that most understood what they had read. However, the use in the text of technical language such as 'sows' and 'gilts' led to further interesting debate and good opportunities for the teacher to help the pupils to find references in the text that illuminated meaning. It also allowed her to check that the pupils remembered how to use a simple index and to extend the work by requiring most of them to compile a list of the unfamiliar words in alphabetical order. The children found this challenging and rewarding. They showed good commitment, concentration and independence in successfully ordering their lists prior to using a range of simple dictionaries to check the meanings of words. Meanwhile, the teacher was able to support the few pupils with special educational needs as they constructed a sentence about pigs based on what they had previously heard.
79. The majority of the few pupils identified as having special educational needs have difficulties linked to delays in the development of their literacy skills. The school manages its provision for these pupils successfully, both within mainstream lessons and in the occasional use of well-targeted support outside the classroom provided through initiatives such as Additional Literacy Support [ALS]. In one of these ALS sessions, two pupils at Stage 3 of the special educational needs code of practice were observed working extremely productively under the tuition of a teaching assistant. The assistant had prepared thoroughly and was making very effective use of the materials provided for this support. She swiftly helped the pupils to revise their previous work on the sounds 'ay', 'ai', and 'a\_e' by getting them to provide examples of each. It was evident that the pupils enjoy extremely positive relationships with the teaching assistant and wanted to succeed. As a result, they worked extremely successfully to provide a good list of appropriate words. When the assistant read them a poem with the same sounds appearing at regular intervals, both the pupils showed good auditory awareness by raising their hands each time the sounds appeared.
80. Further good examples of the way that teachers take care to include the pupils with special educational needs were observed in the good and occasionally very good teaching of English within Key Stage 2. It was evident, for instance, in the way that the teachers take care to welcome back pupils who have been absent and then get the rest of the class to explain what has happened since they were last at school. It was also equally apparent in every lesson observed that the questions asked of those with special educational needs were pitched accurately at level appropriate to their prior attainment.
81. The English lessons with pupils in Years 5 and 6 rattle along at a very brisk pace because the teacher is an experienced practitioner with extremely high expectations. The current work on fables builds convincingly on the pupils' previous learning about myths and legends. The teacher uses correct technical language throughout, and as result, so do the pupils. They spot, for instance the similarities in the features of fable and of the parable they heard during morning worship. They maintain a record of 'useful words' and can therefore provide and explain examples of 'metaphorical expressions.' The quality of the debate is often high. For instance, following the class's fluent and expressive reading of Brian Moses' version of the

fable 'Fox and Crane' one pupil swiftly challenged the view that the fox is a generous character by quoting directly from the text; 'He liked to entertain himself at the expense of his guests.' This type of detailed and perceptive scrutiny is further evidenced in the wide range of reading undertaken by the vast majority of Years 5 and 6, and the strong development of their personal tastes. A minority appears to enjoy the work of J K Rowling, but a significant number are dismissive expressing a preference for authors such as Jacqueline Wilson. Their reading diaries show that most pupils read prolifically and that they are encouraged to include authors such as Dahl, Ian Serrailier and C S Lewis. The recent investment in books and teaching materials has resulted in good improvement to range and quality of literature within the library that is available to pupils throughout the school.

82. The quality of the pupils' writing has also improved considerably. By Years 5 and 6, almost all the pupils are writing fluently in ink in a neat and expressive style. There is also strength in the way that all their work in English is dated and their headings underlined. Their work covers a good variety of styles and genres including letters, stories, factual accounts and evidence of research, for example, for the recent bird survey carried out in the school grounds. The pupils' well-developed writing skills make a strong contribution to the good quality of their work in many other areas of the school's curriculum such as history and science.
83. The teachers' marking varies in quality across the school. In Key Stage 1, it is generally confined to a tick and a brief comment and occasionally pieces of work appear to have been unmarked. By the end of Key Stage 2, the marking is far more thorough. There are often helpful commentaries that explain how the pupils might improve their work. This was shown, for example when the teacher wrote, 'The ending needs more work. The story finishes too abruptly.' A good example of how this helps to motivate the pupils is seen in one child's book where she has written at length to the teacher saying, 'I'm sorry I haven't done much. I'm very confused because...' The ensuing dialogue provided telling evidence of the strong bond of trust that is being established between student and teacher and their joint commitment to learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. The 2000 National Curriculum test results showed that at the age of seven, the pupils' attainment in mathematics was very high when compared to all schools; over half of the pupils attained the higher level. The results are a big improvement on those achieved by the 1999 cohort. When compared with schools that are broadly similar, the pupils' attainment was well above average. Over a three-year period their performance was also well above average.
85. In the 2000 National Curriculum test results by the age of eleven, all pupils reached the expected level with just under half of them achieving at the higher level. This was well above average when compared to schools nationally and to those with broadly similar intakes. There have been significant swings in attainment in mathematics over the last four years, but overall the pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 was above average. Last year's results show no major difference in the attainment of girls and boys.
86. At the time of the previous inspection, the pupils were reaching average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. The inspection findings show a similar picture at Key Stage 1 where one third of the current Year 2 cohort are identified on the register for special educational needs. At the end of Key Stage 2, the inspection

findings show that standards have improved when compared to those found in the previous inspection. Just under a half of the pupils in the current Year 6 cohort are likely to achieve at the higher level of attainment by the end of the school year.

87. The teachers throughout the school have raised standards in numeracy significantly. They have established the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy effectively. They rightly stress the importance of mental calculations and in nearly every class these sessions are carried out at a very brisk pace, promoting quick responses from all pupils. For example, the pupils in mathematics group containing Years 3 and 4 were observed calculating confidently in their heads the multiplication and division problems with 180, the special number of the week. They were confident and accurate in their interaction with the teacher. The rapport between the teachers and the pupils in all classes is very good and this helps to sustain the pupils' concentration throughout the lessons.
88. The pupils steadily build upon their previous learning and the amount of work completed so far this year is good. The quality of teaching, throughout Key Stage 1, is sound and almost all the pupils including those with special educational needs make sound progress. By the age of seven, the majority of them have a good understanding of place values up to three figures. They can sequence numbers up to 100 and can count accurately and confidently in multiples of 2, 5 and 10. They have progressed well to measuring in metres and centimetres and nearly all know and can describe the properties of common two- and three-dimensional shapes.
89. The pupils throughout Key Stage 2 make good progress because of the good quality of the teaching, particularly at Years 5 and 6. Most of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make rapid calculations in their heads as they recall facts about 8, 9 and 10 times tables. They use approximations, and can halve and double numbers very well. Nearly all have a clear understanding that there are many ways to arrive at a correct answer. The higher-attaining pupils work at a level that is above average for their age, and make generalisations which show that they are beginning to think algebraically. Most pupils calculate co-ordinates in four quadrants, and use brackets correctly. The teachers give all pupils good encouragement and this brings about a high level of enthusiasm for mathematics and the confidence to 'have a go'. For example, in one lesson seen, nearly all pupils in both Years 5 and 6 confidently shared their knowledge of angles. Most are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the different types of angles and confidently use protractors to measure accurately to within one degree. The high standard of the pupils' work was a direct result of very good teaching skills in a very well structured lesson. The high expectations of the teacher and the high level of challenge extended the pupils' knowledge substantially beyond the expected levels for their ages.
90. Throughout the school, the teachers' plans for mathematics are carefully prepared. The learning objectives set by the teachers follow the numeracy strategy and the activities are very well structured. This ensures that the work becomes increasingly more demanding and builds effectively upon previous learning to bring about a thorough understanding of mathematics in each age group. The teachers in Key Stage 2 make good provision for the range of attainment in their classes, and as a result all pupils make good progress in their learning. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported by accurate individual education plans and detailed lesson planning and that are matched to their learning needs. The teachers plan lessons with a good balance between class, group and individual work. The lesson introductions and conclusions are used well to reinforce what the pupils are expected to have learned. Within this purposeful ethos, the pupils demonstrate good attitudes

to work by responding enthusiastically to their teachers. This inevitably has a positive effect on their learning. Most pupils have learned to take pride in their achievements and in the main the quality of their workbooks is good.

91. The school successfully follows a well-planned and balanced programme that covers and regularly reinforces all the required areas of mathematics. The opportunities for the pupils to develop investigative skills are much improved since the previous inspection. The subject is well co-ordinated and the headteacher monitors the teachers' planning and the quality of their teaching. Some use is made of information and communication technology, for example PIP in work on co-ordinates in Years 3 and 4, and a nationally approved programme on angles and the recognition of two-dimensional shapes in Years 5 and 6, but in the main computers play a limited part in the mathematics curriculum.

## SCIENCE

92. The results of last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards were above average when compared to all schools nationally, and that they were average in comparison to the results in similar schools. A particular strength was the very good performance of the higher-attaining pupils. Almost a half of this cohort achieved beyond the expected level 4. Currently, the work in Year 6 indicates that approximately half of the pupils are likely to achieve the expected level and half are on target to reach the higher level 5. Therefore, standards are likely to remain above the national average.
93. Analysis of the national test results of the past four years shows significant variation in attainment between cohorts and that over this period the level of improvement is below that seen nationally. By the time the children leave school, the boys have been achieving levels about one term behind their age and the girls about two terms ahead. The school is monitoring the performance of boys and girls in detail.
94. In Key Stage 1, the teachers' assessments of the pupils' work last year indicate that standards at the age of seven are below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was very high. A small number of pupils did not perform at the expected level in the assessments. Although the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher level was very high, overall these results are low when compared to those achieved by pupils attending similar schools.
95. An analysis of the pupils' current work in science shows that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with national average, and they are above this at the end of Key Stage 2. The curriculum covers all aspects of science including investigations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was found that the lack of practical work was adversely affecting the attainment of boys. There is now little difference in the progress made by both boys and girls and overall progress is sound throughout both key stages. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their work and are making good progress throughout the school.
96. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are sound across all elements of the learning programme for science. The teachers' planning is well structured and follows a clear sequence, which enables the pupils to develop early science concepts soundly. They recognise the differences between living and non-living material and can sort objects either by these criteria or by their properties. They explain how natural and man-made materials have a variety of purposes. They recognise how materials can be changed in shape by

processes such as heating, bending, squashing, twisting and stretching. The increased opportunities to develop their investigative skills are having a positive influence on attainment. For example, the pupils in Year 2 test materials to see if they let coffee stains through the fabrics such as cotton, silk and leather and are able to make predictions and to record their findings appropriately. The teachers support their pupils well, giving help and encouragement where needed.

97. The pupils continue to make sound progress across the science curriculum in Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils can explain the requirements of a healthy diet and can use their knowledge in devising a balanced meal. They understand how the different teeth are used to bite and chew food. When conducting experiments on materials, the pupils recognise that some changes are reversible while others are not. The teacher ensures that the pupils have opportunities to build on their previously learned skills by differentiating the activities so that each year group extends its input into the planning of the investigations. In their work on soils, for instance, the Year 4 pupils devised their own methods of investigation and recording into the different rates that water passes through various soils. Prediction is also playing an important part in their work. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a sound knowledge of each strand of the National Curriculum. They have a good understanding of the human body and can describe the function of major organs. They know of the human life cycle including reproduction. When describing the growth of plants, they show understanding of pollination and germination. Most pupils develop a good scientific vocabulary.
98. Overall, the teaching is sound in both key stages. The teachers plan their lessons effectively and share the learning targets for the lesson with pupils. They have good class management skills and this results in pupils being attentive and well behaved. There is appropriate balance between the teachers' explanations and the pupils' activity. The pupils show a clear understanding of their tasks and enjoy working individually and co-operatively. In a Year 2/3/4 lesson, the teacher skillfully reinforced previous learning on the importance of erosion in forming different soils. They were encouraged to work in small groups to measure out samples of soils and to time the rate at which water passed through them. All pupils worked co-operatively, shared resources and took care in recording their findings as accurately as they could. The teacher recognised pupils who were reluctant to be involved and gave them individual support and encouragement. By the end of the lesson, these pupils had completed their task.
99. The school has a clear policy and scheme of work. The scheme successfully addresses the issue of mixed age classes. Formal methods of assessing the pupils' attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection. The teachers evaluate the result of each lesson, and they adjust their planning accordingly. There is occasional inconsistency in the teachers' expectations when correcting the pupils' work. The marking of work is encouraging in tone, but does not always provide the pupils with a commentary that tells them how to improve what they have written. Some teachers ensure that the pupils' work is dated in order to monitor progress, but others do not.

## **ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. Throughout the school, all groups of pupils make sound progress in art. By the age of seven, most pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected. By the age of eleven, their ability to record their artistic observations, to experiment with different media, and to apply their increasing knowledge of techniques is good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection because all the teachers take great care to plan

interesting and challenging lessons. The ideas suggested in the teaching programmes at the upper end of Key Stage 2 are extended with flair. The good use of sketchbooks further encourages the pupils to experiment with ideas and styles. They concentrate hard on their work and regard art as an intellectual activity. This, and the very good teaching at the upper end of the school, makes a significant contribution to the achievement of high standards by the time the pupils leave school.

101. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show confidence in drawing. They use a sketchbook to record experimentation with pattern and texture. When painting, they show confidence in mixing colours to create different shades. Their printing skills are developed and they take care when producing repeating patterns. The pupils are also confident in using collage materials to make simple models. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils develop skills in observational drawing. They understand how to use line and tone when drawing still life. In their painting and collage work, for example, they employ their skills to develop their understanding of costume in their studies of the Tudors and Romans.
102. Evidence of design and technology gained from the teachers' planning and from work on display around the school shows that there are limited opportunities for the pupils to develop the skills needed in this subject. Consequently, standards are below those expected nationally. The pupils enjoy whole-school projects on a termly basis that provide design and make opportunities. For example, during the autumn term the pupils worked in mixed age groups rotating through a variety of activities such as biscuit baking, and making cards and articles to sell at the Christmas Fair. Overall, however, the provision lacks the structure needed to ensure that the pupils acquire skills, understanding and knowledge in a progressive way. **This is a key issue for action.**
103. No teaching of art and design was observed at Key Stage 1. The teaching observed at Key Stage 2 varied significantly, but was at least sound. The teachers ensure that the activities are well matched to pupils' needs. Very good use was made of the support assistant who worked well with the younger pupils in the class. For example in their work on creating patterns, all pupils including those with special educational needs, were well supported and made good progress in their learning. The pupils particularly benefit from the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. They enjoy art and design, concentrating and persevering well to meet the expectations made of them. This was seen in a very good lesson where they were building on the previous week's work by extending their skills in making containers. They are keen to work, and show a genuine desire to improve. One boy explained why he thought his first container had not been successful. His container, built in the shape of a house, was significantly better than his original piece of work and reflected his determination to succeed. The pupils value the support and evaluative comments they receive from the staff and benefit from opportunities to experiment and make decisions about the materials and techniques to use. They are able to describe the use of computer software to create pictures and patterns, which are displayed in the school.
104. The teachers plan art and design lessons in relation to the school's scheme of work. They ensure pupils use sketchbooks to record ideas and practise skills. However, there is inconsistency between classes in the use of these books. In some classes, the teachers ensure that work is dated in order to monitor their pupils' progress. However, in other classes, work is not dated and no improvements are suggested. There was limited evidence of any design and technology opportunities and experiences and this confirms the judgement that the subject is not being taught in a structured and systematic way. Therefore the pupils

do not progressively develop the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject. **This is a key issue.**

## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

105. Only one geography lesson was seen, in a Key Stage 1 class, and no history lessons in either key stage. However, from discussions with the pupils and a scrutiny of their work there was sufficient evidence to make judgements. The limited amount of lesson observation in these two subjects was due to timetable constraints during the period of inspection. The available evidence confirms that most pupils meet the national expectations in both subjects at seven and eleven though at the age of eleven standards are higher in history than in geography. This is because the expectations of the teacher who teaches history at the end of Key Stage 2 are high and consequently the subject is covered in greater depth and the pupils present their work well.
106. In geography, at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have gained a good understanding of the physical and human features of their local community and of more distant places. The teachers teaching Key Stage 1 pupils provide them with a wide range of interesting experiences in both history and geography. In the one lesson observed, Year 1 pupils studied the life of Katie Morag on the Isle of Struay. They were able to explore the similarities and differences in the lives of people on the island and in those of the inhabitants of their local village. They made good progress in their learning because the teacher had planned the lesson well. She used questions very effectively in focusing on the differences and similarities, and the pupils were encouraged to work independently as they recorded their facts. They use geographical terms accurately and with increasing confidence. They know the purpose of simple maps and how to draw and use them. Local history links are also clearly made. In history, in Class 2, the pupils' study of the Romans was brought to life with a visit to the Caerleon Centre where they dressed as Roman soldiers.
107. Throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils build progressively in both history and geography on the sound foundation laid at Key Stage 1. Their geographical skills become more refined. They compare their own environment with that of different areas of the British Isles, Europe and countries in other parts of the world, such as India. They study climate around the world and can write about the reasons for the changes linked to geographical position. In history, there is evidence of good cross-curricular links with art through the pupils' collage work on Tudor costumes. Literacy skills are used effectively in their written work as pupils in Years 5 and 6 write about the lives of the people in Tudor times. In Years 3 and 4, several examples of the pupils' work in history demonstrate that they are acquiring a sound body of knowledge and understanding of the past. For example, they have good understanding of the Ancient Romans and Anglo-Saxons.
108. The teachers base their half-term plans upon the national guidelines for both history and geography and this has given effective structure to the development of the subject. However, the scrutiny of pupils' work in both these subjects shows that at the end of the Key Stage 2 the teacher's expectations are higher in history than in geography and are reflected in differences in attainment. By the age of eleven, the pupils achieve standards that are higher in history than in geography. There is inconsistency in teachers' expectations between both classes and subjects. Some teachers ensure work is dated to monitor progress. In other classes, this is not the case and no improvements are suggested.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Since the last inspection the school has continued to make steady progress in improving the quality of its provision for this subject, but more still needs to be achieved, especially in relation to the curriculum for control technology. **This is a key issue for action.**
110. At the end of both key stages, the pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected of seven and eleven year olds, but few exceed them. There are several reasons for this. Although the computers are adequate in number, they are shared out so that each class has two or three at its disposal. This means that it is difficult for the teachers to ensure that when they have demonstrated a new skill or program all the pupils get the chance to practise immediately. Although the teachers are now much better at identifying opportunities to utilise new technology across the breadth of the National Curriculum, they often lack the confidence and knowledge needed to manage this. The imminent arrival of additional training provided through New Opportunities Funding will help address this issue.
111. A good example of the limitations of the current organisation was observed when the Year 2 teacher demonstrated how geometric shapes and lines could be produced by the program 'Paintspa.' Nine pupils had to crowd round one fourteen-inch monitor and the limited view caused two or three of them to lose concentration. The teacher explained clearly the features she wanted the pupils to use and linked this carefully to the pupils' previous learning. However, the lesson would have been improved by the more consistent use of the correct technical language and greater opportunities for the children to demonstrate what they could do. As it was, the lesson ended before anyone really had a chance to get to grips with the latest features and apply them to their work.
112. Conversations with the pupils in Years 5 and 6 show that most of them have a keen awareness of the significance of information and communications technology in their daily lives. The vast majority has a computer at home and uses it regularly. For example, the teachers sensibly encourage the pupils to attempt to use word processing for important pieces of homework. The pupils speak enthusiastically about their use of computers at school such as the current research into Tudor navigators using a CD Rom encyclopaedia, and the database that was set up a few weeks previously during a school-wide study of birds. They remember using a programmable electronic toy when they were younger, and one or two have vague recollections of using a program such as 'Logo' to control the screen cursor. However, it is evident that the curriculum relating to control technology requires considerable work and greater prominence if these pupils are to realise their true abilities in all aspects of this subject.

## MUSIC

113. Although it was possible to observe only a little music teaching within Key Stage 2, it is clear that the school makes some good provision for this subject.
114. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 are at the early stages of creating a music, drama and dance performance in partnership with a number of other local small schools. In order to achieve this, the schools are making extremely effective use of the expertise of a specialist music and drama teacher. The pupils have already devised a collection of ideas on 'Space and the universe,' that their teacher has set to music. The lesson observed during the inspection saw the pupils take their first steps towards learning the song and devising a movement sequence

to perform with it. They achieved a great deal in a comparatively short space of time. The confident and knowledgeable teacher was able to set a brisk pace for work because he was thoroughly prepared and knew exactly what he wanted to achieve in the time available. The use of a pre-recorded soundtrack with an interesting arrangement and compelling rhythmic patterns motivated the children and provided a fitting accompaniment to their words. The teacher's ability to demonstrate what he wanted helped the pupils to master swiftly the tune and the phrasing of the song.

115. The pupils' commitment showed in the number of good ideas they came up with for the movement sequence. The teacher welcomed all suggestions and showed great skill in spotting swiftly those that might link well within the sequence. The final section of the lesson provided an excellent indication of the very good progress made when the teacher introduced the skill of 'focus.' By getting the class to focus their eye contact on the same spot in the hall as they danced and sang, the level of the pupil' performance gained considerable dramatic impact.
116. The school's provision for the teaching of music benefits considerably from the strong contribution made by the local authority music service. Almost a third of the pupils play instruments such as the flute and clarinet. The quality of the teaching is very good and many pupils make rapid gains in their musical skills, knowledge and understanding. For instance, a small number of the current Year 6 pupils are already working towards the Grade 4 flute examination. Once again the specialist skills of the peripatetic teacher, his thorough preparation of interesting material and effective use of pre-recorded accompaniments all contribute to the positive working ethos observed during the lesson.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

117. By the end of Key Stage 2, the quality of the pupils' work in gymnastics is in line with the expected levels. It was not possible to observe the teaching of this subject in Key Stage 1.
118. Both the lessons observed built effectively upon the pupils' previous work. The teachers' planning sets out clearly what the pupils are expected to learn and identifies a good range of teaching approaches. The pupils worked sensibly and safely, following the good example of their teachers who were appropriately dressed for their role. Care was taken to ensure that the pupils received an adequate warm-up before starting work in earnest. During this part of one lesson with Years 3 and 4, there was a good link to the pupils' earlier work in mathematics by referring to turns in terms of ninety-degree rotations, both clockwise and anti-clockwise.
119. By the age of eleven most pupils talk about and execute safely a good range of jumps including, tuck, straddle, star and pike. The way the teacher encourages the pupils to evaluate each other's work shows that they understand the importance of a good starting position and a clean, balanced landing. Their work on balancing on different points of the body is in line with the expected levels. At the time of the inspection these were beginning to be incorporated successfully within a sequence of other movements. The pupils show a good awareness of the need for transitional movements to be carried out smoothly and to ensure a variety of height in their body shapes.
120. The pupils work hard in their lessons and exercise vigorously. They try hard to improve the quality of their performance, by listening carefully to suggestions of their teachers and classmates. Their application and behaviour are consistently very good.

121. Despite its small size, the school offers a good range of extra-curricular sport for pupils at Key Stage 2. There are currently clubs for netball and soccer, and in the summer rounders, athletics and cricket take the field. Mixed teams of girls and boys represent the school in small-sided competitions with other neighbouring village schools and the results are proudly reported during assemblies.
  
122. The whole school goes swimming each summer term. Standards are high because every pupil leaving the school at age eleven can swim a minimum of twenty-five metres and most swim much further. A significant number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have acquired watermanship and survival qualifications.