

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BEECH GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wellington

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123711

Headteacher: Mrs K Chappell

Reporting inspector: Mrs Kay Cornish  
21080

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 243042

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Courtland Road  
Wellington  
Somerset

Postcode: TA21 8NE

Telephone number: 01823 662438

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs L Lettley

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21080	Kay Cornish Registered inspector	Mathematics; Art.	Characteristics of the school; The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9644	Michael Whitaker Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27568	Midge Davidson Team inspector	Design and technology; Geography; Religious education; Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage.	
15334	Julie Hooper Team inspector	English; History; Music.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22578	Gavin Jones Team inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; Physical education; Equal opportunities; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Beech Grove Primary School is above average in size with 312 pupils with almost equal numbers of boys and girls. There are eleven classes with an average of 28 pupils. All pupils come from homes where English is the main language. The number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register is 58, which at 19 per cent, is slightly below the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs as defined by the DfES Code of Practice<sup>1</sup> is 1.3 per cent and is below the national average. Currently, the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 22 per cent, which is slightly above the national average. There were three exclusions in the most recent year. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup>. Assessments of children on entry show that they have attainment that is broadly typical of other primary schools in the local education authority, with lower scores in mathematical development. The site is spacious with well kept communal areas, and adjoins Wellington's beautiful park.

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

Despite significant changes in staffing over four years, Beech Grove Primary School is effective in providing a relevant education for its pupils. Standards of pupils' attainment in key subjects have improved throughout and, by the age of 11, are close to nationally expected levels, apart from mathematics and science. Reading and art standards are above expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning overall by the age of 11, and good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Older pupils have been most affected by changes in staffing, but there is every indication that the situation is improving and that standards are getting better. The exceptional, educational vision of the fairly new headteacher, and the strong support from staff and governors, have ensured several successful developments since the previous inspection. Observed teaching during the inspection was good overall. All pupils are fully included in all aspects of school life resulting in good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school gives satisfactory, and acceptable value for money.

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

- The excellent headteacher is incisive and an inspirational leader of staff.
- Teaching is good at the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, with some good features in Years 3 to 6.
- The provision and leadership for special educational needs are good.
- Standards in reading and art are above national expectations.
- Good behaviour, relationships, attitudes and pupils' personal development are ensured through the good support given by all hard working staff.
- The excellent chair of governors is frequently in school, supporting pupils and staff.
- Governors have close links with the school and are very good at strategic planning.
- The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is excellent, resulting in very good management of change.

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<sup>1</sup> Code of Practice: This gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

<sup>2</sup> The Foundation Stage refers to children from entry up to and including age six when they complete the reception year.

## What could be improved

- Standards of pupils' attainment in mathematics and science particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Planning for progression of pupils' skills when taught in the older, two-year age ranges.
- The impact of all co-ordinators of subjects upon standards, whilst recognising the good start that has already been made.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection, with very good management of change. Key issues from the previous inspection have been mainly rectified. The National Literacy Strategy has been very effectively implemented. The number aspect of the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented, but there is still a need to improve the other elements of mathematics: shape, space, measures, and analysing and collating data. A new overview of the curriculum for all age groups has been undertaken. Planning in lessons has improved with the exception of some units of study for mathematics, science, geography and design and technology for Years 3 to 6. Changes to the structure of staffing and the new delegation of co-ordinator roles have improved monitoring and management. New assessment procedures provide better information about the learning of pupils. The headteacher has closely monitored teaching and the planning of the curriculum. All statutory requirements are now met. Standards have been raised in reading, writing and art. The formulating of the school's improvement plan is very good and arrived at very democratically by governors and staff.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores<sup>3</sup> in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	B	D	C
Mathematics	C	D	E	E
Science	C	D	E	D

**Key**

well above            A

average above        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

*Similar schools are those with between 20 and 35 per cent free school meals.*

Compared with all schools, pupils' attainment in 2001 at age eleven was below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, mathematics was still well below, but English and science improved. Trends over three years, 1999 to 2001, show that English standards were close to national averages, whilst mathematics and science were below. Based on average points, school trends are upwards. The lower scores in 2001 reflect a higher number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group and the significant changes of teachers in Years 3 to 6. Fewer pupils achieved higher levels. The situation has stabilised and it is evident that better standards are improving as pupils progress through to older age ranges.

<sup>3</sup> Average points scores refers to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

Current figures show in Years 1 and 2 pupils have made good progress from entry and have above average standards in reading, art and history in Year 2, and are average in writing, mathematics and science. Current standards in reading and art are above the average in Year 6. English standards meet the national average. In all other non core<sup>4</sup> subjects, standards are close to the nationally expected levels apart from design and technology and geography, which are below in Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science have improved in Year 6 from well below, to below average in certain aspects of the National Curriculum. Standards in calculating numbers are close to the national average, but there are weaknesses in aspects of shape, space, measurement and handling data. Investigational science and science linked to information and communication technology (ICT) are weaker, but pupils' subject knowledge is close to what is expected. Clearly, standards are rising.

Assessment of children on entry to reception shows a wide range of attainment, with the majority close to the expected level of the local education authority, apart from mathematical development, which is below. By the end of reception, most children are on target to attain the nationally expected levels of the Early Learning Goals<sup>5</sup>. Pupils with special educational needs have good provision and they make good progress towards their individual targets. Higher attaining pupils are usually well challenged in Years 1 and 2, but insufficient achieve the higher levels of the National Curriculum tests in Year 6. Attainment in religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Overall, the picture is one of staff working hard to improve standards and the school is currently well placed to bring about the necessary changes for the better.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good and pupils enter school confidently. Most pupils try very hard to reach the whole school's current target: to improve presentation, resulting in success.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is predominantly good. Pupils are polite to visitors and helpful to teachers. The very few unco-operative pupils are not allowed to disrupt the learning of the majority. There have been three exclusions over the preceding year – all for fixed periods.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are good. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities and to reflect on the impact of their actions on others.
Attendance	Attendance is good and above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

<sup>4</sup> Non core subjects are art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.

<sup>5</sup> QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.



The quality of teaching during the inspection was good overall. Seventy-six lessons were observed. Seventeen lessons were very good, thirty-four lessons were good and twenty-five lessons were satisfactory. No lessons were unsatisfactory. Pupils' recorded work over time reflects satisfactory teaching with some very good aspects. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 resulting in good learning. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory with good features, mainly in the effectiveness of the teaching methods used. The main weakness in Years 3 to 6 is in planning for the progression of pupils' skills within two-year age range classes, in order to challenge the older and higher attaining pupils. The teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is good so that reading standards are good. Teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy is good for number work and calculations, but is weaker in other areas of mathematics such as shape, space, measurement and handling data. Teachers ensure good links are made to other subjects, particularly to art, history and geography, but the links between mathematics, science and information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. The teaching of reading and art throughout is good. History teaching is good in Years 1 and 2.

Since recent staff changes, the improvements in teaching are beginning to influence standards. The school is doing well to overcome the significant changes over three years and is enthusiastic to take on board opportunities to participate in extra training for teachers. This is very encouraging.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has made considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The planned curriculum is relevant and meets statutory requirements. It is mainly balanced, apart from insufficient planning for some aspects of science and mathematics. The teaching time allocated for Years 3 to 6 is below the nationally recommended time per week.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision and support are good. Pupils who have extended needs have full access to the curriculum. The educational psychologists, speech and behaviour therapists are particularly supportive of pupils in the school. Pupils with special educational needs are included well. It is less successful for other pupils who sometimes miss basic lessons because of the way provision for music is co-ordinated.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The successful promotion of good moral and social development, and certain strengths in spiritual and cultural development, ensure that pupils grow in personal insight and awareness. The school succeeds in maintaining a warm, friendly community ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for child protection and ensuring a high quality of care. All staff work very hard to maintain a safe, clean and happy environment. The assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good. The analysis of assessment information to guide whole school planning is good.

Parents consider that the school is good. The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents are accurately informed about their children and the school. The school is a well ordered community, offering a warm welcome.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has exceptional vision for the development of the school. She is incisive and an inspirational leader of staff. Her deputy is industrious and gives very good support, particularly in the field of ICT. The delegation of duties is clear and the performance management cycle for staff is excellent. Due to the short time some staff have been employed at the school, some subject co-ordinators' roles are still underdeveloped. The school is implementing a very good training programme for improving teaching expertise and management of subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The chair of governors gives excellent support and is frequently in school. Governors show obvious commitment to the school and share with staff a positive drive to improve standards. The management for change is very good. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's good improvement plan is arrived at very democratically. It provides a very clear programme of action from a thorough evaluation of the school's strengths and needs. Due to close monitoring, the school has already identified key issues that need to be rectified.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its budget prudently and there is a good financial policy. There is very good use of strategic resources, including specific grants, so that extra support staff and 'booster' classes can be funded. The poor storage of resources at the school is a handicap but there are imaginative plans to extend the storage area and improve resources. The spacious accommodation and site are used to good effect, but the lack of sufficient outdoor provision for the Foundation Stage, and the poor drainage of the school's field cause problems. Best value principles are applied regularly and the school gives satisfactory and acceptable value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open, friendly ethos.</li> <li>• Children's pride in their school.</li> <li>• School values.</li> <li>• Spirit of co-operation in children.</li> <li>• Effort put into Christmas shows.</li> <li>• School choir's community involvement.</li> <li>• After-school provision.</li> <li>• Improving standards,</li> <li>• New ICT suite.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications about the curriculum.</li> <li>• Inconsistency in handling behavioural issues.</li> <li>• Lack of information sessions or workshops for parents on curriculum matters.</li> <li>• Lack of a bike shed.</li> <li>• A few parents were concerned about homework provision.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with all that pleases parents and with opinions about current improvements. Inspection evidence does not support the view that communications about the curriculum taught to their children is unsatisfactory because the school's diary states clearly when meetings were held. Inspectors consider that homework provision is satisfactory and that the

behaviour policy is regularly and systematically applied by staff. There is a bike rack where bicycles can be left.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is close to the expected level of the local education authority with the exception of mathematical development. By the time pupils begin their formal schooling in Year 1, most have made satisfactory progress in language and mathematical development, and good progress in other areas of the Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1, children are in line with the Early Learning Goals in the main, but are ahead in some aspects. This is a similar picture compared with the previous inspection.

2. The overall picture is that current standards are improving, but the rate of improvement is more pronounced in Years 1 and 2.

3. At the time of the previous inspection, the majority of pupils, by the end of Year 2, reached the expected level of attainment in all subjects and sometimes exceeded it. By the end of Year 6, the majority reached the average and expected levels for all subjects, but there were weaknesses in art, design and technology, geography and physical education. Higher achievers lacked challenges. Art and design and physical education standards have improved, but standards in mathematics and science are still below at the end of Year 6, but not well below as in 2001. Design and technology and geography are below nationally expected levels at Year 6. Overall improvement has been satisfactory since the previous inspection.

4. In 2001, the National Curriculum assessment results show reading and writing attainment in Year 2 as slightly above the national averages, but mathematics was below. In Year 6, standards in English were below the national average; mathematics was well below; and science was below. Higher attaining pupils in reading at seven years attained Level 3 scores similar to the national average, but were below in writing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 were well below the national averages in English, mathematics and science. In Years 1 and 2, trends over three years from 1999 to 2001 show that reading and writing standards exceeded the national upward trend. Mathematics standards fell below. Girls performed better than boys.

5. In Years 3 to 6, trends over three years 1999 to 2001 show that English standards were close to the national average; mathematics and science were below. Girls performed better than boys. Based on average points, school trends are upwards. The Year 6 lower scores reflect the significant changes in teachers. In the recent two years, seven teachers left and four teachers were appointed. Since the previous inspection, there have been two changes of headteacher. The situation has now stabilised and it is evident that younger pupils with better standards are moving upwards through the school and beginning to impact on the scores of pupils in Year 6. Instead of being well below national averages in mathematics and science, they are currently below and improving. Year 6 in 2001 had a higher proportion of special educational needs pupils and these pupils have now left the school.

6. Results based on pupils' prior attainment at the age of seven, and when compared with schools in similar contexts, show that, by the age of eleven, English attainment was average in 2001, but that mathematics and science attainment was well below the national averages. Pupils did not attain sufficient grades at the higher Level 5. Since 2001, standards in mathematics and science have slightly improved at the end of Year 6.

7. Current pupils in Year 2 have above average standards in reading and are average for speaking, listening and writing. In Year 2, mathematical standards are mainly average with slightly above average standards in using and calculating numbers. In Year 6, standards in mathematics are below the national average overall, but meet the expected levels for attainment in number. Science standards in Year 2 are close to the national average, but are below the national average in Year 6.

8. In all other subjects, standards are close to the nationally expected levels, apart from design and technology and geography, where attainment is below in Year 6. Standards are above the expected levels in history in Year 2, and art throughout the school. Attainment in music was not graded because very little teaching of whole classes was observed, although small groups reach the appropriate music levels. Standards of religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

9. Pupils with special educational needs made good progress towards their own particular targets. When they receive direct support on an individual, or very small group basis, they make very good progress. Individual education plans are of a very good quality and contain clear and specific targets which lead pupils to make step-by-step gains in knowledge and understanding. Annual reviews help set new targets to which pupils can work in order to secure continuing progress.

10. Currently, in Years 1 and 2, higher attaining pupils are better challenged due to the good planning of lessons for separate year groups, with precise learning targets for small groups of pupils who are supported by very skilled teaching assistants. As a result, pupils' learning progresses more speedily. There are high challenges in art throughout, and in history in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6, planning for two-year mixed age classes does not challenge the higher attaining pupils sufficiently. For example, in a mathematics class of higher attaining Years 5 and 6 pupils, the Year 6 pupils were given the same learning targets as the Year 5. In addition, the overall curriculum provided in mathematics throughout does not cover all aspects of the programme of study in sufficient depth. Likewise, there are gaps in the whole school approach to planning for progression of pupils' skills in science. A similar picture exists in some other subjects. In addition, the Years 3 to 6 pupils have suffered more from the adverse effects of teacher changes in recent years.

11. The headteacher has wisely identified the need to raise standards and is confident that the school can achieve its higher targets. She has made the necessary alterations to key staff roles and new co-ordinators' appointments, and has implemented some excellent performance management provision to increase staff's expertise, which has resulted in observable improvements all round. Quite clearly, standards of pupils' attainment are rising.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are good, which represents an improvement over the satisfactory attitudes noted in the previous inspection. Children in the Foundation Stage feel secure and are confident about leaving parents on arrival. They follow well established routines - hanging up coats, stowing lunch boxes and taking their seats on the carpet for registration - without being reminded. Children with duties, such as organising the crates of lunch boxes or taking registers to the office, carry them out promptly and with minimal fuss. The great majority of pupils demonstrate good, positive attitudes to school. In lessons, they are keen and enthusiastic, responding well to challenge, as was seen, for example, in a Years 1 and 2 geography lesson, in which pupils were using street plans and photographs in a mapping exercise. In a few lessons, when the pace is slower, or the material less challenging, pupils lose interest to the detriment of their own learning and that of the rest of the class.

13. The previous report noted that behaviour was “satisfactory overall, ranging from good to occasionally poor.” Behaviour is now good; in a third of lessons seen, it was judged to be very good – a significant improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection. Behaviour in the playground and at lunch is lively but no instances of oppressive behaviour were observed. Pupils are polite to visitors, standing aside and opening doors, and are helpful. There are occasional pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour, chiefly amongst boys in Years 3 to 6, but competent pupil management ensures that such instances do not disrupt the learning of the majority. School premises and resources are handled with care. There have been three exclusions over the preceding twelve months – all for fixed periods.

14. The school is an inclusive community; harassment for reasons of gender, race, ability or background is absent.

15. Pupils’ personal development is good. All pupils have classroom duties which they carry out without the need for reminding. Older pupils have responsibilities, such as acting as house captains, librarians, helping younger children in the playground and setting up the hall for assembly. From their early days at school, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon the impact of their actions on others, through a good, effective programme of personal and social education. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, and even some Foundation Stage children, show that they are beginning to grasp the difficult concept of personal responsibility. Older pupils demonstrate high levels of maturity in addressing sensitive issues, as was seen, for example, in a mixed Years 5 and 6 sex education lesson, in which pupils considered the processes of female reproduction. Whilst pupils are encouraged to work independently, there is less evidence of their acting on their own initiative. No pupils, for instance, were seen using the school libraries for independent research.

16. Relationships are good, an improvement on the sound relationships reported at the previous inspection. Adults in school provide a model of good working relationships. In a number of classes, there is an obvious warmth and rapport between staff and pupils. Relationships are especially good between pupils and support staff, including lunchtime supervisors and the site manager. Teachers value all contributions, thus encouraging the hesitant child to ‘have a go’ at answering. Pupils relate well to each other. They work well in pairs and groups and spontaneously applaud good effort on the part of others. Parents at the Ofsted pre-inspection meeting said that they appreciated the spirit of co-operation in the children.

17. Attendance is good; it is above the national average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is below average.

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

18. Observed teaching during the inspection was good overall. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection, when 21 per cent of observed lessons were unsatisfactory. During the current inspection, no lessons were unsatisfactory. Seventy-six lessons were observed. Seventeen lessons were very good, thirty-four lessons were good, and twenty-five lessons were satisfactory. Pupils’ recorded work over time reflects satisfactory teaching with some very good aspects. There are strengths in the effectiveness of teachers’ methods and organisation, in the use of teaching assistants and in the management of pupils’ behaviour and relationships. Teaching is mainly good at the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. However, there are weaknesses in the planning for pupils’ progression of skills in mixed age groups in Years 3 to 6.

19. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage for all aspects ensures that children are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The impact of good teaching in personal, social and emotional development and physical development means that most children will exceed the Early Learning Goals in these areas. During the inspection there were some examples of very

good teaching, particularly to develop good progress in moral and social issues and in number work and physical activities.

20. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is predominantly good with strengths in teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subjects for this age range. The use of teaching assistants to support small group teaching in mixed age groups is very good. Teachers plan precise lesson targets for each age group so that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. The management of pupils' behaviour is good at this age range, and teachers are thorough when reinforcing basic skills, as, for example, in the recognition and use of correct coinage in mathematics lessons. Lessons are of good pace in Years 1 and 2 and this enables pupils to be well focused and concentrate to the maximum.

21. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory with good features, mainly in the effectiveness of the teaching methods used. However, there is some lack of expertise in the teaching of mathematics, although the headteacher has recently organised some extra courses for mathematics in the forthcoming weeks, in the drive to improve pupils' learning. The main weakness in Years 3 to 6 is in the planning for the progression of pupils' skills within a two-year age range, in order to challenge the older and higher attaining pupils so that standards are raised. In addition, there are weaknesses in the resourcing of some subjects, namely design and technology. As a result, teaching of skills to use resistant materials, such as wood, is restricted.

22. Teachers' knowledge and teaching, of the National Literacy Strategy is good. There are good links made to other subjects, particularly art, geography and history, so that pupils' research skills are reinforced and the learning of other cultures is enriched through interesting art activities. Teachers provide good enrichment programmes throughout the school year so that most pupils have equal opportunities to participate. Teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy is good throughout for number, the reinforcing of knowledge of the value of digits and calculating with all four operations. The teaching of using and applying numbers is good. However, there is less secure teaching of weight, capacity and length throughout, and of area, volume, shape and space in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of handling data, graph work and mathematical links to ICT is unsatisfactory throughout. These weaknesses are due to insufficient planned provision for these aspects throughout the school year.

23. Teaching by learning support assistants is good overall. Some teaching, by the special needs co-ordinator and a learning support assistant was very good. In these cases, the relationships between the teacher and pupil were a strong feature of the work, which itself was very carefully planned, varied and built upon small gains in understanding. Where pupils with special educational needs were working in a class without specific help, their needs were not always noted in planning, and specific work was, therefore, not always provided for them.

24. Since recent staff changes, the improvements in teaching are beginning to influence the trends in standards. The school is doing well to overcome the significant changes over the recent three years. Teachers and all staff have worked hard to make an effective team and are enthusiastic to improve professionally and take on board the opportunities given for extra training. This is very encouraging and is having a steady impact on pupils' learning, which is improving, slowly and steadily.

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

25. The school has made considerable improvement since the previous inspection, which took a critical view of the range and quality of its curriculum. There was an absence of planning schemes in some subjects, planning was insufficiently detailed, and there was a lack of monitoring of curriculum plans to ensure that all subjects were taught in line with

National Curriculum requirements. Most of these issues have been addressed successfully, and the planned curriculum is generally broad and balanced, apart from in mathematics and science, where not all programmes of study of the National Curriculum are provided for in sufficient depth. In addition, the planning for progression of pupils' skills, when taught in a two-year age range in Years 3 to 6, lacks challenges for older and higher attaining pupils.

26. The curriculum planning for children in the reception classes is good and enhanced by a range of well planned activities. Planning has been revised to bring it fully in line with the new recommended curriculum for children of this age. The teachers plan together closely to ensure that children's developing skills are built on systematically as they move through this stage of their education. Teachers work closely with teachers at the next stage of the children's education to continue to develop the current good practice, and this provides children with a firm foundation for, and smooth transition to, their next stage of work of the National Curriculum.

27. Most subjects have been reviewed in the light of Curriculum 2000. There are curriculum maps in place giving an overview of what is to be taught for all age groups, and teachers mainly use nationally recommended schemes to help them with their planning. This ensures that the curriculum meets statutory requirements and pupils' skills are built on systematically as they move through the school. The headteacher monitors planning fortnightly and makes classroom observations to ensure that what teachers plan, is taught. English and mathematics are given appropriate priority and all classes have daily literacy and numeracy sessions. The National Literacy Strategy is securely established with good practice evident in most classes.

28. Provision for implementing the number element of the National Numeracy Strategy is good and effective for consolidating pupils' skills in calculations and application. However, the school is less effective at implementing the whole of the national targets for space, shape, measures and handling data. The programme of religious education is consistent with the locally agreed syllabus. Personal, social and health education is provided for satisfactorily. Pupils receive sex education and are made aware of the dangers of drugs. There is a draft policy in place for the provision of homework, and when homework is given it makes a sound contribution to pupils' learning and attainment. Cross-curricular links are often very effective in promoting pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made Anderson shelters in design and technology which supported their historical studies of World War II well.

29. Currently, the amount of teaching time for the seven to eleven year olds is significantly less than that recommended nationally. During the inspection it was observed that when pupils were withdrawn from classes for activities such as guitar and recorder lessons, they consistently missed their entitlement to other areas of the curriculum, such as history and science, and this is unsatisfactory.

30. The school provides a suitable programme for extracurricular activities, which includes homework, games and environmental clubs, and supports pupils' learning satisfactorily. An appropriate range of educational visits and visitors with specialist expertise, such as authors and poets, enrich the curriculum. The quality of the contribution made by the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory and the school benefits from gifts, for example, for raffle prizes, from local businesses. Relationships with the secondary school and playgroups are good, and these contacts support pupils' overall progress effectively.

31. Pupils who have special educational needs have full access to the curriculum. They are supported both in their classes and sometimes by withdrawal from their classes. Pupils with higher order needs, including those with statements of special educational needs, receive a good quality curriculum, which, wherever possible, is planned for their varying needs. The Code of Practice is fully implemented.

32. Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

33. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is supported well through the close links established in assemblies, religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils have many opportunities to empathise with the feelings and emotions of others and this is a reflection of the ethos and aims of the school. In well planned assemblies, pupils are given quiet times to reflect on the message of the day and to join in prayers, as, for example, in 'The Sound of Silence'; a story which illustrated how to find the other self within. All pupils know the school prayer and this is used in all assemblies. While considering the concept of rights and responsibilities, the older pupils have good opportunities to relate two articles from the Charter of Rights of the Child and think of them in relation to their own school charter. In best practice, reflection is led by suitable music and enhanced by prayer. Not all assemblies, however, exploit the use of music or art to increase the spiritual dimension of worship. The spiritual quality of discussions about emotions, for example, thinking of whose footsteps you will follow, and considering the emotions connected to the story of Jonah, contribute well to this provision.

34. Moral and social development are very good. From the earliest age, children learn to tell the difference between right and wrong. The school's accepted code of behaviour is discussed frequently and rewarded both in the classroom and more publicly in assembly. Those who have received 'beech trees' stickers are celebrated and appreciate their efforts towards house totals. The strength of the personal, social, health and citizenship education programme, and an emphasis on discussion of feelings, enable pupils to make judgements about ethical issues and personal values: for example, in an assembly concerned with rights and responsibility. The school's aims and values which reflect the behaviour policy, are supported by displays in classrooms and the hall. This is well established in the school and an effective system of rewards and sanctions is used. Where necessary, pupils learn how to resolve conflict by discussion with peers, and this is skilfully led by the headteacher, and in class by teachers. Pupils relate well to adults and each other. They have many opportunities to share opinions with one another. They have a structure which gives older pupils the chance to be house captains and members of the school council. The scope of the personal, social, health and citizenship education curriculum allows many opportunities to develop personal qualities of honesty and thoughtfulness, and there are good opportunities to share in corporate experiences in assemblies, residential visits and outings.

35. Cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities are provided to study and celebrate other cultures during an annual multicultural week. Pupils have studied aspects of life in Ghana and this year will be studying Brazil. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the understanding of world faiths, and literacy and art give good support for the understanding of pupils' own and other cultures. Pupils celebrate their own locality in historical and geographical studies. They sing traditional English songs. In this aspect of the curriculum the school has improved its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education since the previous inspection.

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

36. The school has good procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. Both the headteacher and a Years 1 and 2 teacher have been trained in child protection matters. All staff, including support staff, are aware of the action to be taken in cases of concern. Pupils are taught about personal safety in personal and social education lessons, and access to the Internet is screened to prevent pupils from accessing unsuitable sites. Parent volunteers working in school are police-checked. All the necessary procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety. Fire drills are held regularly, contracts are in place for safety inspections of fire-fighting equipment, electrical items and physical education apparatus. A member of the governing body has responsibility for the supervision of health and safety; and she, and the site manager, make regular inspections of the premises. There are competent



arrangements for meeting pupils' medical needs. The previous inspection report mentioned a number of omissions in the school's health and safety arrangements; all have since been addressed.

37. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Criticisms in the previous report have been dealt with. Registers are called at the beginning of both daily sessions and the information transferred to the office computer weekly. Absences are followed up appropriately. Where necessary, the school has recourse to the services of an educational social worker. The need, however, is rare. Whilst families do take holidays in term time, the incidence is not so great as to present a problem.

38. There are good, effective procedures for promoting high behavioural standards. Children are introduced to the school's behaviour expectations as soon as they join the Foundation Stage. The behaviour code is based on five simple rules – the School Charter. These are known and understood by the vast majority of pupils and are often used as the basis of behaviour discussions in class assemblies and personal and social education lessons. The school's high behavioural expectations are underpinned by a series of rewards – both individual and group – for behaviour, effort, academic success and so on. Some parents have expressed concern that the use of rewards is inconsistent between classes. Those concerns have not been borne out by inspection evidence; the approach to discipline is consistent. All staff, including classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors, are trained in behaviour management and can issue rewards or impose sanctions. Unsatisfactory behaviour, including bullying, is recorded and monitored for recurrence. Where necessary, parents are brought in to discuss the problem. The school's procedures and ethos have made it free of any sort of focused unpleasantness – there have been no instances of racial or gender harassment.

39. Arrangements for promoting pupils' personal development are good, although informal and largely based upon good relationships and staff's knowledge of their pupils. Records of personal development are few; more recording would have assisted the school over its recent period of high staff turnover.

40. There are good systems for identifying the needs of pupils. All members of staff work together well to assess the special educational needs of pupils. A sensible number of specific tests are used to confirm needs and diagnose weaknesses. All information is carefully recorded and gives very good support to all supporting adults. Where appropriate, the school involves the advice of outside agencies. The educational psychologists, behaviour support therapists, and speech therapists, are particularly supportive of pupils in the school.

41. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in formulating procedures for assessment and putting them into effect. As a result, teachers are better informed about the standards their pupils reach. However, this information has yet to be used sufficiently to 'fine tune' planning in Years 3 to 6, in order that the specific needs of all ages and abilities of pupils are met fully within older, mixed age classes.

42. Assessments are carried out effectively when children first enter the school. Through these assessments, first signs of children's special needs are noted. Overall, the information is used well to gauge children's progress over the time they spend in the Foundation Stage. A good analysis is made of the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, in order to check where strengths and weaknesses lie in both teaching and learning of English, mathematics and science. This information enables the school to check the progress made by pupils from one test to the other.

43. The school is in the process of re-assessing pupils within each year group to inform its tracking system more fully and it has been using a series of tests, between the national tests at ages seven and eleven. These are administered in 'Challenge Weeks' in September and February. Whilst these have shown how pupils make progress in areas of reading, spelling

and elements of mathematics, they are not graded in the same way as the National Curriculum tests and are, therefore, not easily used to make comparisons. The school is aware of this problem and is already actively considering the adoption of other nationally recommended tests, which will contribute more to the school's ability to check pupils' progress and record its current information carefully, especially from Year 3 to Year 6.

44. The school has recently begun to set a range of targets for whole school, year groups and individuals, mainly in aspects of English and mathematics. This is still in the early stages of development and does not yet fully meet the needs of all pupils. The school has not made full use of the detail within different levels of the National Curriculum upon which to base its targets, neither has it yet set any targets for science. Individual pupils have access to targets, which appear in some classes on wall displays, but these targets do not appear before pupils, in their books, so that they might meet them on a daily basis as they work. However, a good initiative, seen in Years 1 and 2, shows teachers checking pupils' progress against the learning objectives for lessons in English, mathematics and science. This is a good beginning for noting individual progress and providing targets related to pupils' individual needs.

45. There is little assessment work carried out in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. All co-ordinators are aware of this but due to the short timescale some co-ordinators have been responsible for their subjects, this is still an area for development. Assessments are used well to provide for pupils with special educational needs. They are used equally well in order to check the need for some pupils to receive specific support, such as in extra language support, 'Springboard' mathematics or 'Fun Gym'. Marking is satisfactory across the school and is best when it provides pupils with information upon which to base their own improvements.

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

46. Parents consider that the school is good. The school works hard at establishing good, effective links with parents and is successful. A number of parents work voluntarily in school, helping with hearing children read and with practical subjects, such as art. Parents provide additional supervision on school trips and on the annual residential visits. To encourage more parents to become actively involved, the school has set up forums, such as the 'governors' tea party', to which parents can contribute their views on a range of topics in an informal setting. Parents are welcome to attend school events, such as sports day or Christmas drama performances. Events involving children are supported strongly, but parental support for more formal occasions, such as the governing body's annual meeting, or the Ofsted pre-inspection meeting, is poor.

47. The overall package of information provided for parents is of good quality. Regular newsletters keep parents informed about school activities and information evenings about early years reading, the teaching of numeracy and National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, have been arranged. Newsletters inform parents of the topics their children will be studying in the ensuing term. Parents have three formal opportunities a year to meet their children's teachers; in the autumn term, when parents can meet their child's new teacher, in the spring term, when targets are discussed, and in summer when the child's report is handed over. New parents are invited to a meeting at which their child's assessment on entry to school (baseline assessment) is explained. There is good, informal contact with teachers; parents particularly appreciate their willingness to discuss minor issues at the beginning or end of the school day. Pupils' reports, whilst meeting basic statutory requirements, do not give parents a sufficiently detailed view of attainment and progress in all subjects. Detail is provided about English, mathematics, science, ICT and religious education, but there is no comment regarding the rest of the curriculum.

48. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. The review of pupils' special educational needs is often carried out with parents being present. At

such reviews, all interested parties meet to discuss current progress and look towards setting new targets. An experienced and able governor, with responsibility for special educational needs, provides a clear and supportive link between the school, parents and the governing body.

49. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at home. Most parents support the school's homework policy and a number make effective use of their children's homework diaries and home-school reading records. All have signed and returned the home-school agreement. The school has a vigorous 'Friends' association that raises impressive sums through a range of social activities, some of which involve pupils (thereby contributing to pupils' personal development). The money raised is used for the benefit of pupils' learning: for example in the purchase of computer equipment, four digital cameras, stage curtains, picnic benches, magnetic whiteboards and so on.

50. Parents are supportive of the school. Those attending the Ofsted pre-inspection meeting, responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire and those interviewed during the inspection, particularly appreciated the school's values, the open friendly atmosphere in school and the ready availability of staff to discuss problems informally. Parents were satisfied that standards were continuing to improve and they particularly appreciated the creation of the ICT suite. Some respondents to the questionnaire expressed concern about the homework provision but inspection evidence does not support that concern; the school's use of homework is satisfactory. A few parents were concerned about the consistent application of the behaviour policy; again inspection evidence does not support those concerns. Sanctions and rewards are used consistently, in accordance with the school's policy.

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

51. Since the previous inspection, there has been good improvement in how well the school is led and managed, despite significant changes. At the time of the previous inspection, there was a new headteacher, who left in 2000. The current headteacher was appointed as headteacher in November 2000, having been deputy at the school from April 1997. A new deputy has since been appointed. In the recent two and a half years, seven teachers left and four new teachers have been appointed. Therefore, there have been a number of changes made to the roles of co-ordinators of subjects, some of which have been for the better.

52. The excellent headteacher has exceptional vision for the development of the school. She is incisive, and an inspirational leader of staff. Her deputy is industrious, gives very good support, particularly in the field of ICT, and together, they give very clear educational direction and are very good managers. Both have had strong support from the governing body and all staff to build on good developments and to implement positive change. Many worthwhile initiatives have been implemented since autumn 2000, and key issues from the previous inspection have mostly been rectified. These include:

- Implementing the National Literacy Strategy very effectively;
- Implementing the number aspect of the National Numeracy Strategy successfully;
- A new overview of what is to be taught for all age groups has been implemented, which draws upon nationally recommended schemes for subjects;
- Improving the planning for lessons in most subjects, with the exception of some programmes of study for mathematics, science, geography and design and technology in Years 3 to 6;
- Changes to the structure of staffing in Years 3 to 6 and new delegation of co-ordinators' roles;
- New assessment procedures to provide better information about pupils' learning;
- Close monitoring of teaching and teachers' planning of lessons;
- Meeting all statutory requirements;

- Raising standards, particularly in reading and writing.

53. The governing body is very good in fulfilling its statutory duties and in shaping the direction of the school. The excellent Chair of Governors gives excellent support, is frequently in school, and has ensured close links between governors, staff and pupils. Governors show obvious commitment to the school and share with staff a positive drive to improve standards. The management for change is very good and based on a careful analysis of the school's needs and strengths. For example, the school's good improvement plan is arrived at very democratically. It starts in September with a full conference of all staff, including administrators and site officers, to discuss the whole school's policy, when the headteacher presents an audit of strengths and needs. This is followed by groups discussing how new developments could improve the areas they are responsible for, and the whole of the findings are drawn up in a school improvement plan which has cost implications and identifies key people to carry out the action plan's targets.

54. The delegation of staff to managerial responsibilities is very clear and successfully managed by the headteacher. It is strongly supported by the outcomes of the excellent strategy for appraisal and performance management. This was a priority of the new headteacher when she commenced her duties and the performance management action plan is already operating its second cycle. All targets of staff are set, formalised and in the process of being measured. As a result, the need to ensure that subject co-ordinators have sufficient support to have greater influence in their subjects' planning and standards has already been identified. The reasons that some roles are still underdeveloped are due to the short timescale some staff have been employed at the school, the 'settling down' of the new planning for mixed-age groups, and the fact that improving the teaching expertise for some subjects is still ongoing in the timetable for the staff's training programme. When the current targets have been reached in the performance management cycle of all staff, the school will be in a much stronger position to improve pupils' standards and the co-ordination of subjects. It is now a question of time.

55. There is a satisfactory number of teachers in the school, with a very good proportion of support teaching assistants. The training of teaching assistants is very good and they are expert in small group teaching, particularly in reception and Years 1 and 2, where the management of their time and expertise is very effective and well supported through precise, shared learning objectives in lessons. Monitoring of subject planning is satisfactory, with some areas of need already identified, namely the need to plan carefully for pupils' skills in mixed upper age classes, so that higher attaining pupils are more fully challenged. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher is excellent in its support. Monitoring of pupils' work is good as, for example, in the recent whole school target to improve presentation of work.

56. Accommodation is good. Classrooms are of a good size, having regard to the numbers and ages of pupils. There are two libraries, comfortably furnished and attractively laid out. There is a very good food technology area, and an extension to the library houses an after school 'Homework Club' for pupils as well as providing a valuable area for working during the school day. Storage space, however, is inadequate. This impacts negatively upon pupils' development as it is not possible, for example, for them to collect and set out physical education apparatus. Outside, the hard play area is adequate for the numbers of pupils. There is, however, no discrete secure play area for children in the Foundation Stage. The grounds are attractively laid out, with an environmental area, which is used to support lessons and the after school environmental club. However, the school's field is frequently waterlogged and unusable. The premises are cleaned and maintained to a high standard under the vigilant supervision of the site manager, and all staff work hard to ensure the safety of pupils.

57. Resourcing for pupils' learning is satisfactory, and is good for art, religious education, special educational needs and the Foundation Stage. It is unsatisfactory for design and technology and geography as, for example, in a lack of tools to use and a lack of large scale

maps and aerial photographs. There have been good improvements in the provision, so far, for ICT. Shared libraries and the food technology area are positive features and used frequently. The school makes good use of the local area and community links to enrich pupils' learning, particularly for history and art. The poor storage of resources at the school is a handicap and inhibits pupils' independence and opportunity for retrieving and returning resources. The school has recognised this problem and has some imaginative plans to extend the storage area and improve resources when building work is complete. The spacious site is used most effectively, the only drawback being in the lack of availability of the school's field during wetter months, because of its poor drainage.

58. The school has policies for both inclusion and equal opportunities and they are both of good quality. Strengths within the delivery of special educational needs work ensure that all of these pupils have an inclusive curriculum. Weaknesses are evident in planning for classes with two-year groups where plans are not yet clear enough to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their year group, make appropriate progress. The planning of the music timetable creates difficulties for the full inclusion of other subjects for certain groups of musical pupils, and not all pupils have their full entitlement to the curriculum for music. The school has identified a group of pupils who are able, and exceptionally able, but has yet to devise any specific curriculum for them.

59. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages the good provision for special needs with unobtrusive skill. She has good qualifications and experience, which she utilises to the benefit of both adults and pupils alike. Well qualified and dedicated learning support staff make very good provision for the success of the care of pupils with special educational needs. The school is already in the process of drafting out a new policy in line with the latest recommendations. Pupils with special educational needs have already been reassigned using the newly recommended levels of need. The governor and the co-ordinator for special educational needs meet regularly to update information for the governing body.

60. The school's financial and daily administration are most efficient, due to industrious administrative officers working closely together to support the school's staff and governors. As a result, daily routines are well established and calm. New technology is used very effectively to inform teachers, parents and governors. The good financial policy shows clear financial delegation and a register of pecuniary interests is maintained by the governing body. The use of strategic grants is very good, as, for example, in supporting additional staffing for 'booster' groups and improving National Curriculum assessment results. The management of the budget is prudent and made with accurate judgement from a careful analysis of the school's needs. In addition, parents and the community have supported the school strongly, enabling the purchase of much needed resources, such as for ICT and physical education.

61. The school uses the principles of 'best value' with serious intent. Pupils' achievements are predominantly satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils have good attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Inclusion for all pupils is rightly identified and improving. Leadership is very good by key staff and governors. There has been steady improvement overall since the previous inspection and good improvement in certain areas. The school gives satisfactory and acceptable value for money.

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

62. In order to address effectively the issues of this report, the headteacher, staff and governing body, in conjunction with the local education authority, should:

- Improve standards of pupils' attainment in mathematics by:
  - Providing further opportunities throughout the school to handle data and communicate findings in tabular form and graphs using ICT;
  - Increasing the amount of pupils' experiences and recording of two-dimensional work, area and volume in Years 3 to 6.
  - Ensuring that all staff in Years 3 to 6 receive further professional development in mathematics to improve their expertise and planning for tasks to meet all pupils' needs in the full range of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum.

(Paragraphs 10, 21, 22, 28, 83, 86, 90)

- Improve standards of pupils' attainment in science by:
  - Ensuring that the full range and depth of the science curriculum is taught;
  - Ensuring investigational skills continue to improve;
  - Providing sufficient links with ICT;
  - Giving more challenging tasks to higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6.

(Paragraphs 10, 95, 96, 97, 99, 100)

- Improve the planning for progression of pupils' skills when taught in a two-year age range in Years 3 to 6, in order to challenge the older and higher attaining pupils and raise standards.

(Paragraphs 10, 18, 21, 41, 55, 80, 83, 87, 94)

- Ensure that the good start made to increase the impact of all subject co-ordinators on subjects in order to improve standards, is further developed.

(Paragraphs 11, 45, 54, 89)

As well as the above issues, the following minor issues should be considered in the governors' action plan:

- Improving the outdoor provision for learning in the Foundation Stage;
- Ensuring that the teaching time allocated for Years 3 to 6 meets the national recommended time;
- Improving the timetabling for music to ensure pupils' full entitlement to other areas of the taught curriculum;
- Ensuring that pupils' standards in subjects, other than English, mathematics and science, are reported upon to parents;
- Improving storage and accessibility of resources;
- Ensuring that the school's playing field is available for use all year round by overcoming the problems with drainage.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	17	34	25	0	0	0
Percentage	0	22	45	33	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	312
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	60

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4



National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	27	20	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	26
	Girls	17	18	19
	Total	42	44	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (94)	94 (94)	96 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	43 (46)	43 (45)	44 (44)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (96)	91 (94)	94 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	25	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	16
	Girls	18	10	18
	Total	31	22	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (83)	47 (65)	72 (79)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	16	17
	Girls	17	17	19
	Total	29	33	36
Percentage of pupils	School	62 (71)	70 (65)	77 (73)

at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	311
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.08
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	28

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	262

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-01
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	£
Total income	612,667
Total expenditure	618,228
Expenditure per pupil	1,891
Balance brought forward from previous year	37,346
Balance carried forward to next year	31,785

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.4

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	310
Number of questionnaires returned	51

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	43	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	53	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	62	4	4	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	54	14	4	4
The teaching is good.	51	47	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	46	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	43	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	45	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	38	6	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	49	29	12	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	41	10	0	14

## **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**

63. The Foundation Stage of the school comprises two reception classes for 47 children. Children start school in the September after they have attained the age of four, and, after a staggered entry programme, attend school full time by October. There is an extensive programme of meetings for parents and opportunities for children to meet their new teachers before they start school. Class teachers visit local playgroups and there are 'play together' sessions and story time with the headteacher. A very well prepared starter pack of information is available.

64. As a result of this good provision, children make a peaceful and happy start to their school life. Good levels of contact are maintained with parents and carers throughout the year, through formal and informal meetings. The reception classes participate in all aspects of school life; they play outside at break times, attend assemblies and use other parts of the building for learning, as, for example the ICT suite. This ensures that children make a smooth transition to the next stage of their education in Year 1.

65. Children enter school with attainment broadly typical of most schools in the local authority area, but slightly below in mathematical development. They make good progress overall and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most children will have achieved the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development, and most children will exceed the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. The majority of children will meet the Early Learning Goals in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

66. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. During the inspection there were examples of very good teaching seen. The quality of teachers' planning is good. Teachers give a great deal of thought to the daily organisation of groups in their classes. Value is given to the expertise of learning support assistants and they have an equal responsibility in the good management of children. There is a peaceful atmosphere in both classes. All adults get to know the children very well. The quality of organisation is good and movement from one activity to another runs smoothly. Routines are well established. Work is planned well for different ability levels and imaginative activities, which are linked to the current theme, lend relevance and richness to children's learning.

67. The curriculum offered to the children is well planned and incorporates the six areas of learning. The teachers are successful in maintaining a good balance between teacher-focused and child-selected activities. This ensures that these young children continue to learn through well planned play opportunities. This is particularly notable during mathematics and literacy sessions. Children's progress is recorded well during each session. All adults evaluate the activity for which they are responsible. They keep particularly careful note of the progress made by individual children in mathematics and literacy. In this area, learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the effective learning made by the children. The children in both reception classes have equal opportunities and similar activities. Although children have regular opportunities to play outside, and extend their physical development through the use of wheeled toys, there is no secure designated area which can be used as an outside learning environment.

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

68. The teaching of this area of learning is good and children make good progress. They learn to dress and undress themselves for physical education and respond well to the routines of school. The importance placed upon moral and social development throughout the school is reflected in the reception classrooms. Children learn how to take turns and

respond in discussions. They empathise with the feelings of others through stories about Noah and Jonah. They think about whether it is good to run away, having heard the story of the Gingerbread Man. They share their news and share special events. They are able to take their part in school and infant assemblies. They share and play together well.

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

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children will have achieved the Early Learning Goals in this area of their education. They make satisfactory progress overall. However, better progress is made with reading and many children are confident with books, acquiring a sight vocabulary and using pictures as clues to help them to read. The teachers successfully employ a structured reading scheme and progress is carefully monitored in class. Most children share books at home and a special record is kept for this. The structure of the literacy sessions ensures that every child works with an adult each week to read and write. Most children become very confident with their writing and are happy to 'write' unaided. Progress in this area is well supported by inventive ways to record: for example little books and writing frames. Writing activities are often well supported by using the contents of a 'story sack', in which are smaller copies of the larger shared text, puppets for the characters and a related game. Children learn to form letters correctly and are beginning to recognise the initial sounds of words. Speaking and listening skills are extended when adults share in creative play in the 'café'.

### **Mathematical development**

70. Children make good progress in mathematical development and most will attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the year. In this area some particularly good teaching was observed during the inspection. Children count confidently and can count to and back from ten. They consolidate their learning by regular and good use of number action songs. By using counting songs effectively, children are beginning to understand about subtraction (ten green bottles). They are able to use pennies to buy two items from the shop and a few are able to calculate change from ten pence. Well linked activities support and extend the learning. Children are beginning to learn to write numerals to five and can recognise numbers to ten and count beyond. Resources for mathematics are well used and often particular items are made by the teacher for specific lessons. Children can recognise common two-dimensional shapes and use them to make pictures. They are confident with the concepts of 'more' and 'less' and know how to make one more than a given number.

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

71. Children make good progress in this aspect of learning and the majority will exceed the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year. Well planned opportunities are provided for children to use their senses to explore their world. They are able to explore changes by melting chocolate in their hands, in a polythene bag, and changing it back by solidifying it in cold water. Good questioning and opportunities to talk about what is happening significantly increases the level of children's learning. Later, children experience other aspects of change when they watch toast being made and spread butter on it and watch while it melts. Good progress is made in ICT. Children learn how to 'drag' and 'drop' with the mouse to dress a teddy. They are learning how to use a powerful drawing program and have made pictures of their favourite meal, linked to work in the classroom. They learn how to cut, stick and join materials to make sun hats and sunglasses, and careful photographic records are kept of work completed. Children make pictures of their front door, which opens, having been for a walk to visit their own houses. They draw an imaginative map of their way to school. They understand that food comes from various sources and make decisive choices about the sandwiches they like and dislike.

### **Physical development**

72. Children make good progress in their physical development because of well planned activities and good teaching. Most children will exceed the Early Learning Goals before entry to Year 1. Children learn how to use space well in the hall and have good opportunities to run, jump, hop and skip, that they really enjoy. They know that they need to warm up before exercise to 'warm their muscles' and they realise that their heart beats faster when they run about. Children make good progress in learning how to throw and catch in small groups. Learning support assistants participate fully in lessons, and sensitively support the less mature children, enabling them to make good progress. Children are beginning to learn how to play a game. They enjoy experimenting with movements, whilst balancing a bean-bag on various parts of their body. They have good opportunities to use larger equipment for balance in the classroom and have a chance to pedal and use physical education equipment outside. Teachers sensitively plan activities that develop small physical skills, like handwriting or colouring, together with opportunities for balancing, jumping and running. At present there is no designated secure area attached to the classroom that can be used as an outside learning environment.

### **Creative development**

73. Children make good progress in this area of learning due to the well planned activities and good teaching. They develop particularly good skills in printing, which are used frequently in mathematics for sequencing patterns and making shape pictures. They use colour well and are able to paint observational pictures of fruit and vegetables. They have good opportunities to make collaborative collage pictures, illustrating where food comes from. The contribution of creative work to the rest of the curriculum has a significant impact on children's learning. Opportunities for creative role play are good and are utilised well to support learning, particularly in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. Where adults participate in this area, children make particularly good progress with speaking and listening skills. Teachers deploy learning support assistants and adult helpers well in this area of the curriculum.

### **ENGLISH**

74. Standards in English are similar to the judgements made at the previous inspection and continue to be typical for pupils in Years 2 and 6.

75. Overall, speaking and listening skills of pupils throughout the school are generally in keeping with their age. However, there is a significant minority of pupils in all age groups who display above average standards in speaking and listening. Most pupils speak clearly, and communicate their thoughts and feelings well in lessons. They speak confidently and articulately, using an increasingly wide vocabulary as they move through each year group. Most teachers are good role models and speak clearly, enunciating their words properly. They value the contributions pupils make when answering questions or making comments, giving them a greater confidence. Pupils improve their speaking skills through group and class discussions. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 frequently share their ideas with a partner. In one lesson they discussed, in pairs, their thoughts about what they had learned so far about information writing. This gave the pupils a good opportunity to clarify their ideas as well as providing a chance to develop their speaking and listening skills. During their time in school, most pupils have the opportunity to speak to wider audiences: for example in assemblies and productions. Most pupils listen attentively to teachers and to each other and this contributes greatly to their learning.

76. Reading skills are above average in most year groups. Throughout the school pupils read a variety of appropriate texts, and discussions with pupils indicate that they use non fiction books effectively for research in their topic work. Most pupils, even the youngest, talk about index and contents pages and know their purpose. One quicker learning Year 2 pupil, talked confidently about the glossary in her book. Year 1 pupils associate sounds with different letters and many read simple texts, making good use, when necessary, of letter sounds, pictures and the meaning of the sentence to help them decipher unfamiliar words.



Reading a non fiction text with the Years 1 and 2 pupils, the class teacher modelled good, clear reading techniques that the pupils copied, promoting these skills well. Pupils in Year 2 read accurately from increasingly more difficult books as they get older, talk knowledgeably about characters in the stories and discuss other stories they have heard. Quicker learning pupils frequently predict what might happen next in the story. By the time they are eleven, most pupils are fluent readers and show a good understanding of the text. For instance, one pupil gave a clear, succinct précis of the beginning of the story she was reading and referred to the text when explaining her ideas. Many pupils confidently discuss books they enjoy reading and their preferred authors. Many pupils borrow books from the public library to supplement their reading at school because they enjoy reading so much,

77. Writing skills are less well developed and, although most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are likely to attain the expected standards for their age, a lower than average proportion are likely to achieve beyond this. The school is well aware of this and writing skills have been a focus for development. In the literacy hour, pupils develop their writing skills appropriately and learn to write for different purposes and audiences. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about writing for information, and design posters to this effect. There are good cross-links with other subjects, such as science. Years 3 and 4 pupils write their own fables and use a set model to help them. Most are aware of the importance of a story having a good beginning, middle and end, and use imaginative vocabulary. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 investigate humorous verse, and model and develop their own poems in the style of 'The Purple People Eater'. They recognise clearly that alliteration is a feature of this verse and use this technique effectively in their own work. Most pupils develop and use their writing skills ably in other subjects, such as science and history.

78. Overall, standards of spelling and grammar are satisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils use dictionaries competently to help with their spellings. Younger pupils especially, use the many attractive teaching and learning aids displayed on the walls to help them. Work in books and on display shows that most Year 2 pupils write in sentences and put capital letters and full stops in the correct places. Years 5 and 6 pupils show they are familiar with correct punctuation, direct speech, rhyming and 'powerful' verbs, and many use them confidently in their work. Many pupils take a pride in their written work, presenting final copies neatly. However, very few pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are used to writing in a neat cursive style. There are only a few examples of pupils using their word processing skills to produce final copies of their work.

79. In general, most pupils throughout the school make satisfactory and often good progress in their knowledge and use of English, frequently through the consolidation and reinforcement of previous learning. Often, during literacy hours, pupils make good progress in their learning because of the high expectations of the teachers and brisk pace to lessons. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment with work that is matched to their particular needs. This good progress and achievement is frequently due to the very good support of the well informed teaching assistants.

80. The quality of teaching varies, but is good overall. Most teachers plan lessons in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. In the best lessons teachers share with pupils what they want them to learn and often ask them at the end of lessons whether they think they have achieved this. Planning in some lessons indicates that teachers are aware of the differing needs of pupils in their classes. However, too often, teachers in Years 3 to 6 do not ensure that appropriate levels of work are planned to match the very wide range of ages and attainment levels of pupils in their classes. As a result, pupils, especially those who learn quickly, are not challenged enough to make sure they achieve well and maintain a good rate of learning. In the introductions to lessons, teachers often use skilful questioning techniques to revise and review work covered in previous lessons and they value the contributions made by pupils. They give clear instructions and explanations for follow up work and in the best lessons teachers have high expectations that pupils make maximum effort

and behave well. In these lessons, teachers build effectively on pupils' enthusiasm for their work and eagerness to learn, so that from an early age, pupils sustain concentration even when not directly supervised by an adult.

81. Most teachers monitor pupils' reading carefully through the guided reading sessions in the literacy hour and, in the case of younger pupils, to some extent through their independent reading. Many pupils change their library books with their parents and carers and share their reading with them at home. However, there are no reading record books, which are often usefully used in other schools for giving parents guidance on how to help their children read. Older pupils in their choice of reading material often prefer to choose books with a similar theme or those by a favourite author, and teachers do not always guide them towards a wider range of reading material.

82. The subject is well managed by a very conscientious co-ordinator. She and the headteacher have recently drawn up a clear and detailed policy statement. The school has chosen appropriately to use a scheme to help teachers with their planning in which the National Literacy Strategy has been adapted accordingly to meet the needs of the mixed age classes. Assessment procedures are good and most teachers know what their pupils can do, but this knowledge is not always used effectively to provide appropriate work to extend the learning of higher attaining pupils. The school is working towards raising standards in writing throughout the school, because national assessment test results over the last two years have not shown the same improvement as other aspects of English. The headteacher, the co-ordinator and outside agencies have undertaken some monitoring of the effects of the National Literacy Strategy on pupils' attainment through direct classroom observation. Visitors to the school such as a poet and author have worked with pupils enhancing their learning. The school is fortunate to have two libraries, well stocked with a good range of fiction and non fiction books. However, pupils were not observed using them for independent research during the inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in mathematics were close to the national averages for both Year 2 and Year 6. Currently, the attainment of pupils is close to the national average in Year 2. In Year 6, standards in mathematics are below the national average overall, but meet the expected levels for attainment in the aspect of number. This represents satisfactory improvement at Years 1 and 2, but unsatisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in their learning of the value of digits within larger numbers, in calculating numbers accurately, and in identifying procedures to solve problems correctly. Pupils make less progress in other aspects of mathematics, such as measurement and shape and space. In addition, pupils' standards in Years 3 to 6 reflect the influence of frequent staff changes in recent years, although this problem has now stabilised and improvements can be seen. Although the curriculum planned for mathematics is broad, insufficient depth in all programmes of study is planned, so that the planning has some imbalance. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 are insufficiently challenged in space and measurement and graph work.

84. Results of the National Curriculum assessments for Year 2 pupils in 2001 were below the national average for all schools. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, results in Year 2 were average. In Year 6, results were well below average when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. Reasons are due to the small number of pupils at the higher levels, the settling in of new staff, the weaknesses identified in the planning of the school's curriculum for mathematics, co-ordinator changes, and a previous climate whereby pupils were insufficiently prepared for procedures for testing. This is all changing. The grouping of pupils into sets in Years 3 to 6 is influencing standards and ensuring improvement. The school has identified the problems, improvements have begun, and younger pupils with higher standards are moving upwards, successfully, through the school.

85. Throughout the school pupils develop secure skills for understanding and calculating numbers and this aspect of numeracy is a strength. In Year 1, pupils count reliably up to 20 objects, count aloud in tens, recognise odd or even numbers, and all are successful in ordering numerals to 20. Most begin to partition larger, two-digit numbers and understand and use operations of addition and subtraction with correct vocabulary. In Year 2, many recognise two-digit multiples of five, count in steps of five, count in hundreds, and most add more than two numbers together correctly to 100. Their recognition of coinage and totalling is good. All recognise basic two-dimensional shapes. Overall, pupils aged six and seven have a secure knowledge of the value of numbers. Investigations and flexibility for calculating is strong. Pupils' understanding of patterns and properties of shape is secure. However, there is insufficient understanding of recorded work on weight, capacity and measuring length. When handling data, there is insufficient understanding of, and recorded work for, communicating findings of collected information in tables, block graphs, simple lists or in ICT format.

86. Learning in Years 3 to 6 in understanding and calculating larger numbers is good. Pupils generally investigate numbers well. Most pupils are accurate when calculating using all four operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Solving problems, using money and time, are secure overall. Understanding and use of fractions and decimals are satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well in number, using positive and negative integers correctly and understanding clearly the use of brackets. However, there is insufficient understanding and recording of work in measuring length, shape and space, of area, volume and capacity. There is insufficient compiling of different graphs from given data, or of data and graph work linked to information and communication technology. This is unsatisfactory and affects learning in Years 3 to 6 overall.

87. The quality of teaching observed in mathematics was predominantly good due to the fact that most lessons observed were usually about number work. Lessons were planned thoroughly and implemented closely the number aspect of the mathematics curriculum. In the main, pupils' tasks were closely matched to their needs so that pupils' progress in learning about numbers was good. However, planning of lessons about shape and measures was less successful, so that higher attaining pupils in mixed age groups in Years 3 to 6 were insufficiently challenged. For example, Year 6 pupils had identical tasks in measurement to Year 5, which challenged Year 5 pupils, but not the Year 6. This is a weakness. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the carefully planned individual education programmes set for them by the teacher and teaching assistants, who have received very good training. As a result, these pupils make good progress towards their individual targets.

88. Teachers' assessment in number work is good and staff ask searching questions in order to ascertain the levels of understanding before new concepts in mathematics are introduced. The management of pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are given good encouragement to suggest answers and to estimate first, and they are confident to do so even at the risk of being wrong. As a result, pupils' attitudes towards learning are good and behaviour is good. Relationships are positive. Successful marking highlights pupils' strengths and clearly identifies what needs to be improved upon. This impacts well on the presentation of work by pupils, and the majority succeed in setting out work neatly and logically when recording figures and answers.

89. Changes of mathematics co-ordinators have resulted in some aspects of management being unsuccessful. A new co-ordinator has only very recently been appointed and, therefore, has had very little time to make an impact in monitoring, planning and raising standards. The headteacher has rightly identified the need to make changes for new leadership since the previous co-ordinator left, and has implemented good assessment procedures to record pupils' mathematical development. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been good and effective, particularly in planning precise learning objectives for each year group in mixed age classes of Years 1 and 2. The use of well trained teaching assistants is very good in mathematics and is particularly good in Years 1 and 2, where assistants are

very skilled in teaching small groups of pupils from the precise lesson plans given by the teacher.

90. The management of the broader range of the programme of study of the National Curriculum is less effective. Although all aspects of mathematics are planned for, the depth of work planned in weight, capacity, handling data and measuring length in Years 1 and 2 is insufficient. In Years 3 to 6, planning for experiences and recording in area, volume, capacity, time, shape and space, graph work, data handling and information and communication technology is, again, lacking in depth. This results in lower standards in National Curriculum tests at Year 2 and Year 6. The school has taken on board this analysis, confirmed by their own assessment procedures, and plans to rectify the issue immediately.

## **SCIENCE**

91. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in science met the national average. Standards in science now are in line with the national average by the end of Year 2, but below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their learning between Years 3 and 6 and this shows a drop in their levels of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs show standards equally below national expectations, but their achievement is good compared with their lower standards on entry to the school. Some older, higher attaining pupils reach the standards expected for their age, but their achievement is not as high as suggested by their assessments when they were aged seven.

92. The results of the National Curriculum tests for 2001 for seven year olds, based on the assessments of class teachers, suggest that well over ninety per cent of pupils are seen to be working at the expected level for their age. However, teachers only consider a very small proportion to be working at a higher level. The subject co-ordinator suggests that teachers, not fully understanding the difference between levels of work and showing an unwillingness to suggest that pupils have reached a higher level, may well be a determining factor in a grade of 'well below national expectations', being given for the small percentage who achieved the higher Level 3. This is the case when the school is compared not only with all schools, but with schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds.

93. The results of National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in recent years show a rise in standards from a low in 1997 to a high in 1999, when the school's results were similar to national averages. Since that time, results have fallen, so that when compared with all schools nationally, the results are well below the national average. A closer examination of the results shows that, whilst just over half of the pupils obtained a level equivalent to expectations for their age, only a further nineteen per cent achieved a higher level score. The national average for this age group is thirty-four per cent. At the same time, twice as many pupils than the national average achieved below expectation.

94. The above information gives support to the inspection findings that higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not being challenged sufficiently in science. An analysis of previously completed work reinforces the fact that work is too similar for all abilities of pupils and often for the two-year groups within the same class. However, in some of the lessons seen, this was not the case, suggesting that the monitoring of previous work was not rigorous enough to expose weaknesses in the planning and delivery of science in this phase. Although class teachers organised effective support for pupils with special educational needs, little evidence was seen of planning, which related specifically to their needs.

95. The subject co-ordinator has tried to address the weakness in investigational science pointed out at the last inspection, but has only really succeeded in making some improvements in her own year groups of Years 1 and 2. Elsewhere, opportunities for investigational work are sometimes too controlled by teachers, do not support literacy skills by having a clear and consistent writing frame, and do not give pupils enough opportunities to show initiative and take responsibilities for their own experiments.

96. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have had good opportunities to examine how sounds reach their ears and why sound is fainter as it travels. They know that electricity can be dangerous and have had experience of putting together simple circuits involving batteries, cables and lamps. They have looked at the needs of humans, in terms of air, water and food, and can place food in a number of different categories. They have compiled a graph of the most popular foods, but were not given valuable opportunities to use ICT to support them in the task.

97. By Year 6, pupils have had appropriate opportunities to look at the effect of shadows, and now understand that sound is caused by vibrations. They carry out an investigation to see the effect of materials on stopping sound travelling. In one lesson, an investigation in dropping a large paper 'snowflake' from a height was followed with good open ended questions for pupils to answer. Pupils were asked to comment on the difference that shape, size and material might have on the way the snowflake fell, providing them with much clearer investigational opportunities. Although pupils understand that they must plan, carry out, then write about their investigations, a lack of clarity in forming writing frames prohibits better links being made in improving pupils' literacy skills.

98. Teaching is very slightly better in Years 1 and 2 than it is in the rest of the school. Overall, six out of seven lessons were satisfactory and one was good. In the good lesson, the class teacher was prepared to give pupils opportunities to experiment in groups with an investigation. She provided a good range of materials for them to use and gave them good encouragement to discuss their ideas and problems before committing themselves to action. As a result, pupils talked about how they were going to create a simple bridge between two small objects. They tried different types of materials and used their ingenuity to fold, bend or glue material together to make it stronger. Even though some groups had organisational problems, the class teacher intervened well and gave them good support. The pupils were delighted with this opportunity to experiment. They behaved well, had good discussions on their work and whilst leaders appeared in the groups, all were actively engaged.

99. As the science co-ordinator has only been in post a very short time, it is difficult to ascertain how closely the work of different classes has been monitored. The range and quantity of work in some classes gives some cause for concern, because not all areas of the National Curriculum for science have been studied in sufficient depth, although there are plans to cover the full range of programmes of study. In her short time in post, the co-ordinator has worked hard to provide resources for the new nationally recommended scheme of work for science and has already given some support, through in-school discussions, on how colleagues might further improve pupils' investigational skills. The results of this are clearer to see in Years 1 and 2 than in other years, although everyone is trying to make improvements in their own class work.

100. It is helpful that science will be the focus of whole school development next academic year, as there is still much to be done in ensuring that:

- The full curriculum is being taught;
- Investigational skills continue to improve and make best use of pupils' literacy skills;
- Links with information and communication technology are written into planning;
- Higher attaining pupils are given more challenging tasks.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

101. Standards in art and design are above the nationally expected levels by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, which is an improvement from the previous inspection, when the attainment of pupils was at the expected levels and progress was unsatisfactory. Pupils now make good progress in learning. Provision is good and pupils receive a broad range of interesting and enriching experiences.

102. By the end of Year 2, pupils have shown good progress in using a wide range of media. Their fine line drawings of soft toys and puppets are realistically detailed and watercolour landscapes show good perspective. Pupils' observational drawings of old houses in the vicinity, to show ageing, cracked walls and weathering, as part of a history topic about Victorian buildings, are good. There are strengths in large scale collaborative art as, for example, in collages based on the stories of the 'Pied Piper' and the 'Gingerbread Man', which show appropriate perspective and clean application of paint. Large designs from geometric patterns and primary colours are striking. Pupils use a variety of media, such as oil pastels, crayons, and paint, to produce an effective mixture in their pictures, block prints and rubbings of textured surfaces. There are good effects produced in collages, using cellophane and fabric to depict where food comes from. Block prints, using cross-sectioned real oranges and lemons and paint, link well with pupils' fine line drawings of other fruit. Colour mixing to match correctly the different shades of fruit is of a high standard for young pupils.

103. By the end of Year 6, pupils' learning is good. They have good standards in mixing colours and using a mixture of pastel, paint and fabric effectively. There are high standards in the quality of landscapes and paintings, some in the style of L S Lowry, which show very good perspective, colour mixing, clean lines, imaginative texture, ideal for scenic pictures. Older pupils have explored techniques for conveying movements in figurative drawings, using brushed charcoal to reflect action, and these are of a high quality. Fine line drawings and painting of natural objects show good progress throughout all year groups. Pupils' sketch books containing drawings of man-made objects, such as a guitar, roller skate, African basket and a shoe, reflect high standards in fine line drawings and good development of shading. Clay models are imaginative and well made.

104. Photographic evidence illustrates that pupils have reached appropriate standards in sculpture. They have experienced some exciting opportunities to create natural sculptures on trips to the beach and have used effectively, plasticene, wire, papier maché, and plaster of Paris bandages for sculptures. Some large scale sculpture was painted to represent stone and looks very professional. There is much evidence of good art linked to a wide range of topics, such as historical artefacts, large scale collaborative work linked to Egyptian gods, and activities in the school's environmental club. School portfolios show imaginary art produced and inspired from African textiles and the artists, Braque and Picasso. The sculptor, Andy Goldsworthy, has inspired good achievements by pupils to create their own sculptures from natural objects. Reproductions of the art of Picasso and Van Gogh have inspired good abstract art, depicting mood, through pattern and colour.

105. Teaching observed during the inspection, and reflected through the results of pupils' work, is good. There is good teaching of a variety of techniques so that pupils improve their skills, particularly in drawing, colour mixing and in landscape perspective. Teachers' planning ensures good links with other subjects as, for example, in creating large scale 'Five Fat Sausages Sizzling in a Pan', to illustrate a poem. The large scale painted brown papier maché sausages, sitting in a 'frying pan' made from black card and foil paper, look very striking on a bed of orange 'flames' on a wall frieze. Teachers take good advantage of the expertise of visiting artists and of the local area. Preparation for art is good and management of pupils' behaviour is mainly good. All pupils are highly challenged in art; pupils with special educational needs receiving good support in art and design, and being very proud of their successful work.

106. The impact of teaching and management ensures that pupils have good attitudes towards the subject. Pupils are enthusiastic and attentive, ask perceptive questions and co-operate well when working on group tasks. Pupils' independence in choosing materials for drawing and colouring and tidying away is mature. Most take pride in perfecting their work and talk animatedly about their art tasks and work on display.

107. The management of the subject is very good, due to the enthusiasm and flair of the coordinator. She has ensured good links with other cultures. For example, in an art project week, the whole school studied Ghana and pupils produced art in the style of a Kenyan artist Gakonga. The whole school's collection of art from textiles has been exhibited at Wells Cathedral. Such rich experiences inspired one pupil to write:

*"I decided to do my people like I did because when we were looking at a book of African Art, all the people mostly had long arms, legs and bodies. They were also in different colours, like blue, green, brown."*

When Indian dancers visited, pupils created dances to tell the story of Rama and Sita, and from the photographs taken, pupils were given the opportunity to sketch dancers in pose. Their sketches are of a high standard. Interested and higher attaining pupils are well provided for in an after school club.

108. Art and design is valued throughout the school as an enlightening activity to communicate ideas and feelings in a visual form. Portfolios of pupils' work and displays show that the school is successful in improving the perceptions of pupils. As a subject with a high profile, it makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. Standards in design and technology at the age of seven are broadly in line with those expected nationally, but at age eleven they are below those expected. This is the same picture as at the time of the previous report. Despite the introduction of a comprehensive scheme of work, the oldest pupils in the school still have gaps in their knowledge and an absence of skills, particularly in work with tools and resistant materials.

110. At the age of seven, pupils are able to join materials effectively by sticking, using tape and staples, and by stitching. Pupils are in the process of designing and making a finger puppet. They have had opportunities to draw and label their plan and are learning skills to join fabric. They learn how to make stitches using textiles with holes designed for sewing, and later master their skills in joining small pieces of felt to make a snake. Pupils try various other joining methods in order to compare effectiveness and decide what they will use for their puppets. Recently they have had opportunities to design a playground and make playthings. They use well designed recording sheets to draw pictures of their structures and are able to write a brief evaluation of the products. Pupils design, make and evaluate processes effectively.

111. By the age of eleven, pupils design and make effective jack-in-the-boxes, using pneumatic movement. They really enjoy the work and are pleased with the results. Pupils present, describe clearly, evaluate their finished box, and say what they might have done to improve the result. Oldest pupils accurately test flexible materials to make the covering of a shelter. They are introduced to good vocabulary – 'canopy', 'structure', 'composite'. – and use their scientific knowledge to devise a fair test for strength. However, in Years 3 to 6, pupils have few opportunities to develop their skills of cutting and joining resistant materials like wood or plastic and have not had sufficient opportunity to measure and cut wood to create rigid frames. All projects carried out involve paper, card and recycled materials and there was no evidence of scientific knowledge of electrical circuitry or forces being transferred to design and technology.

112. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. Pupils benefit from careful planning and opportunities to develop skills, as well as understanding the relevance of their work. Teaching at Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons skills are developed in a sequential manner and pupils make good progress. Materials are well prepared and pupils enjoy those lessons because they are well ordered and fun, due to the good relationships established

with adults. Teachers of younger pupils use additional help in the classroom well, so that many adults can support sewing and joining skills and suggest and help with construction problems. Pupils with special educational needs learn well in these lessons as they are well supported and motivated by practicality and relevance. Where lessons are less successful pupils are so concerned with testing that they are not always aware of what the end product will be.

113. The school has begun to address the issues from the previous inspection and with support from nationally recommended schemes of work is now providing a suitable curriculum. Although the co-ordinator is collating a portfolio of work and the school keeps records effectively by using photography, the management of the subject is underdeveloped. Extensive monitoring of planning and teaching has not yet taken place and at present there are insufficient tools and resistant materials for older pupils to fully develop skills.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

114. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in geography is broadly in line with that expected nationally. However, at the age of eleven, pupils do not attain the expected levels. They do not have sufficient skills or knowledge of the subject. The current curriculum, which includes units from nationally recommended programmes of study, has only recently been introduced and has not been established for sufficiently long for these older children to have benefited completely from a scheme of work which ensures progression in learning. This situation is understood by the new subject co-ordinator, who is taking a positive lead to implement new practice and provision.

115. By the age of seven, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning about maps. They recognise a local street map and can place on it pictures to show where there are zigzag lines, zebra crossings and other signs linked to traffic flow. This activity builds well upon a previous walk around the neighbourhood and a traffic survey at the local car park. The results of this are effectively displayed in a pictogram. Pupils express preferences about areas around the school and make suggestions for improvement. By the age of eleven pupils identify and relate sets of information about places. For example, they can describe the relationship between climate and tourism. They study environments different to their own by planning a visit to India and investigations into life in Ghana and Brazil, linked to multi-cultural week, and in history, links with Egypt. Many pupils are able to go on field trips which enable them to examine a nearby but different environment, like the seaside, where they look at cliffs and erosion. Pupils generated effective plans for the redevelopment of the old swimming pool area. These plans were later perfected by the use of an ICT program. However, by the time they leave the school not all pupils have developed suitable map work skills. They are not confident with the use of geographical vocabulary and due to lack of experience have not developed suitable geographical investigative techniques.

116. Although a few examples of good teaching were seen during the inspection week, the quality of teaching overall was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers are able to motivate pupils with imaginative activities, using well prepared and chosen photographs to remind pupils of the walk, and well prepared record sheets for those investigating holiday destinations and climate. Teachers establish good relationships with pupils. They provide a supportive and peaceful learning environment. Good planning allows for a balance between class discussions, individual and group work. Good class record books of photographs provide an absorbing interest for pupils and an effective method of recall and consolidation of learning, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Links to other subjects often enrich pupils' understanding, as in the work on houses and locality in history and geography. Occasionally, this approach leads to some confusion and a dilution of geographical skills, as in some work on Egypt, "Is it now or then?" Special educational needs pupils are normally well supported and frequently have specifically designed work to enable them to participate with activities for the whole class. As a result, they make good progress.



117. Management of the subject is currently satisfactory and the co-ordinator has a clear view of the development needed to establish firmly the new curriculum and to develop an assessment scheme to record pupils' progress. Resources available at present are not sufficient to support the curriculum suitably. However, pupils enjoy geography, especially in those lessons where there is a variety of activities, and they can see the relevance of the work they are doing. Particularly of merit throughout the school is work on the local environment within the school grounds and close to the school.

118. There has been some improvement since the previous inspection in implementing a satisfactory scheme of work covering the programmes of study for geography. This has not yet had an impact on the improvement of standards at the end of Year 6, due to the short timescale since its introduction.

## **HISTORY**

119. Standards in history for Years 2 and 6 are similar to those at the previous inspection. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards above those expected for pupils of their age nationally. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the events that led up to the Fire of London and understand that because the houses were made of wood and there was a strong wind blowing at the time, the fire spread very quickly. During the inspection, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were looking for similarities and differences between modern houses in the town and those built many years before. When looking at the older houses they posed questions, such as, "When was it built?" and "How many families lived there?" Many of the Year 2 pupils gave reasoned explanations why newly built houses do not need to have chimneys like the older houses with many chimneys they had observed, because there are now methods of heating other than coal fires.

120. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards typical of pupils of their age. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have good insight into the ways that the Ancient Egyptians lived, by using, for example, photographic evidence of artefacts found in Tutankhamun's tomb. One child deduced that Tutankhamun probably liked red, blue and purple because these were colours of jewels in a piece of his jewellery. In their studies, pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a secure understanding that some aspects of the past have been represented and interpreted in differing ways. Carefully brushing away wood shavings with paintbrushes, they 'unearth' various artefacts, such as brass buttons and bottle stoppers, and make suggestions about their possible origins, purposes and uses. They record their work well, carefully drawing the items, and extending their drawings to show their interpretations of their original form or purpose. Pupils understand that evidence can be interpreted in different ways. For example, one pupil thought the glass stopper was from a perfume bottle, whilst another suggested it was from a medicine bottle.

121. The quality of teaching and learning is good for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory for those in Years 3 to 6. Teachers of pupils in the same age bands plan together so that their expectations of what pupils are to learn are the same. However, these plans are not always adjusted sufficiently to meet the different needs of pupils in each class. Teachers often skilfully link historical learning with learning in other subjects. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had used their design and technology skills to make shadufs and pyramids in their work on the Ancient Egyptians. There were many good examples of pupils using skills learnt in literacy lessons well. For example, Year 3 pupils, as evacuees from World War II, had written postcards to their parents. Effective use is made of wall displays to help pupils understand what is required of them and to stimulate their imagination. In the best lessons, teachers frequently use skilful questioning techniques to draw out pupils' thinking and learning and use correct terminology to develop their vocabularies. Resources are prepared well, and pupils in Years 5 and 6, as they brushed away the wood shavings, were given an insight into how an archaeologist works. Teaching support assistants, who are given specific tasks by teachers, are confident and supportive of pupils in their learning, especially those with special educational needs. This impacts positively on pupils' good learning.

122. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and has made an enthusiastic start. She is looking forward to the time, designated in the school improvement plan, when history is the focus for development and she can make a positive input into the development of learning and improving standards. The school has adopted a nationally recommended scheme to help teachers with their planning which ensures appropriate coverage of all aspects of the subject. However, teachers do not often use it effectively to ensure that pupils' skills are built upon in a systematic way between year groups. Pupils make interesting visits in the locality and visitors have spoken to pupils about their experiences, such as holidays in the past. These activities have enriched pupils' learning and raised their awareness of the importance of history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

123. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are close to nationally expected levels. Since the previous inspection, information and communication technology (ICT) has changed a great deal with many more challenging expectations being placed upon schools and their pupils. Despite this, improvements have been made over the last year and a half, due to:

- The influence of a well qualified and supportive co-ordinator;
- An improvement in the knowledge and confidence of class teachers through good training;
- Improved resources as provided by the computer suite;
- A more detailed and supportive scheme of work.

124. There still remains a number of avenues for improvement. Whilst the school now has a successful computer suite, which gives very good support to the teaching of skills to groups of pupils of almost whole class size, individual classes are still awaiting the delivery of classroom computers which will further support the use of ICT across a range of other subjects. This weakness means that limited use of ICT is noted within English, mathematics and science for example. By the time this report is published, the school hopes to have been able to rectify this shortcoming.

125. Within lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, pupils effectively used mouse and keyboard arrows to locate items on the screens. They clicked on to words within a word bank and repositioned them on the monitor screen in order to form simple sentences. Pupils often remember to use shift keys to put in capital letters and the space bar to leave a "finger space" between words. About half the pupils were able to print their work without too much support. Work on display shows they are competent at using a simple painting program, whilst a discussion with some pupils, revealed that they had experience of programming a toy so that it moved in response to their instructions.

126. The teaching of pupils was good in both lessons seen. Teachers are confident and provide their pupils with appropriate tasks, which support their individual needs. As a result, pupils respond well, grow in confidence and receive just praise for their work, although seeing their work in print is often reward enough!

127. In Years 3 and 4, pupils amend text and support it with visual images competently. Pupils change the font and size of their writing and import graphics using a 'drag and drop' technique. In these lessons, links with literacy were clear to see. As a result, literacy skills were improved, as were ICT skills. By Years 5 and 6, discussions with pupils confirm that they have experienced a wide range of applications of ICT, although some of these were not in great depth. Pupils accurately complete work on spreadsheets which collate information about how they would finance a class party with limited funding. They make calculations and changes to their shopping lists and discuss in pairs how they might best meet the budget they are given. Evidence from the analysis of previous work, but more especially from

discussions with Year 5 and 6 pupils, confirms that they receive appropriate instruction in all aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study.

128. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 was good in two lessons and satisfactory in one. However, when looking more widely at the work produced over time in these classes, the work, overall, reflects a satisfactory level of teaching with some good features. The best features of the teaching are noted in the confidence several teachers now show and the way in which they can convert their good plans into good lessons. In spite of this, there are still opportunities for teachers to be more specific about how they plan to provide challenges for the two different year groups in their classes and the different ability groups within those two-year groups. Pupils respond well to their work in this subject, which is well managed. They are clearly excited by their access to good quality hardware and make the most of their time in the suite. As a result most make good progress in lessons.

129. The school is now well placed to continue with its work in using ICT to good effect within other subjects in the curriculum. When there are sufficient computers in classrooms, it will be time to make a concerted effort to make strong links between all subjects and ICT. At the same time, a whole school system of assessment would ensure that not only are pupils having equal access to the subject, but that their progress is checked regularly to ensure that the different abilities of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are plotted.

## **MUSIC**

130. Due to the timetable, there was insufficient evidence to make judgements on the standards the majority of pupils attain, and progress they make, by the end of Years 2 and 6 in music. In one lesson observed, pupils in Years 3 and 4 competently composed music in groups, using tuned and untuned instruments to create a mood of calm and peace. They worked well together, planning their work carefully and refining it with practice. In two other lessons with the same age groups, pupils developed a secure knowledge of musical notation through clapping, tapping, clicking their fingers, and using tambourines to beat out the rhythms they represented. Most managed this well, keeping in time with the rhythms and each other. In all these lessons most pupils attained appropriate standards for their ages. The teaching was good and pupils made good progress in their learning. The specialist music teacher had a clear idea what she wanted pupils to learn. She gave very precise explanations and instructions so pupils knew exactly what to do. She continually encouraged pupils to appraise and evaluate their performances and improve them through practice, making teaching points as and when appropriate. Most pupils behaved well, because the teacher had high expectations. However, in a lesson with a small group of Year 6 pupils, the progress of learning was slow, mainly because the start of the lesson was held up for ten minutes waiting for pupils to arrive.

131. The singing of Years 5 and 6 pupils in the upper junior choir is of a good standard, but as these pupils had been auditioned for the choir this is not representative of the whole of these year groups. During the choir practice they sang a wide range of songs tunefully, with clear diction and enthusiasm. They demonstrated effectively their skill at singing in two and three parts. In an assembly they sang 'The Lord's Prayer' with great feeling, which was very moving.

132. The teaching of the specialist teacher is good and often very good. She knows her subject well and presented it to the pupils with a pleasant manner, giving praise appropriately to encourage their learning. She achieves a good balance between giving pupils a chance to experiment and develop their own ideas and making teaching points.

133. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is the specialist teacher and is only in school for one and a half days a week. She mainly teaches pupils in Years 3 to 6, and works with class groups in rotation. Although teachers receive good training working alongside her with their classes, the co-ordinator has very little influence on further

work teachers undertake in the classrooms. The policy is in draft form and the school has adopted a recommended scheme to help teachers plan their work and ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically as they move through the school. However, this is not secure, as apparently there is very little co-ordination between the lessons provided by the specialist teacher and class teachers. Some pupils receive specialist lessons in playing guitars and recorders, and although this is beneficial for the musical development of these pupils, they often miss their entitlement to other areas of the curriculum when they are withdrawn from the classroom for these lessons. The school has an adequate range of musical instruments to support the curriculum and has an especially good selection of keyboards. They are deployed efficiently for pupils' maximum benefit.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved its teaching of games, and in nearly all aspects of physical education, standards are as expected for pupils at the age of seven and eleven. However, pupils' learning is adversely affected by the school's lack of access to a regular field for practising skills. Too often, the field is waterlogged leaving throwing and jumping skills to be practised on hard play areas or indoors. Despite this, pupils do well to attain nationally expected levels.

135. Standards of work in the five lessons seen, covering both gymnastics and games, were satisfactory, with virtually all pupils making at least satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs made similar progress to other pupils, as teachers were at pains to give them extra support and encouragement. Progress was better in the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, due to the better quality of teaching and the fact that teachers made more effort to provide challenges for both year groups in their classes. This was not always a feature of lessons seen in the classes in Years 3 to 6.

136. In the five lessons seen, teaching was good in three and satisfactory in two. Where teaching was best, in Years 1 and 2, teachers were well prepared and understood not only the requirements of the scheme of work, but offered pupils a wide range of opportunities to practise and refine their newly learned skills to good effect. The lessons here were very well organised, with a clear focus on pupils improving their range of movements. Good opportunities for discussion and feedback from teachers, was a feature of these lessons. Very able pupils were utilised in order to demonstrate to the class, and create a point for both discussion and learning. Very good use was made of extra adults in the class, in order to support those with difficulties, making the lesson fully inclusive for all abilities and both age groups within the classes.

137. As a result of the good teaching, pupils showed good attitudes to their work. They were very involved in both activity and discussion. All wore correct clothes for the activities and, where appropriate, performed in bare feet. Behaviour is never less than satisfactory and pupils' positive response to the lessons helps them make progress. Most are enthusiastic and show obvious enjoyment of physical activities.

138. The management of the subject is successful. The school has adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work, which is giving teachers good support. The co-ordinator has successfully raised the status of physical education in the school and has enabled extracurricular club activities, which support the development of games' skills for a large number of pupils. At the same time, it gives older girls and boys the opportunity of taking part in competitive games against other schools and gaining confidence to specialise.

139. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 have good opportunities to swim on a rota basis and, as a result of regular swimming with good support from both parents and staff, almost all pupils can swim the recommended minimum of 25 metres when they leave the school.

140. Although resources for gymnastics are good, the permanent stage in the hall and the poor drainage of the sports field, place restrictions on aspects of the curriculum for physical education. 'Fun Gym', provided by the special needs co-ordinator, is proving very helpful with pupils who have some difficulties with co-ordination and movement.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

141. Standards are broadly satisfactory in religious education, with pupils' skills and knowledge in line with the statements of attainment in the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school, pupils discuss issues, and the links with personal, social, health and citizen education are emphasised. In this area standards are good.

142. By the age of seven, pupils have good opportunities to discuss feelings of anger, fear and guilt, while recalling the story of Jonah. They begin to discuss and understand forgiveness, while studying the parable of the Prodigal Son and record the story in a class book. Pupils have knowledge of the events of the birth of Christ. They know what happens during Ramadan and have learned about the celebrations of Hanukkah and Diwali.

143. At the age of eleven pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the places of worship of the main world faiths. During their study of Judaism they discuss issues related to and learn about, special clothing and holy books. Pupils have visited local churches and have listened to visitors from several Christian denominations.

144. There is an emphasis throughout the school on the sharing of feelings, discussion of emotion and relationships, from the youngest to the oldest. This area of religious education is well supported by the themes for assemblies and the personal, social, health and citizen education curriculum. Pupils take an active part in discussion. They learn how to express and listen to opinions. They enjoy these opportunities and recall facts they have learned well.

145. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good and in Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching. In the best lessons there is a variety of activities, and often imaginative ways of recording ideas. Having learned about special Jewish clothing, pupils made a kipah decorated with symbols of the Jewish faith. They make scrolls recording their own messages having learned about the Torah. Pupils are able to express their emotions in pictures and symbols whilst listening to music and frequently record stories and work in attractive books, using specially designed recording sheets. Good questioning in classes, where teachers know the pupils well, inspires confidence and openness in dealing with personal issues.

146. The co-ordinator shows great commitment to the subject. She has a very clear vision for its development and is, at present, implementing a new assessment procedure. The school has successfully implemented the requirements of the new locally agreed syllabus, supported by the nationally recommended programmes of study. In this area particularly, there is improvement in the subject since the previous inspection and standards have been maintained.