

INSPECTION REPORT

Middlefield Community Primary School

Eynesbury, St. Neots

Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110716

Headteacher: Mrs J. Harvey

Reporting inspector: Mrs E. M. D. Mackie
23482

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th June 2002

Inspection number: 243453

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Andrew Road Eynesbury St. Neots Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE19 2QE
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Duley
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23482	Diana Mackie	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19335	Susan Dixon	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?
30823	Brenda Clarke	Team inspector	English Music Physical education Special educational needs	
4874	Hugh Figgess	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30745	Pat Thorpe	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Religious education Foundation stage Equal opportunities	

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REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6 – 10

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

11 – 14

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14 – 16

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

16 – 19

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

19 – 20

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

20 – 21

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

21 – 23

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

24 – 25

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

26 – 29

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

30 – 49

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Middlefield Community Primary School is located in a residential area of St. Neots, consisting mainly of owner occupied property. Most pupils come from the immediate locality of the school. This is an average sized primary school, having 239 pupils on roll, of whom 35 are in the reception year. Children entering the school have a broad range of attainment but overall, their attainment is average. Just over three per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is below the national average. Nearly two per cent of pupils are of Black African, Indian or Chinese heritages. Less than one per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, and none is in the early stages of learning English. Nineteen per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs for learning, emotional or physical difficulties; this is broadly in line with the national average. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, teaching is good and pupils learn at a good rate. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, but there is some good teaching in these classes, too. Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2 and standards are gradually rising as pupils move through the school. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They have steered the school effectively since they took on their roles last year.

What the school does well

- ◆ Standards in mathematics and science are good by the end of Year 2 because of the improved teaching and curricular provision over the last two years.
- ◆ Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and pupils achieve well (achievement refers to the progress which pupils make over time in relation to their starting point).
- ◆ The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- ◆ The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good.
- ◆ The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well.

What could be improved

- ◆ *Standards in English, particularly in reading, are not high enough by the end of Year 6.
- ◆ Standards in religious education, *information and communication technology and music are unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6
- ◆ *Although behaviour overall is satisfactory, a significant minority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not always show regard for the needs of others.
- ◆ *Assessments of pupils' progress are not developed and drawn together sufficiently for information to be used to make decisions about school target-setting in English and mathematics and curricular provision in all subjects.
- ◆ Provision for pupils' spiritual development.
- ◆ The range and number of clubs for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is unsatisfactory.

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

****The school has identified these issues and has plans to deal with them.***

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the last inspection in November 1999, the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The school has made satisfactory progress in overcoming the seven important issues which were identified for improvement and now has the sound capacity to improve further. Standards have risen in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 2 performed very well in reading and well in writing in national tests in 2001 and current standards are now at least satisfactory, with examples of good achievement. Challenging targets for higher achievement have been set throughout the school. The quality of teaching has improved. Senior teachers now monitor lessons in literacy and numeracy. Teachers use information from assessments to match work more effectively to pupils' needs in lessons. The curriculum is now broad and balanced, with a two-year cycle of teaching and learning to accommodate pupils' progress in mixed age classes. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment have improved in English, mathematics and science and are gradually being developed for all other subjects. The school now has a policy for teaching higher attaining pupils. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education has been successfully followed in Years 1 and 2 but standards are still unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents now meet statutory requirements.

In addition, the overall leadership and management of the school has improved.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

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

Comparison with all schools nationally was average overall in the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 6. Comparison with similar schools is based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. Standards at the end of Year 6 are now in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. They are below national expectations in English; pupils currently in Year 6 have experienced frequent staff changes and targets set for them in 2002 are unlikely to be met in English. Over the past four years, the trend in the school's test results has been slightly upward and broadly in line with the national trend. Challenging targets set with the local education authority were not met in 2001.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are now in line with national expectations in English and above national expectations in mathematics and science. In the 2001 national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics when compared with all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, Middlefield's results were well above average in reading,

below average in writing and average in mathematics. The trend has been upward in all three areas of learning over the past four years. In the reception class, children make sound progress and reach the early learning goals in the six required areas of learning. Overall, from an average start, pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 6. Achievement is good by the end of Year 2, and it is improving as pupils move through the school. In information and communication technology, religious education and music, pupils in Year 2 attain in line with the expectations for their age, but standards are not high enough by the end of Year 6. In all other subjects, standards are broadly typical. Pupils with special educational needs and those from ethnic minority groups or who speak English as an additional language make sound progress and achieve in line with their peers.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school and want to join in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Behaviour is good in many lessons and in parts of most lessons. A small but significant number of pupils are sometimes inconsiderate and attention seeking.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils are keen to help in school. They relate satisfactorily to each other and well with the staff.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils come to school regularly and punctually. Attendance figures are adversely affected when holidays are taken during school time.

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.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but examples of good teaching were seen in all year groups. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection, but the standard overall has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They plan well and prepare work for pupils of different abilities in most lessons, so that learning is at least sound overall, and in the best lessons, it is good. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching methods are more effective in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants play a significant role in enhancing pupils' learning.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, where it was more variable. It is good throughout the school in science, art and design and physical education. The teaching seen in geography and history was good. No judgement is given for teaching of music and religious education, as too few lessons were seen. In information and communication technology and design and technology, teaching is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. It is good in the reception class and Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Strategies for the teaching of numeracy are good.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils are identified early and individual education plans are carefully written. Teachers plan appropriate work in most lessons. There is not enough adult support in some lessons in Years 3 to 6.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Advice from the local education authority is used sensibly to ensure that pupils are supported appropriately.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The school's well-written new policy is gradually being implemented to provide further support for pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory for their spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Assessments of pupils' academic progress are not developed and collated sufficiently to inform target-setting and curricular planning.

The school has satisfactory links with parents and parental involvement has a positive impact on the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives clear educational direction and her leadership has ensured that staff work together as a confident team. The deputy headteacher plays a significant role in the leadership and provides an excellent role model for classroom teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The chair of governors provides good leadership and governors use their skills conscientiously in the service of the school. The committee structure ensures that statutory duties are dealt with systematically.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and governors have been well supported by the local education authority during a challenging period of development. Priorities have been chosen well to effect improvements in the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Governors have managed the deficit budget well. Resources for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, are used effectively.

Staffing levels are satisfactory overall, but there are not always enough teaching assistants in lessons to support pupils with special educational needs. Professional training for staff is well organised and of good quality. Resources are at least satisfactory in most subjects, but they are not in information and communication technology and religious education. The quality of the accommodation is satisfactory and it is well cared for. Governors give sound consideration to the effect of their spending on improvements in the pupils' attainment and achievement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Their children like school. ◆ The school expects the children to work hard and achieve their best. ◆ They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. ◆ Their children are making good progress in school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The range of activities outside lessons. ◆ Information on how their children are getting on. ◆ The closeness with which the school works with parents. ◆ The amount of homework set. ◆ The children's behaviour in school.

From views expressed at the pre-inspection meeting and in the responses to the parents' questionnaire, the inspectors feel that the school has sound levels of parental support. Bearing in mind the heavy workload of the teachers, the school recognises the need to explore ways to organise more activities after school. The school sends adequate written information to parents about how their children are getting on. There are opportunities for them to discuss their children's progress with teachers and the headteacher has an 'open door' policy so that parents can ask questions at the beginning and end of the school day or by appointment at other times. The school tries to work closely with parents, but meetings to discuss curricular and other issues are not always well attended. The amount of homework set is satisfactory but it is set inconsistently. Parents say that behaviour in the school has improved since the appointment of the new headteacher. Most pupils' behaviour is at least satisfactory in nearly all lessons but a significant few pupils in Years 3 to 6 tend to be attention seeking and lack consideration for the majority of pupils who want to get on and work hard.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The trend in the school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science has been in line with the rising national trend from 1997 to 2001. In comparison with all schools nationally in 2001, the latest reporting year, the performance of pupils in Year 6 at the expected level (level 4) was average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The school's performance at the higher level (level 5), in comparison with all schools nationally, was average in mathematics, below average in English and well below average in science. Comparisons with similar schools are not favourable because of the low percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Boys performed better than girls in 2001. This was expected because of the particularly bright group of boys in Year 6. The challenging targets set with the local education authority for English and mathematics in 2001 were not met. Current standards in Year 6 are below average in English and average in mathematics and science; pupils are also unlikely to meet this year's targets. The progress of these pupils has been hampered by frequent changes of teachers. Work has not always been based consistently on what pupils already knew so that they learned in a systematic, step-by-step way. Also, the school does not have a cohesive picture of pupils' attainment across the school and this has made it difficult to set realistic targets. Staffing arrangements and assessment procedures are well in hand and pupils in Year 6 are already benefiting from improvements.

2. The trend in the school's performance in national tests for pupils in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics has also been in line with the rising national trend from 1997 to 2001. In comparison with all schools nationally in 2001, the performance of pupils in Year 2 at level 2 (the expected level) was well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. The school's performance at the higher level (level 3), in comparison with all schools nationally, was well above average in reading, above average in mathematics and average in writing. In teachers' assessments, pupils' performance was well above average in science. Boys performed better than girls in 2001. Current standards in Year 2 are average in English and above average in mathematics and science. There are more pupils than last year with special educational needs, particularly those who need development of skills in language.

3. Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment which are broadly in line with those expected for their age but the attainment of a significant number of children exceeds expectations in speaking and listening. They make sound progress and achieve the nationally agreed early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Good teaching is based on the teachers' secure understanding of the needs of young children. The literacy hour and daily numeracy lessons have been introduced sensitively so that children have gradually adapted to the more concentrated teaching and faster pace of learning.

4. Pupils' achievement is good in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2. Achievement is improving gradually in Years 3 to 5, as pupils move through the school with increasing levels of competence in literacy and numeracy. Pupils in the current Year 6 achieve satisfactorily overall but there are weaknesses in their performance in English, information and communication technology, religious education and music. The school is addressing the deficiencies in English and information and communication technology with rigour.

5. By the end of Year 2, most pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding of English at a good rate and achieve well. Teachers emphasise the teaching and learning of letter sounds and patterns so that pupils make good gains in reading, writing and spelling. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills effectively and widen their vocabulary consistently in all subjects. Pupils do not always use capital letters and full stops confidently but they develop satisfactory levels of writing to express their ideas. In mathematics, pupils acquire a good range of strategies to solve problems. They demonstrate good levels of mental arithmetic and are quick to recognise ideas, such as division being the inverse of multiplication. They develop an increasing awareness of the use of mathematics in everyday life; for example, in counting money and looking at shapes. Higher attaining pupils use words such as 'circumference' and 'estimate' with confidence. In science, practical investigations help pupils to gain skills of scientific enquiry and a deeper understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.

6. By the end of Year 6, pupils are keen to contribute their ideas during discussions. They speak confidently but do not always listen considerately. During the literacy hour, pupils explore spelling patterns and look for specific punctuation. They write for a good range of purposes and literacy is developed satisfactorily in other subjects. In mathematics, pupils gain increasingly secure knowledge of the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of numbers. They understand the relationship between percentages and fractions and use this knowledge effectively to solve practical problems. Higher attaining pupils have a sure grasp of terms such as 'mode' and 'median' and are able to collate data and determine their values. In science, pupils gain knowledge and understanding at a good rate because of the school's practical approach to teaching and learning, which helps pupils to investigate their ideas and work things out for themselves.

7. In information and communication technology, pupils' levels of attainment are broadly at expected levels by the end of Year 2 but below national expectations by the end of Year 6. Standards are adversely affected by the condition and amount of equipment. Pupils' progress is gaining momentum as they acquire skills at an increasing rate. By the end of Year 2, pupils use information and communication technology confidently to word process and to explore programs in art and design, when they use graphic packages to draw and fill shapes and create colourful pictures. Control and monitoring are developing features in the school's provision but these are weaker areas of attainment. By the end of Year 6, pupils word process confidently, search for information in CD-ROMs, send e-mails and handle data. Plans to improve pupils' competence in control and monitoring in Years 5 and 6 are in hand.

8. In religious education, pupils attain satisfactory standards by the end of Year 2 but pupils in Year 6 do not achieve standards outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils do not have appropriate levels of skills, knowledge and understanding which enable them to have a broad view of the range of faiths.

9. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. In music, standards meet expectations by the end of Year 2 but do not do so by the end of Year 6.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall towards the targets in their individual education plans. They make good progress in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2. The progress of older pupils has been adversely affected by frequent changes of staff. Realistic targets are now set for pupils throughout the school to achieve regular success so that their confidence and self-esteem are raised and they build step-by-step on what they already know and can do. Teachers make good use of assessment information for

target setting on individual education plans and for the formation of groups. Staff support pupils well in lessons. Higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 6 but their learning is not always extended fully. The school is addressing this issue by grouping pupils by ability in literacy and numeracy and by implementing its policy for teaching higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils.

11. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is extremely small. Standards of attainment for these pupils are satisfactory by the end of Year 6. No judgement can be made in relation to attainment in national tests. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve satisfactorily in all curriculum areas as they progress through the school. Assessments are made, with support from the local education authority, when pupils first arrive at the school. The extra provision for these pupils is determined following this assessment. For example, one pupil who was assessed to have satisfactory skills in most aspects of English was identified as needing support with the development of vocabulary; a teaching assistant meets this need on a regular basis, supplementing the focused support made by the class teacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Overall, pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their work. In many lessons they have good attitudes and present themselves as enthusiastic and hard working learners. This happens where the quality of teaching is good. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of the pupils and the tasks they set are interesting and achievable. In a significant number of lessons in Years 3 to 6, a minority of pupils' attitudes are less good. They lose concentration easily, become restless and chatter, thus slowing the pace and effectiveness of their learning. This occurs where the introduction to lessons is too long, activities do not provide appropriate challenge or teachers make insufficient demands with regard to good behaviour and attentiveness. This is a similar picture to that found at the last inspection. In the best lessons, pupils demonstrate that they can work well alone or in small groups. As a result, they learn at a good rate and achieve well.

13. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall but the inappropriate behaviour and a lack of regard for others by a few pupils in Years 3 to 6 hampers the pace of some lessons and the learning of other pupils is disrupted. Many pupils behave well and have good skills which help them to learn independently. For example, in a physical education lesson for pupils in Year 2, pupils worked with partners in a mature and sensible way to improve their ball skills. Behaviour in Years 1 and 2 is good. In the best lessons throughout the school, the effective use of the school's behaviour policy, which promotes the use of praise in lessons, instils pride and motivation in pupils so that they exert good levels of effort and want to do well. When a significant number of pupils in the class have weak self-discipline and teachers are under pressure to get on with the lesson, they sometimes use too many negative remarks. This undermines the purposeful learning atmosphere which teachers work so hard to engender, takes the focus away from the task in hand and results in lack of effort by pupils. Attractive displays throughout the school raise pupils' self-esteem when they see that their work is valued.

14. At lunchtimes, pupils generally behave well and pupils report that the number of incidences of disagreement and bullying has reduced considerably recently. Midday supervisors confirm that there has been a significant improvement in behaviour at lunchtime. Pupils understand the school rules and the system of rewards and sanctions well and feel that

they are fair but feel that they are applied inconsistently across the school. There were three exclusions last year; there are likely to be fewer in the current academic year.

15. Pupils' personal development and their relationships with other pupils are satisfactory. They relate well to the staff. The school's new policy for developing pupils' personal skills is contributing increasingly to the improvement of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There were insufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect in assemblies and lessons during the inspection, but in discussions, pupils spoke considerably about how they want to be helpful and how they like to raise funds to help less fortunate children. No instances of racial disharmony were noted and, for the most part, pupils work and play well together. There are isolated occasions when they display a lack of respect for each other and for adults both in lessons and at playtimes. Teachers tackle these issues in personal and social education lessons, but again, the effectiveness of messages depends on the attentiveness of the pupils concerned.

16. Pupils develop satisfactory levels of social skills. They are offered a variety of opportunities to take responsibility and they undertake their duties with enthusiasm and commitment, for example, when they prepare the hall for assemblies and clear away chairs afterwards. In 'circle time', when pupils sit in a circle to discuss social issues, pupils acquire the skills to take turns, express their ideas and consider the views of others. The school has good plans to develop aspects of citizenship further, with the reintroduction of a school council.

17. Attendance rates are in line with the national average and are satisfactory. Most absences are due to normal childhood illnesses but a significant number are due to families taking holidays in term time. This has a detrimental effect on the learning of the pupils involved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in a quarter of the lessons seen. Teaching is now sound overall. It is good in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. There were examples of good lessons in all year groups and some effective features of teaching were common throughout the school. For example, all teachers plan their work well and deploy teaching assistants purposefully to give good support for groups of pupils. The 'coaching' style of the school, especially for those new to the profession, encourages teachers to improve constantly and this is having a positive effect on the pupils' learning as they move through the school. Teachers receive good levels of support from one another, from the headteacher and from the governing body. The school has a good capacity to maintain and improve the current standards in teaching because teachers reflect on their own work and want to improve their classroom performance.

19. Teachers work hard and are enthusiastic. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, so that pupils can ask questions when they are unsure of things, without fear of criticism or ridicule. In all classes, teachers generally use resources effectively to help pupils to learn. For example, pupils record and display their answers on small boards in mental arithmetic or spelling sessions and there is no hiding place for those who are reluctant to exert intellectual effort. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good in Years 1 and 2. Some excellent teaching was seen in Year 1, when pupils made excellent gains in learning because of the teacher's brisk pace and insistence on every pupil's attention, so that the maintenance of very good discipline seemed effortless.

20. In the reception class the good quality of the teaching gives children a positive start to their schooling. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children are significant features in the good teaching of children in this class. Children are encouraged to be independent and follow the simple and well understood rules. Staff place appropriate emphasis on language skills, in particular speaking and listening and in learning letter sounds and early mathematical skills. The nursery nurse is closely involved in the teaching and planning of activities and she plays a significant role in assessing how well the children are getting on. Children respond well to questions and are keen to take part in discussions. This builds children's confidence and encourages them to express their ideas. Literacy and numeracy are introduced gradually and effectively so that children are ready to take a full part in the demanding sessions in Year 1. Staff create a bright and attractive environment for the children. Their progress is checked carefully and work is planned to meet the needs of all children, including children who have special educational needs. In all areas of learning, activities are prepared and organised well so that pupils want to learn and do well.

21. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is good. There is a purposeful atmosphere in most lessons, especially when pupils are taught by the deputy headteacher, whose teaching is excellent. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and attention to their work are high in most lessons. As a result, pupils learn at a good rate and achieve well. Teaching methods are good, so that pupils learn at a good rate throughout most lessons. No time is wasted in the best lessons, as pupils move from one activity to another smoothly and get on with tasks smartly. Pupils behave well because it is expected and a purposeful atmosphere pervades the classrooms.

22. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching was more variable during the inspection. It depended to a large extent on the teachers' ability to promote a purposeful atmosphere throughout the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers kept pupils 'on their toes' by continually focusing on the main points of the lesson and monitoring the performance of every pupil, giving honest and pertinent feedback on performance. For example, in a good handwriting lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher moved around the classroom, encouraging those who needed support by pointing out what they could do to improve and revisiting them to see how they are getting on. Good teaching in science throughout Years 5 and 6 was reinforced with well organised practical work, so that pupils could find out things for themselves. A sense of responsibility was fostered as pupils made their own decisions on how to display their findings.

23. Pupils behaved satisfactorily and learned at a sound rate in the overriding number of lessons in Years 3 to 6. This was because teachers varied the way in which pupils learned. Some methods were more successful than others for individual teachers. For example, if the teacher's introduction was too long, pupils, especially those with specific behavioural difficulties, soon fidgeted or found it difficult to take turns to speak. In good, quick-fire questioning at the beginning of many lessons, teachers probed pupils' understanding and helped them to learn at a good rate. In a good number of lessons, teachers set time limits for the completion of tasks and in the best of these lessons pupils were monitored effectively so that they worked hard and completed tasks. When teachers were too tolerant of pupils who were inconsiderate and who took too long to settle down to activities, the learning of all pupils in the class was adversely affected. When the teachers' positive comments were uppermost, pupils responded well and wanted to do well. Too many negative comments soon created a less productive atmosphere in which some pupils, especially those with special educational needs for behavioural difficulties, became increasingly attention seeking and thoughtless about other pupils' needs.

24. Teachers' planning is good because staff work well together as a team. Experienced teachers guide those who are newer to the profession or to the school. Work is prepared systematically, based on the school's schemes and tailored to meet the needs of the year groups and groups of pupils with different abilities so that there is equal access to the curriculum. All teachers tell the pupils what they are expected to know or do by the end of each lesson. The lesson objectives are displayed and discussed as each lesson begins. Pupils can then measure their own progress and evaluate their success in learning. Pupils value this aspect of the teaching and at the end of the best lessons there is a sense of exhilaration and achievement when success is shared.

25. In mathematics, the good pace in lessons keeps pupils involved and well motivated. In the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lessons, teachers employ effective direct teaching to inform pupils and give them clear explanations. Teachers' high expectations were a significant feature of the best teaching. Staff follow pupils' individual education plans satisfactorily so that pupils build step-by-step on what they already know. In the best lessons, teachers motivate pupils to learn because of the variety of stimulating tasks, for example, in geography. Group work is well organised in English and mathematics, especially when pupils are grouped by ability. Skills are developed systematically when teachers encourage pupils to handle instruments carefully and check measurements accurately, for example, in science. Good links between subjects help to make learning more relevant for the pupils; for example, drawing skills are used well in history. Teachers use specific subject vocabulary to enhance learning in all areas of the curriculum and promote literacy and numeracy well throughout the school day.

26. Teachers work conscientiously with the school's co-ordinator for special educational needs to create individual educational plans and usually provide suitably matched, achievable and sufficiently challenging work to support pupils. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well, but assistance is not available in all lessons. Teachers are hard-pressed to manage the wide range of pupils' needs in such lessons and do well to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers make a satisfactory contribution to the learning of pupils who speak English as an additional language, enabling them to make satisfactory progress, but tasks are not always matched to their needs in some subjects.

27. Teachers keep regular records of pupils' achievements and generally use these effectively to inform the planning of lessons. Best use is not made of the home and school reading partnership to extend pupils' reading opportunities and to involve parents in their children's learning. The teachers' marking of pupils' work is at least satisfactory overall. In science, marking gives clear guidance to pupils and encourages them to improve their efforts.

28. The staff use most learning resources well, but the use of resources for information and communication technology is variable. There are a number of reasons for this. The school's plans to use information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in all subjects are not sufficiently embedded, although the organisation of programs to enhance teaching and learning is well documented. Also, plans for teaching information and communication technology have been frustrated because some computers are old or out of order and other necessary equipment has only recently been acquired.

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

29. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. The school provides a broad curriculum for all pupils which meets statutory requirements. The curriculum for children

in the Foundation Stage is firmly in place and all subjects of the National Curriculum, including religious education, are taught in Years 1 to 6. There is a wide range of appropriate and motivating learning opportunities, linking subjects and covering required areas of study with the expected balance and relevance. This is an improvement on the last inspection, when the curriculum was found to be neither broad nor balanced and schemes of work were not securely in place for some subjects. The time allocated for each subject is broadly satisfactory but it is tight in religious education and music, making it difficult for teachers to ensure that there is a balance of components within these subjects.

30. There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage. All aspects of the nationally recognised curriculum are planned and taught effectively, so that children gain appropriate skills which provide a firm basis for later work in the National Curriculum and religious education. Staff take account of the 'stepping stones' in the curriculum so that children make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

31. Good planning of the curriculum ensures that pupils' learning opportunities are now more consistent in all subjects. In most lessons, plans clearly reflect the programmes of study in the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There are helpful policies and schemes of work for all subjects. These are to be reviewed as part of the school's strategy to develop the curriculum further. The long-term plan identifies how pupils are to learn and is broken down well into medium-term units of work. The school has adapted nationally produced curricular material well and in some subjects has taken account of curricular guidance provided by the local education authority. The curriculum is carefully mapped out to ensure progression for all pupils in mixed age classes. Lesson plans indicate learning objectives which are shared with the pupils and discussed to reinforce and extend learning at the end of many lessons. Homework is planned to consolidate and extend pupils' learning, although it is inconsistently applied in Years 3 to 6. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but work is not always carefully matched to their needs in the foundation subjects.

32. The school has a positive, inclusive ethos and welcomes pupils who speak English as an additional language. Provision for these pupils is satisfactory and they have equal access to the National Curriculum. They are well integrated into classes and work together effectively with pupils from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Teachers make sure that boys and girls have equivalent experiences and that curricular and learning resources, such as books, reflect this.

33. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well in Years 1 and 2. It has been implemented satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively across Years 1 to 6. The thoughtful organisation of the curriculum ensures that literacy and numeracy are consolidated and developed effectively in other subjects. Information and communication technology is not used effectively to support pupils' learning in most other subjects but it is effective in art and design.

34. The governing body makes a satisfactory and improving contribution to curricular development. It does this through involvement in the formulation of the school improvement plan and through its curriculum and policy sub-committee. The governing body has a systematic approach towards the review and development of curricular policies and has established link governors for each subject.

35. All pupils are given equal access to the curriculum and opportunities to join in activities. There are weekly games and music clubs at lunchtimes for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Arrangements ensure that over time all pupils in these classes have the opportunity to take part. Currently, there are no clubs for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and this is unsatisfactory. The school provides a good range of educational visits, including trips to Tudor Chantry School, Duxford Air Museum and the Infant Music Festival. Residential visits to Burwell House, for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and to Grafham Water, for pupils in Years 5 and 6, provide good opportunities for social development and enhancement of what pupils learn in school. There are many visitors to the school; these include members of the local community, such as a local police officer and the vicar. Other visitors support the curriculum through events like the Victorian Day and the Egyptian Day. Pupils visit a Christian church as part of the curriculum for religious education but there are no visits to places of worship for the other religions.

36. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory but its introduction is fairly recent and its impact cannot be properly judged at this stage. The policy for sex education has been reviewed with support from the school nurse. The current policy is satisfactorily implemented through the Health for Life programme. Pupils are introduced to issues of puberty, relationships and growing up. Parents are kept fully informed and support the approach taken by the school. Drugs awareness is taught throughout the school as part of the curricula for science and for personal, social and health education. Questions from younger pupils are sensitively dealt with as they occur.

37. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. Parents support school visits and accompany pupils when they study the local environment. Pupils visit the local church, the library and the Priory Centre in St. Neots. The local police visit the school to discuss aspects of safety with groups of pupils. There are satisfactory relationships with partner institutions, such as other local primary schools in Eynesbury. Networks between schools are setting up to focus on aspects of the curriculum. In their last term pupils in Year 6 visit the local secondary school.

38. The school's provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Assemblies are held daily and these meet statutory requirements but during the inspection they lacked a sense of spirituality and reflection. However, there were good features. Pupils' achievements are often celebrated on these occasions and awards raise individual pupils' self-esteem and share a feeling of success. Suitable music is chosen to enhance the atmosphere but this is often spoilt by the restlessness of a few children. Each class has 'circle time', when pupils share ideas, talk about their experiences and are encouraged to express their feelings free from fear and embarrassment. There was limited evidence in lessons observed during the inspection to show that the school helps pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder in what they see or experience. There were too few opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own or other people's lives and beliefs.

39. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Staff teach pupils right from wrong and expect them to be honest and truthful in their dealings. Pupils are taught to uphold school and classroom rules which are prominently displayed in the classrooms and corridors. Displays of work include examples of pupils' views on how to behave towards others. Staff provide good role models. Pupils are encouraged and taught to behave well. Good behaviour is rewarded by praise, awards and 'golden time', which is time when pupils have a free choice of activities. Pupils are aware of the sanctions which will be applied when there is inappropriate behaviour but the school's policy is applied inconsistently in Years 3 to 6. The

school's recently introduced scheme for pupils' personal, social and health education provides good guidance for teachers.

40. The provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. All pupils have social as well as academic targets, so that they work towards the improvement of their social skills. Teachers use encouragement and praise well to enable pupils to reach their personal targets. They are encouraged to consider their responsibilities within the class and school community. Pupils are expected to take on classroom tasks and the eldest have responsibilities around the school. During the inspection pupils were able to work co-operatively. Staff treat pupils in a consistently friendly manner and this encourages positive relationships between all members of the school community. The school has plans to introduce a 'buddy' system, in which older pupils support younger ones, and to reintroduce the school council.

41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' appreciation of local heritage is soundly developed through visits to places in the locality. Visits further afield, visitors to school and special days, such as the one recently held about castles, all serve to broaden pupils' cultural knowledge and experience. Pupils are introduced to the work of great artists and composers through the ages. Provision for multicultural education is broadly satisfactory. The school has developed links with other countries, such as Scotland and Australia, and pupils study ancient civilisations, such as the Aztecs, in their history and geography lessons. In religious education, pupils learn about traditions and celebrations in other faiths. The school is gradually extending links throughout the curriculum to include references to different cultures and beliefs. This raises pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of contemporary British multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Overall, the procedures for the care, safety and well being of pupils are satisfactory. The school offers an attractive, safe and well-maintained environment. There is a good policy for health and safety which is reflected in careful daily practice, efficient systems and the close involvement of the governing body. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory overall. Staff are appropriately trained, although the depth of training has varied.

43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and progress are satisfactory. The educational guidance offered to pupils is also satisfactory. There is no formal whole-school system for monitoring and recording pupils' personal progress, but the school does have a variety of informal ways of doing this, including lunchtime logbooks, teachers' notes and incident records. These allow the school to provide pupils with personal targets for improvement. Pupils are also given academic targets for English and mathematics. Pupils feel that teachers help them, in particular, by including encouraging and useful comments in marked work.

44. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has introduced additional standardised tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 for English and mathematics. Information gained from these is now used effectively to match planned work to pupils' need and ensure more accurate arrangements for grouping pupils for lessons in literacy and numeracy. Systems for tracking pupils' attainment and progress are not fully established in other subjects. Procedures for

monitoring and tracking pupils' academic progress as they move through the school are not fully established and are unsatisfactory overall. Senior management does not have quantitative information which it can use to track pupils and set them realistic targets. This echoes findings of the last inspection.

45. The use of information from assessments to guide curricular planning is still underdeveloped and is inconsistent between subjects. In science, the school has evaluated pupils' performance in national tests effectively and has adapted the curriculum to address areas where there were low scores. Work has also been done in mathematics. Careful analysis of pupils' writing has enabled the school to address issues such as the use of descriptive writing. Assessment procedures in the foundation subjects are not sufficiently embedded to guide curricular planning. As a priority, the school is gradually developing a clearer picture of assessments of pupils' attainment, to be recorded electronically; this should enable teachers and governors to set informed targets for school improvement.

46. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school fulfils statutory requirements; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Registration procedures are efficient and absences are investigated quickly. The school views families taking holidays in term-time with appropriate formality, but even so a significant number of families still do, to the detriment of their children's education.

47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. There are appropriate school policies to support these areas but there is some inconsistency in the application of the school's behaviour policy. The school has responded well to incidents of bullying. Bullying has been discussed with pupils and parents have attended a workshop about relationships and behaviour. The school continues to work with parents on this issue.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory. Parents feel that the school is approachable, has high expectations and offers good teaching. The inspection findings support these views in general but find that in Years 3 to 6 teaching and expectations are only satisfactory overall. Parents have raised concerns over several aspects of the work of the school. They are unhappy with the range of activities it provides outside lessons, with the information they receive about how their children are getting on, with the provision of homework and with some aspects of the way the school works with them. Some parents have concerns about the standards of behaviour both in lessons and at lunchtime. The inspection findings partly support parents' views. The provision of extra-curricular clubs is unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 3 to 6 but there is good provision for visits to places of interest to support the curriculum and enrich pupils' lives. Some aspects of communication with parents are not as effective as they might be and there is justification for the concerns about behaviour.

49. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. Parents are invited to class assemblies and to seasonal events. The school is keen to involve parents more in the life of the school and in their children's education.

50. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Parents generally support the school well and some are able to help with activities, for example, by listening to pupils read or accompanying them on school trips. There is a strong and supportive Middlefield Friends' Association that organises a variety of social and fund-raising events, which are well attended.

51. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. The governors' annual report to parents and the school brochure are well designed and there are useful letters to parents informing them about school events and trips. At the beginning of the school year, there were well attended meetings at which the curriculum for the mixed age classes was explained. There has been little follow up to keep parents up to date on what their children are doing and homework diaries are not used as well as they might be. This limits parents' understanding of what their children do at school and prevents them from offering better support at home. Consultation evenings offer parents the opportunity to hear about their children's progress. Some parents would welcome a greater allocation of time for these events. Parents also receive a written report in the summer term. Written reports vary in quality but the majority contain useful information about a child's talents and difficulties and set clear targets for improvement.

52. The contribution parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is satisfactory. Parents want their children to do well and usually support them well with their homework. The provision of homework is inconsistent and its purpose and requirements are not made sufficiently clear to parents. Homework books are used but their contents vary, some have good information about homework requirements and some have not. Pupils report that lack of parental understanding about homework limits parents' ability to help. The school works hard to convince parents that their children's progress at school is adversely affected when holidays are taken in term time.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. There has been good improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. The school now has the sound capacity to improve further because it is well led.

54. The headteacher, who was appointed permanently in September 2001 after a term as acting headteacher, leads the school well and provides clear educational direction. Governors, staff, parents and pupils have expressed the view that her leadership has led to improved morale and a more positive climate for teaching and learning. She has built well on the good start made by the previous acting headteacher and, after a period of low morale and many staff changes, this was not an easy task. The conscientious deputy headteacher, who joined the school in September 2001, takes a prominent role in the leadership of the school. Her responsibilities are wide ranging and she is an excellent role model as a classroom teacher. The leadership is focused firmly on improving standards. Because of the difficulties in recruiting staff in this part of the country, the headteacher has a punishing schedule of teaching in addition to her leadership, management and administrative duties. The staff support her well and there is a climate of partnership in the school which involves all adults in a shared commitment to providing as well as possible for all pupils. Governors appreciate the high level of professionalism displayed by the staff team.

55. Co-ordinators for the key subjects of English and mathematics have monitored lessons with the clear focus on continuously raising standards of teaching and learning. The school has been supported effectively by the local education authority in the development of monitoring in the school. The role of co-ordinators has been developed satisfactorily. Classroom monitoring has not yet taken place in all subjects because of the school's appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy over the past two years. Systematic monitoring is scheduled in the school's longer-term strategic planning. The co-ordinators' monitoring and

evaluation of teachers' planning and pupils' work are now a regular feature in the development of most subjects. Each governor is linked with a subject co-ordinator and the headteacher and governors give good levels of support and encouragement to teachers. Co-ordinators give regular presentations to the governing

body so that information on the curriculum and pupils' progress is shared. Each teacher has a clear job description and performance management systems are firmly in place to support teachers' professional development and raise pupils' achievement.

56. The chair of governors brings good levels of expertise and efficiency which support the sustained development of the governing body. All statutory duties are met and the school meets its aims satisfactorily. The local education authority has been very helpful in providing training, so that new governors are becoming increasingly effective in supporting the school and fulfilling their management roles. The governing body has a strong sense of duty towards the pupils and carries out its business conscientiously through a well organised system of committees, each with its own clear terms of reference. Because of good levels of information from the headteacher, governors are increasingly aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have begun a programme of school self-evaluation which includes clearer information on pupils' attainment in all subjects, a more coherent system for tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school and increased use of assessment information to inform curricular planning. Information on the school's performance in national tests is analysed with increasing rigour. This evaluation has provided the staff and governors with well-founded priorities, such as improvements in pupils' reading by the end of Year 6 for inclusion in the school improvement plan. Financial implications are considered carefully, for example, in information and communication technology. All staff and governors are appropriately involved in the formulation of the plan and actions are carefully structured to sustain its progress and ensure its fulfilment.

57. The school is staffed by suitably qualified teachers and there is a good balance between experienced and more recently qualified staff. Maintaining a regular workforce is not easy. There is a shortage of teachers in the area and the governors experience difficulty in recruiting staff. They have been successful in appointing a co-ordinator to take responsibility for Years 3 to 6 from September this year. The school has a strong commitment to the professional development of teachers and specific grants for this purpose are used to good effect. This has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Support and guidance for newly qualified staff is very good, so that they soon integrate into the school community and confidently fulfil their teaching role. The contribution of the nursery nurse and teaching assistants is greatly valued by teachers and governors and they are encouraged to extend their qualifications in order to bring increased expertise into the school. In lessons where a number of pupils with special educational needs require extra support, more staff are sometimes needed. Lunchtime supervisors meet regularly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher in order to share information on routines and on the school's approach to the management of pupils.

58. The governors monitor the effectiveness of financial decisions. They receive regular financial reports and use the information effectively to review spending plans and improve the level of resources. There is a carefully planned strategy in place, which has been agreed with the local education authority, to deal progressively and firmly with the previous budgetary deficit.

59. Educational developments are supported effectively through careful financial planning. The budget reflects the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The headteacher, the chair of the finance sub-committee, the office manager and a member of staff from the local education authority carefully plan the annual budget. Governors and the headteacher make best use of the funds available and ensure that supplies and services offer good value for money. No money is wasted. Grants for specific purposes are used appropriately. Day-to-day financial management and administration are very good. There are very good financial controls and the school follows appropriate guidelines for the administration of its funds. Routine administrative procedures operate efficiently and unobtrusively. The office manager provides very good support to pupils and staff. Good use is made information and communication technology to maintain financial control and accountability. The administration is efficient and effective and supports the smooth running of the school. The funds allocated to support pupils with special educational needs are used effectively to meet pupils' needs.

60. The accommodation is satisfactory. The school provides a well maintained and attractive learning environment. Classrooms are of an adequate size and the school library doubles as an additional classroom. Sometimes noise from one classroom interferes with work in another. The school hall meets academic requirements but is too small to accommodate lunches efficiently. The school has extensive grounds that are used well. There is a wildlife area to support scientific activities and the school has recently created an attractive quiet area in memory of a much respected former teacher.

61. The school's resources are satisfactory overall and provide adequate support for the curriculum. Those provided to support English, mathematics and science are good. Resources for religious education are satisfactory overall but there are insufficient books to support teaching and learning. Resources, including software, accessories and hardware, are unsatisfactory for information and communication technology; there is an inadequate number of computers and some are not in reliable working order.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to further raise standards in the school.

- ◆ Raise standards in English at the end of Year 6 through improving provision in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - *Providing opportunities for the newly appointed subject co-ordinator to monitor lessons and share her skills with other staff;*
 - *Planning carefully structured group reading lessons;*
 - *Improving the process for recording pupils' progress in reading so that teachers have clearer information on which books to choose at the right level for each pupil;*
 - *Making sure pupils are aware of their targets for improvement in English and reinforcing these effectively in lessons;*
 - *Following through the school's plan to improve pupils' writing, particularly in enhancing their spelling and punctuation;*

(Paragraphs 1, 78, 79, 81, 84 and 85)

- ◆ Improve standards in information and communication technology, religious education and music by the end of Year 6 by:
 - *Establishing a system of regular monitoring of lessons to ensure that the schemes of work are followed systematically throughout the school;*
 - *Providing time for co-ordinators to plan the use and systematic development of information and communication technology skills in all subjects;*
 - *Improving resources in information and communication technology and religious education;*
 - *Reviewing the time allocation for religious education and music;*

(Paragraphs 4, 7-9, 28, 29, 33, 55, 61, 137, 139, 141, 143-6, 153 and 155)

- ◆ Encourage pupils in Years 3 to 6 to show more regard for the needs of others in lessons by:
 - *Using the school's broad range of procedures and schemes to develop pupils' personal development more effectively;*

(Paragraphs 12-13, 23, 48, 82, 150 and 156)

- ◆ Improve and draw together assessments of pupils' progress by:
 - *Planning and implementing procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment in all subjects;*
 - *Collating information from assessments which is helpful for improving curricular provision and for tracking the progress of groups of pupils and individual pupils;*

(Paragraphs 1, 45, 56, 113, 118, 126, 135, 142, 146 and 152)

- ◆ Improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development by:
 - *Ensuring that pupils have opportunities in assemblies and lessons to reflect on their experiences and to consider the feelings and views of other people;*

(Paragraphs 15 and 38)

- ◆ Improve the range and number of clubs for pupils to enjoy and extend their interests by:
 - *Exploring ways to involve more adults in running activities which the pupils enjoy.*

(Paragraphs 35, 48, 146 and 152)

The following should also be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan. This is included in paragraphs 57 and 107:

- ◆ The school should explore further ways of providing support for pupils with special educational needs when there are a number of these children in a teaching group.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	7	21	20	3	0	0
Percentage	6	13	39	37	6	0	0

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

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)	239
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	49

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	16	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	17
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	33	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (88)	94 (91)	100 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	33	33	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (85)	100 (91)	100 (91)
	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	17	12	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	17
	Girls	8	6	12
	Total	23	21	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (77)	72 (54)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	15
	Girls	10	7	8
	Total	22	21	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (73)	72 (65)	79 (85)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	230
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	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)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	480,674
Total expenditure	494,570
Expenditure per pupil	2,044
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9,603
Balance carried forward to next year	-23,499

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	15
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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)	0.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	68

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	46	4	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	47	9	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	58	6	13	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	41	18	15	1
The teaching is good.	28	55	4	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	46	32	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	40	6	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	44	3	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	16	47	30	7	0
The school is well led and managed.	28	47	16	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	50	9	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	6	13	46	19	16

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. The provision for children in the reception class is good and has improved since the last inspection. This is due to the improvement in teaching across all the areas of learning. Children are admitted to the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they are five years old. There is a wide range of attainment on entry to the school but it is broadly average overall. Most children have had some pre-school education and there are good links with the playgroup nearby. Links with parents are good. Before their children start school, parents are invited to an initial meeting where arrangements are made for staff to visit children at home at the beginning of the school year. The children also visit for a short time in the summer term. In September, children attend school for half the day to begin with and this is gradually extended to a full day.

63. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress because of good teaching and the work of supporting adults. By the time they leave the reception class, most children achieve the levels expected nationally in the six required areas of learning. The well qualified and experienced staff work together effectively as a team to plan and review activities. Equal opportunities are provided through a range of directed and free choice activities for these young children to develop academically and socially. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of how children learn and provides effective leadership.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. This area of learning is promoted well and children make good progress because of the established routines and clear expectations of staff. They gain in confidence and feel comfortable in expressing their ideas and feelings. They know and respect the classroom rules and behave well. As they work and play, children acquire a wide range of skills and begin to take responsibility for their own actions. They develop initiative and independence in selecting resources, tidying away and making choices in their work. They store their clothes neatly when changing for physical activities in the hall and move sensibly and safely from one room to another. Children learn to share equipment and co-operate together. They negotiated roles in the 'vet's surgery' and confidently entered into imaginative play using experiences beyond school. As one cuddled his dog he confided 'My dog needs his injections.'

65. Children have an increasing awareness of right and wrong and learn to care about the world around them, for example, when they walk round the school gardens, showing consideration for the tiny creatures and plants which they see.

66. Children make good progress in their personal and social development because of good teaching, based on a secure knowledge of the needs of young children. The staff set very good role models in the way that they work together. They show respect, patience and courtesy to all the children with whom they work.

Communication, language and literacy

67. Children make good progress and by the end of the year, most children will reach the standards expected of them in this area of learning. Speaking and listening skills are very good. Children are able to concentrate and listen for considerable periods of time. They respond readily to adult questions and are keen to volunteer information during discussions. When playing a game of dressing a doll, children were able to discuss the correct order and

give reasons for their own suggestions. Children chat confidently to each other during shared activities. They begin to develop specific language to support their learning in other areas. For example, during a walk in the school grounds children use words such as 'season' and 'change'.

68. The teacher encourages children to enjoy books. She reads in a lively and enthusiastic manner. As a result, the children are interested and keen to know what happens next. Children understand the words 'title', 'author' and 'illustrator'. They talk about the characters in a book and some can retell a simple traditional story such as 'The Three Little Pigs' in sequence. They know letters of the alphabet and apply their knowledge of letter sounds when looking at new words in simple texts. They cannot yet read individual words taken out of the context of the sentence. Children are able to borrow books from school to share with their families. Staff encourage children to think of themselves as writers. There is a designated area of the classroom where children have opportunities to make marks and practise their writing. Writing opportunities also occur in child initiated imaginative play. For example, the receptionist at the 'vet's surgery' registers 'patients' and gives appointments. Children know that we need to write for many reasons. They write a letter to a bear and begin to understand the conventions of writing greetings, endings and signatures in letters. Most children can write a simple sentence, with varying levels of support from staff. They use their knowledge of letter sounds and shapes to spell simple words.

69. The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy is good and staff put strong emphasis on improving spoken language and developing listening skills. Staff are skilful in questioning children. The nursery nurse plays a valuable role in the teaching process.

Mathematical development

70. Most children make good progress in acquiring mathematical skills and reach the expected levels of attainment by the end of the reception year. Teachers ensure children have opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge in activities such as joining in number rhymes and games. They develop the concept of size when singing 'Goldilocks and the House of the Bears' and mention the father, mother and baby bear. Lessons are planned well to develop children's skills in counting and ordering numbers to 10. Teachers provide many interesting activities to develop children's understanding of number. For example, children search for plastic numbers hidden in the sand and then count them. The more able children are beginning to recognise and count numbers to 20. Children use a variety of equipment to measure the length of their teddy bears. They are aware of numbers that add up to 10 and begin to understand the idea of addition and subtraction. Higher attaining children can add small numbers together and record their work on the board. Suitable computer programs enhance the children's mathematical learning.

71. Teaching is good. Staff plan appropriately and tasks are matched to meet the needs of all the children. They record the children's progress and attainment and use this information to plan future lessons. Classroom displays constantly reinforce new skills and knowledge.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Children make good progress in this area of learning and reach the level expected of them by the end of the reception year. Evidence from teachers' planning show that a variety of experiences are provided for the children, some of which are linked to the current topic. Children begin to gain an understanding of the passage of time as they talk about their teddy bears and how old they are. The recent 'castles' day provided an exciting opportunity for children to get a glimpse of what life was like further back in history. Children relate the

passage of time to the natural world as they appreciate seasonal changes and understand the life cycle of a frog. They begin to be aware of their own responsibility towards the care and protection of other living things, for example, how to handle tiny creatures they may see on their walks together. They know that pets need love and care as they play imaginatively in the vet's surgery. Early geographical skills are fostered during walks round the school grounds and the local area. Computer skills develop appropriately and children use the keyboard and the mouse with growing confidence.

73. Teaching is good. Staff make use of visits, such as the whole school trip to the pantomime, to widen children's experiences and develop their social skills. Visitors, such as the community policeman, enhance the personal and social development of the children.

Physical development

74. Children achieve the early learning goals for physical development by the time they leave the reception class. As they play with construction kits and malleable materials such as dough and clay, children increase their level of manipulative control. Teachers provide mark making, cutting and sticking activities so that children can practise the vital skills needed for writing. Most children control paintbrushes, pencils and scissors successfully by the end of the reception year. In the school hall, children use the space effectively when they warm up at the beginning of lessons. They are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies. Working co-operatively with partners, children respond imaginatively to the challenge of travelling through a large hoop in a variety of ways. They control their bodies well. Children are beginning to understand the importance of evaluating their work and that of others. They observe and comment on what others have done well and demonstrate what they themselves have achieved.

75. Good planning and teaching ensure that all children build effectively on skills already learnt. The quality of teaching is good. Activities are well organised with appropriate emphasis on developing an awareness of others, co-operating and working safely.

Creative development

76. Children achieve the levels expected for this age group by the end of the reception year. Progress in their musical development is very good and most children achieve very well. They enjoy singing new and familiar songs, keeping in time with the music and joining in the actions. Teachers make good use of current topics to enrich children's learning in music. For example, the children were able to clap the different rhythms of the names of bears from a story they had heard. These rhythms were then put in different orders to create a simple composition. A selection of musical instruments from around the world gives the children an opportunity to explore sounds by shaking, tapping and scraping. Skills in drama begin to develop as children take part in role-play. For instance, children become the surgeon, receptionist or customer at the 'vet's surgery'. Throughout the year, children are introduced to a wide range of techniques, including printing, colour mixing, cutting, pasting, collage and modelling with reclaimed materials. They use their developing observational skills effectively to draw and paint their teddy bears. They explore colour and texture when engaged with others in weaving a large picture using a wide variety of materials. As the children concentrate on chosen activities and work and share with others, they also extend their social skills.

77. Children make good progress because of the good teaching and the opportunities provided. Learning is promoted in exciting ways which stimulate children's imagination and encourage their participation.

ENGLISH

78. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 is not as high as it was at the time of the previous inspection. The current Year 6 includes a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and pupils have experienced a number of changes of teacher over the past year. This has hindered their progress. The overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations in writing and spelling and above national expectations in reading. Standards of attainment have risen since the last inspection because the teaching is good, teachers have developed effective strategies to increase the range and quality of pupils' early writing skills and teachers have a structured approach to hearing pupils read in literacy lessons.

79. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, the school's results were in line with the national average and were similar to those of the previous three years. Results were well below those of similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that standards of attainment for Year 6 pupils have declined and are now below average. This is because there has been inconsistency in the quality and stability of teaching and work has not always been provided at the right level for all pupils. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Additionally, there is a lack of structure in the teaching of reading. Higher attaining pupils read at a level which is in line with or above national expectations.

80. In the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2, the school's results were well above the national average in reading and in writing. Standards in reading for pupils currently in Year 2 are above average, with more than a third exceeding the nationally expected level. Standards in writing are average. Inconsistent use of punctuation and inability to use more complex sentences precludes pupils from attaining higher levels in national tests. Current standards are not as high as last year because this group of pupils in Year 2 includes more pupils of below average attainment than in the previous year.

81. Pupils in Year 1 make good to very good progress due to the excellent teaching, and pupils achieve well by the end of Year 2. There is some good achievement in Years 3 and 4, when higher attaining pupils are taught as a group. Because of lack of consistency in teaching provision, pupils do not achieve well enough in reading and writing by the end of Year 6. In Years 3 to 6, progress in reading slows for a significant minority of pupils. Overall, boys and girls achieve similarly throughout the school and pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve in line with their peers. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons. They make good progress when supported individually and in small groups by well trained adults, for example, when extra support is given for literacy. Pupils are treated equally and included in all aspects of the subject.

82. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are confident speakers. Teachers promote the use of specific vocabulary in each subject, for example, in a mathematics lesson in Years 1 and 2, pupils used words such as 'halving', 'doubling' and 'inverse'. Teachers give pupils ample opportunities to explain their ideas during lessons, and frequently challenge pupils to use more adventurous vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 5 offered 'questioned', 'exclaimed' and 'stated', as possible alternatives for 'said'.

Whilst most pupils listen attentively to what the teacher is saying, a significant minority take less notice, sometimes preferring to continue their own conversations. Valuable time is wasted as the teacher brings the class back to the subject in hand and this reduces the rate of pupils' progress in some lessons.

83. By the end of Year 2, systematic teaching of letter sounds and patterns enables pupils of all abilities to read simple texts by themselves. Most use these skills appropriately to decode new words. They use pictures and context clues well to establish meaning. Pupils develop good reference skills and use the contents, index and glossary pages of books to locate information. This enables them to use a range of non-fiction texts confidently. They know how to use alphabetical order correctly to find spellings and meanings in dictionaries. Teachers provide weekly structured opportunities for pupils to read in small groups. They keep detailed, diagnostic records of pupils' attainment and achievements. This ensures that most pupils make good progress, enabling them to read well and to gain enjoyment from stories. Opportunities for pupils of below average attainment to read to adults are sometimes missed and this reduces the rate of learning for a significant minority of pupils in Year 2.

84. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading is well below average and progress is uneven between groups. During the literacy hour pupils have satisfactory opportunities to read from a range of texts, but overall, they read infrequently to adults. Often pupils choose books that are too difficult for them; as a result, they fail to understand and enjoy the text. Home and school diaries are not used as well as intended, limiting the contributions that parents can make. This does not affect higher attaining pupils, who are well motivated and read frequently for pleasure, but pupils of average and below average attainment do not necessarily have their progress monitored closely enough. A significant number of pupils who read during the inspection had books that were too difficult for them. Overall, pupils lack strategies to decode unknown words. Since pupils read infrequently to adults in lessons, weaknesses are not systematically identified and addressed.

85. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in writing are satisfactory but by the end of Year 6 they are unsatisfactory. Standards have improved since the last inspection, with more pupils attaining the average and higher levels. Cursive script is effectively taught so that most pupils develop a legible, fluent handwriting style. Teachers rigorously mark work against previously set targets so that pupils see how to improve. Throughout the school, pupils are challenged to add interest to their work through the careful choice of vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1 make particularly good progress in writing because of the high quality of the teaching. Most already write in simple sentences and are beginning to choose words to add impact, for example, a child wrote 'a noisy bird was in a blossom tree', another wrote 'a brave dog lived in a dark forest'. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use their knowledge of sounds and letter shapes well and make good attempts to spell new words but they do not use full stops and capital letters consistently. High attaining pupils are beginning to use more complex sentences, with an adventurous choice of words to enrich their writing. Spelling is at the level expected for 7 year olds. By the end of Year 6, pupils write for a good range of purposes, such as lists, play-scripts and poetry, and they include an increasingly interesting vocabulary. A significant minority of pupils do not meet national expectations because they misspell common words, use only simple sentences and are inconsistent in their use of punctuation.

86. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' attitudes to English are good. Pupils concentrate well and are motivated to work hard. They settle quickly to tasks because teachers explain the work clearly and they know what to do. In a significant number of lessons in Years 3 to 6, most pupils listen

attentively during lessons but achieve less than they are capable of. This is because they are not always set challenging times in which to complete works, allowing them to take an unduly long time to settle and to chat while they are working.

87. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and very good for the younger pupils. It is satisfactory overall for pupils in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn well and sometimes very well. In the very good lessons, the teacher uses a good range of strategies to maintain pupils' interest and has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate. No time is wasted and lessons progress at a challenging rate. Pupils' learning is reinforced through revision and questioning. Teachers in all classes promote a supportive atmosphere in which pupils' contributions are valued. This develops pupils' confidence. Teachers consistently ensure that pupils are clear about what they are learning and what they have to do. Planning is good throughout the school, with provision of relevant work which builds well on previous learning. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 wrote letters to pupils in a Scottish primary school, after reading about life on the Isle of Struay.

88. Teachers ensure that pupils experience a wide range of literary experiences. For example, pupils in Year 6 compared a writer's work over a range of books and compared and contrasted texts from different countries. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and are deployed effectively by teachers to teach and give additional support to individual pupils and to small groups. Good teaching and learning was observed in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, when the teacher kept the pupils on task, moved from one part of the lesson to another briskly and had high expectations of pupils. The main weakness in the teaching of older pupils is the teachers' low expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils can produce. A significant number of pupils do not work to their full potential.

89. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy effectively. Pupils use the library confidently and, by Year 6, search for information on the Internet, CD-ROMs and in books. Pupils apply the skills taught in literacy to other subjects effectively, for example, when they produce labelled drawings in design and technology and write reports about environmental issues in geography. Pupils use a word processing package confidently to write poems, stories and letters of thanks.

90. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Rigorous analysis of pupils' work has been undertaken recently, with accompanying training for teachers. An appropriate school improvement plan has been prepared which addresses weaknesses in reading. The co-ordinator is a skilled practitioner who leads by example and is having a significant impact on the teaching and learning of younger pupils. Monitoring of teaching and learning has taken place but there are no current plans for the co-ordinator to give model lessons to develop good practice. A satisfactory range of procedures is in place to enable teachers to assess pupils' attainment and progress but test results are not drawn together to evaluate the overall attainment and progress of groups. This reduces the opportunities for teachers to use assessment to set challenging, achievable targets for pupils. The quality and range of learning resources is good.

MATHEMATICS

91. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Pupils are making greater progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Work for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is more carefully matched to pupils' needs, as a result of the introduction of teaching groups based on pupils'

prior attainment. In particular, higher attaining pupils are now challenged, although those who are talented in mathematics could be challenged still further. The improvement since the last inspection is the result of better quality and more consistent standards of teaching, good co-ordination of the subject, effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and increased emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation of provision and standards.

92. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2001 were in line with the national average, but well below average when compared with those at similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher, level 5, in the 2001 National Curriculum tests was below the national average. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that standards are now in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6, and standards are improving for higher attaining pupils. Since 1998 there has been a slight rise in the school's results in national tests. In 2001, there were differences in the attainment of boys and girls. The school has taken effective action to remedy this and no significant gender difference was noticed during the current inspection. In the 2001 tests for pupils in Year 2, the schools' results were above expectations when compared with all schools nationally and in line with those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher, level 3, was above the national average. Current standards for most pupils in Year 2 are above those expected nationally. Since 1998, results have improved for pupils in Year 2. There has been no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

93. Higher attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those where English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils also achieve well in most groups in Years 3 to 6. Achievement is good in Years 1 and 2 because of the good, and sometimes very good, teaching. Instability in staffing has adversely affected the progress of pupils in Year 6, but achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory and improving because pupils are now organised into groups based on prior attainment. This helps to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons and that they are set work at an appropriate level. Pupils who need extra help to reach the expected levels in Year 6 are given additional support.

94. Pupils in Year 1 are familiar with a range of mathematical language, for example, they confidently use 'count on', 'more than' and 'total' in relation to addition, and 'minus', 'less than', 'count back' and 'difference' in relation to subtraction. By the end of Year 2, pupils recognise that addition is the inverse of subtraction and use this knowledge to solve number problems. They can find solutions to problems expressed in words and figures. They know that a triangle is two-dimensional and has three sides and three corners. Pupils discuss the features of shapes and higher attaining pupils know that a pyramid has triangular sloping faces which meet at the top. By the end of Year 2, pupils use mental recall with confidence. Most recognise that multiplication is the inverse of division and apply this relationship simply, without the need for pencil and paper. Higher attaining pupils understand the meaning of words such as 'estimate' and 'circumference'. Using money, this group of pupils can approximate to the nearest 10p and calculate mentally that 65p is the correct change from £1 after spending 35p in a shop.

95. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developing satisfactorily. Lower attaining pupils steadily develop their confidence in mathematics with the support of teaching assistants. They are able to explain the meaning of terms such as 'percentage' and recognise the relationship between fractions and percentages. For example, they know that half is the same as 50 per cent. Higher attaining pupils collect and collate data and use mathematical language such as 'mode' and 'median'. This group of pupils has a clear

understanding of different mathematical shapes and is able to explain confidently the properties of various regular and irregular shapes. They apply their mathematical knowledge well to other areas of work. The highest attaining pupils understand and apply sophisticated concepts, such as negative co-ordinates, accurately.

96. Pupils develop speaking and listening effectively in mathematics, through the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is appropriate emphasis on the development of specific subject vocabulary and there are good opportunities for pupils to learn through investigations in mathematics lessons. This provides the opportunity for pupils to organise their thoughts and develop mathematical ideas. Teachers make good use of numeracy in other subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 applied their mathematical knowledge and understanding by collating data in a physical education lesson. Pupils use their understanding of measurement in science lessons and collect and collate information in geography. The school is aware that it offers few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology in mathematics lessons.

97. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in mathematics lessons are good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Attitudes and behaviour are less positive where teachers have low expectations and the pace of lessons is slow. Attitudes and behaviour are very good where pupils work independently, fostered by high teacher expectations of good behaviour and attention to work.

98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good or very good in Years 1 and 2 but is inconsistent in Years 3 to 6 where it varies from good to unsatisfactory. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy well to plan lessons. Many lessons start with a brisk mental exercise which motivates and inspires pupils. Planning is good or very good in most lessons. Lessons have a clear structure giving pupils a good balance between mental work, direct instruction from the teacher and practical exercises. Teachers extend pupils' previous learning and give them opportunities to work in groups at different levels of difficulty. Pupils are told what they are expected to learn and do in each lesson. In a minority of lessons, the initial mental exercise and introduction to the main activity takes too long. This significantly reduces the pace and rate of pupils' learning and can impact adversely on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. In some lessons in Years 3 to 6, teachers' expectations are low during the activities when pupils work in groups. As a result, a minority of pupils become distracted and then disturb others. This reduces the rate of learning. Learning is good in some lessons because the teacher provides pupils with instant feedback on their progress. It is also good when teachers use praise effectively to motivate pupils and boost their confidence and self-esteem. At the end of the good and very good lessons teachers provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learned. In Years 3 to 6, homework is used inconsistently and it does not sufficiently consolidate, reinforce and extend what is learned at school.

99. Pupils' written work is often well presented. Work is marked regularly by the teachers and, in the best examples, is supported by positive comments. Teachers assess and record pupils' progress effectively. Pupils are set targets for improvement, which they refer to and understand. The tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of targets based on National Curriculum levels are at an early stage of development. Targets are currently too broad for some pupils to understand. Teachers are increasingly using the results of assessment to inform curricular planning. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils with special educational needs to focus closely on their work and organise their mathematical ideas. Teachers ensure that assistants are clear about what pupils are expected to learn; more support is needed for pupils in mathematics lessons.

100. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership. He has ensured that the issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and he has led the successful implementation and further development of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is an effective subject policy and curriculum plan. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has worked closely with the headteacher and members of staff from the local education authority to analyse and evaluate the results of national tests, to review teachers' planning and pupils' work, to identify areas for development. The co-ordinator has monitored the quality of teaching and learning with advisers from the local education authority and there are plans for the school's independent monitoring of the subject.

101. There is a good level of resources for mathematics. They are accessible to both staff and pupils. New resources have recently been purchased specifically to support the provision for teaching in mixed age groups. This has been an effective investment. The subject co-ordinator recognises that a priority is to provide a good range of up to date software to support the teaching and learning of mathematics through information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

102. By the end of Year 2, standards are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards are not as high as they were because of frequent changes of staff, but current teaching is good and pupils make good progress in lessons. From evidence gained from lessons, pupils' past work and discussions with pupils, standards are now above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6. Standards are improving as pupils move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

103. In 2001, every pupil in Year 6 reached the expected standard (level 4) in the national tests for pupils in Year 6, but the school's results were below the national average because few pupils achieved the higher level (level 5). The performance of pupils was well below average in comparison with pupils from similar schools. In comparison with all schools nationally, teachers' assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2001 showed that levels of attainment were very high at the expected level (level 2) and well above average at the higher level (level 3).

104. By the end of Year 2, pupils know that plants need light and moisture in order to survive. They carry out investigations to test their ideas; for example, when they placed plants in different places to see if they could survive without sunlight. Pupils label parts of the human body and know that humans and other animals are able to produce offspring and these in turn grow into adults. They experiment with water, ice, bread and chocolate to see what happens when materials are heated or cooled. Pupils understand the idea of testing fairly to ensure that results are valid. They explore the reasons why materials such as glass and wood are used for certain purposes. Pupils recognise the importance of exercise to keep healthy and the majority of pupils draw and name the characteristics of a healthy diet. There are good links with mathematics when pupils create simple graphs to record their investigations into favourite foods. Pupils classify materials in terms of texture, rigidity and colour and know that some materials can be stretched.

105. By the end of Year 6, pupils can explain some reversible and irreversible changes and demonstrate how to separate mixtures, such as solutions of salt or sugar and water. They explain the path of the earth around the sun and know how shadows are formed. Work on the reproduction of plants shows how pupils are aware of the importance of observation in

science. Interim results, from regular checks on growth, were well recorded when pupils grew plants from cuttings. Pupils use their knowledge and understanding of science to explain and interpret a range of everyday phenomena. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils set up an investigation to test which materials were the best insulators. Regular investigative work helps pupils to develop increasing confidence in predicting outcomes. Pupils record their observations and measurements with understanding, using a selection of tables and charts and they interpret patterns and trends from graphs they have drawn. They enjoy science and usually work together well in pairs and groups to solve problems, for example, when they experimented to find the relationship between grammes and newtons. Pupils express their ideas confidently, in an atmosphere of open enquiry and interest, without fear of criticism.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is now good throughout the school after a period of instability. Schemes of work are taught systematically because teachers translate them into good lesson plans which help pupils to build effectively on what they already know and can do. Analysis of pupils' past work shows that teaching and learning is consistently based on interesting practical activities which challenge pupils to find things out for themselves and then explain their findings in a variety of tables and graphs. For example, pupils in Year 2 investigated sources of light and recorded their work well. As they explored 'pushing and pulling', pupils made predictions and wrote up their findings in an organised, scientific way. In Year 6, pupils used correct scientific symbols in diagrams of electric circuits. In lessons, teachers' explanations are clear; as a result, pupils learn at a good rate because they know what they are supposed to do and learn. Resources are well organised so that pupils have the means to experiment and explore, using a good range of equipment and materials. This helps them to become eager young scientists who are keen to learn.

107. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge which enable them to answer pupils' questions and extend their knowledge and understanding through discussion. Throughout the school, teachers expect pupils to adopt a sound scientific approach to problems and ensure that tests are fair. A few pupils in Years 3 to 6 lack concentration during investigations but most pupils maintain their interest and enjoy the challenge of completing tasks. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, are challenged and supported sensitively by teachers. In some lessons, more adult help is necessary to support the teaching of a few challenging pupils who need constant support. Pupils generally work together happily and productively, regardless of gender or ethnicity.

108. The subject is led well. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to raise standards. The policy and systematic scheme of work are detailed and meet with national requirements. The school's emphasis on practical work requires careful monitoring, organisation and storage of resources, and this is done effectively. The amount and quality of resources are good overall. New electronic equipment has yet to be incorporated into lessons, and this is in hand. The school uses the school environment and educational visits effectively to provide pupils with experience of fieldwork. All pupils benefit from trips to local urban and rural sites, for example, when they go pond dipping to explore aquatic plant and animal life.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Sound standards have been maintained by the end of Years 2 and 6 since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress and achieve well.

110. In Years 1 and 2 pupils develop good observational skills, building well upon their previous learning in the Foundation Stage. They investigate the use of a good range of

materials, explore different ways in which pictures can be made and look carefully at shape, colour and pattern. As they sketched a range of musical instruments, pupils considered which technique, such as shading, hatching, blending or scribbling, should be used to most accurately represent the instrument being drawn. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate and improve their work. One pupil explained how he could gain a more three-dimensional effect by shading the edges to give a rounded effect. Pupils explore the techniques of significant artists and use them to bring interest to their own work. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 designed and created colourful masks after studying the work of Mexican artist, Gustavo Horta. Work in art and design is linked well with other subjects. Pupils record work in science by drawing and labelling diagrams and they used information and communication technology to draw and label pictures of flowers. In design and technology, they plan work by drawing the products they intend to make. In English, pupils illustrate their writing with lively drawings.

111. By the end of Year 6, pupils demonstrate a broad range of skills which they use to support work in other subjects, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 illustrated their history work on the Tudors with detailed portraits of the wives of Henry VIII. As part of their work on the use of colour, pupils in Years 3 and 4 studied paintings by Andre Derain and created well observed pictures in his style. Pictures of masks from other cultures inspired pupils in Years 5 and 6. They carefully considered the emotions which masks show and went on to make their own examples, with expressive, exaggerated features. This is a good example of how art from other cultures has stimulated pupils' interest and extended their knowledge and understanding but overall, this aspect of art is underdeveloped in the school.

112. Most pupils behave well. They are enthusiastic in lessons and are keen to share their enjoyment. They like to see their work displayed around the school and are interested in the work of other classes. They are generous with praise when they see good work by other pupils, for example, when a pupil said, 'That's good. I wish I could draw as well as that.'

113. The teaching of art and design is good throughout the school and pupils systematically build on skills learnt earlier. Teachers plan sufficient time for pupils to observe and reflect on what they are drawing. As a result pupils' drawings get more detailed and show a greater accuracy as they progress through the school. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support work in the subject. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is made informally within lessons. The school recognises the need to develop a more formal assessment process

114. The co-ordinator for art and design provides sound leadership. She scrutinises teachers' planning but has not monitored teaching. Resources are adequate and teachers use them imaginatively. The curriculum is based on the local authority's scheme of work. This ensures that pupils acquire skills in a step-by-step way for drawing, painting, printing, sculpture and working with textiles. Pupils are gradually gaining insight to art and design from other cultures. There have been no recent opportunities for pupils to work with visiting artists or visit art galleries to extend their experiences in art, nor are there any clubs for pupils to practise and experiment in a subject which they clearly enjoy.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. Judgements are based on discussion with teachers and pupils, the analysis of pupils' work, photographic evidence and examination of teachers' planning, as no design and technology lessons were seen during the inspection. Standards in design and technology are satisfactory and have been maintained by the end of Years 2 and 6 since the last inspection.

116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop satisfactory levels of skills and use them effectively to support other subjects. In this way, new learning in one subject reinforces learning in another. Pupils extended their scientific knowledge as well as their techniques for cutting materials and fastening them together when they cut out pictures of parts of the human body and then joined them together so that the limbs could be moved. Pupils use reclaimed materials effectively. In religious education, they made a model of a Mosque as part of their studies of other faiths. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked with partners to design, make and decorate a pair of slippers. These were carefully executed and individually decorated in imaginative ways. The work was relevant to pupils' everyday lives and they paid particular attention to the function, safety and reliability of the products. Pupils acquire satisfactory skills in food technology. They design and make healthy fillings for jacket potatoes, considering the kinds of ingredients carefully. They benefit from the support of parents who are able to help them with this area of learning. By the end of Year 6, pupils have learnt to plan and sketch what they want to make and evaluate their work, but do not always follow the process systematically from initial design to final evaluation.

117. From discussions with pupils, it is evident that they enjoy design and technology lessons and are proud of their work. They like to explain what they have done, and recognise that they use skills learned in other subjects, for example, in Years 1 and 2 when they used literacy skills to read and follow the instructions to make a doll.

118. No teaching was seen, but scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work and consideration of their achievement show that teaching has been sound. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and reach the standards expected of them by the end of Years 2 and 6. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are made informally within lessons. More formal assessment has yet to be developed.

119. The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively. He examines teachers' planning but has not yet monitored their teaching. The school has adequate resources for the subject and uses reclaimed materials to extend pupils' experience with a range of materials. The curriculum is based on the local authority's scheme of work. The school provides a range of activities and experiences for pupils so that they acquire appropriate skills in choosing and using a variety of tools and materials.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Improvement since the previous inspection has been sound overall. At the time of the last inspection, standards were found to be in line with national expectations for pupils in Years 2 and 6. The current inspection concurs with these findings. Standards have been maintained at the levels expected for both age groups. Pupils are making greater progress and an appropriate curriculum for geography is now taught. There are also newly adopted, appropriate arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision for geography.

121. By the end of Year 2, pupils acquire a good range of geographical skills, increase their knowledge and gain a deeper understanding of the physical and human aspects of the subject. They appreciate that maps provide different types of information and use their skills of geographical enquiry to ask questions and search for answers. Pupils can place Mexico on a world map and construct a simple map of a Mexican village. They are able to undertake

elementary research, for example, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 collected information on Mexican children and wrote it down in a logical order. Pupils have also investigated life on the Isle of Struay in Scotland, collected information and placed it in an appropriate order on diagrams.

122. By the end of Year 6, although pupils' attainment is sound overall, aspects of their attainment in geography are good. They achieve well and make good progress in their understanding of maps and pupils in Year 6 refer to atlases and globes with confidence. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 confidently use books, the Internet and maps to gather information, and use their knowledge and understanding to gain a growing appreciation of the world. They can plot a route from Mozambique to England describing the continents, the countries and major physical features crossed. With good teaching and the introduction of a more structured curriculum, pupils' achievement is increasing as they move through Years 3 to 6, and their skills of geographical enquiry develop well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have studied the island of St. Lucia and they know that it is in the Caribbean. As part of their research into a St. Lucian family, they made maps of the island and used them to locate cities, an airport, beaches and mountains. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language achieve at a satisfactory rate. They make good progress when work is set at an appropriate level. Higher attaining pupils achieve well; one higher attaining pupil in Year 3 could explain that the purpose of the scale on a map is to enable him to calculate how far places are apart.

123. Pupils have positive attitudes and are interested in geography. They usually complete their work and are keen to do well. They work collaboratively on tasks and demonstrate respect for one another. Pupils usually present their work well and draw diagrams carefully. The work of some Year 6 pupils is very well presented.

124. Literacy and numeracy are promoted and developed effectively. Pupils apply their mathematical and writing skills by recording their work in charts, grids, graphs and reports. Pupils' reading develops as they improve their research skills. Information and communication technology is used appropriately by older pupils. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have gathered data on the incidence of tornadoes in different parts of the world and constructed graphs and charts to display their results. They use the Internet to collect information and other software to collate it but there is only limited software for pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and skills further in the subject.

125. No judgement can be made on the teaching in Years 1 and 2, as no lessons were observed during the inspection. The teaching is good in Years 3 to 6, reflecting the teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding. Effective planning includes a wide range of interesting learning opportunities for pupils so that they are well motivated. Teachers' expectations are high, especially in Years 3 to 6. In the best planned lessons, teachers provide opportunities for investigative work and tasks which allow pupils to use their own ways of finding things out. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given good opportunities to show the results of their work in different ways, including presentations to the rest of the class. Support for pupils with special educational needs is inconsistent; work is sometimes well matched to their needs but this is not always the case. The quality of learning is good overall. Pupils learn effectively because the topic areas and the good quality of teaching motivate them. Learning is constrained by the lack of formalised teacher assessment to inform planning. Pupils' written work is marked but sometimes only by ticks. The quality of teachers' written comments varies from class to class. No progress has been made on implementation of procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' work.

126. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator took over responsibility for the subject in September 2001. He has identified appropriate initial targets for the current school year, and is aware that the policy for geography is in need of review. Classroom teaching and learning has not been monitored in geography because of the school's appropriate emphasis on monitoring the introduction of the literacy hour and daily numeracy lessons. The co-ordinator has led the staff through some brief scrutiny of pupils' work across the school but has not monitored teachers' planning. Further improvement in the subject is hampered by the lack of consistent procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' work.

127. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on first-hand experience. The school is aware that the amount of time spent on many aspects of the scheme of work across Years 3 to 6 has been less than planned and this has adversely affected the attainment of pupils in Year 6, in particular. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs, have access to the full range of activities. The curriculum makes good use of the school grounds, for example, during work on conservation and pollution. The results of this work are presented to the whole school in assemblies. The local area is also used as a resource, for example, to carry out traffic surveys. The curriculum effectively supports pupils with special educational needs. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

128. Resources for geography have been increased recently and are satisfactory. Software is needed if information and communication technology is to be used in geography to extend pupils' experiences. Some atlases are out of date and there are very limited resources for a new topic in Years 1 and 2.

HISTORY

129. Since the last inspection, improvement has been sound. Standards have been maintained by the end of Years 2 and 6, where they continue to be in line with national expectations. Improved teaching and better curricular provision are raising the profile of the subject and there are examples of good work throughout the school. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision for history are beginning to be put into effect but procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' work are not sufficiently developed.

130. By the end of Year 2, pupils acquire a good range of historical skills and achieve a sound knowledge and understanding of history which is in line with standards expected nationally. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 gain an understanding of the passage of time as they study how they themselves have changed and grown older. As they look further into the past, they develop a growing sense of chronology. They know that castles were built long before anyone alive today was born and that they know were built to protect people. Pupils demonstrate a developing historical vocabulary, using words such as moat and drawbridge when they describe the ways that protection was created. They are beginning to be able to hypothesise when they discuss the possible reasons for changing window shapes and sizes in castles. Pupils with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily.

131. By the end of Year 6, pupils' historical skills, knowledge and understanding are in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 4 have studied the Vikings. They know that they came from Denmark and appreciate why the Vikings came to Britain. They have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding about Viking homes and how they dressed when preparing to fight. Pupils in Year 6 have deepened their understanding of past societies. They have a good

appreciation of the technical skills required by the Aztecs to build their cities. They carry out research using books and the Internet. They work co-operatively in groups to collect information about different aspects of Aztec life. They present the results of their research to the rest of the class. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily overall. These groups of pupils are not often given work that is differentiated to meet their different needs. Higher attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily.

132. Pupils have positive attitudes and are interested in history, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Some, but not all, older pupils are very enthusiastic about history. Pupils present their work satisfactorily by the end of Year 2. Work by some pupils in Year 6 is very well presented. Pupils with special educational needs often do not complete their work, because they are set the same work as the rest of the class. Pupils work both collaboratively and independently on tasks. Skills in literacy and numeracy are developed satisfactorily in history, for example, pupils are given opportunities to develop speaking and listening, to read from a range of sources and to write for different audiences.

133. No judgement can be made on the teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6, as no teaching was observed during the period of the inspection. The quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned. Learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils. Teachers use questioning techniques effectively to recall experiences from previous lessons, develop factual knowledge and deepen pupils' understanding. Most pupils behave satisfactorily, because they are well motivated and want to learn. Pupils' concentration is reduced if periods of direct teaching are too long. Teachers use some resources effectively to bring history to life and to support the development of new concepts. For example, a series of illustrations of castles from different periods were seen being used effectively to help pupils develop their appreciation of chronology. There is an over reliance on the use of worksheets during some lessons. The support for pupils with special educational needs is inconsistent; work is often not differentiated. Pupils' progress is constrained by the lack of formalised teacher assessment to inform planning. Most pupils' written work is marked but sometimes only by ticks; some work for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not marked. Some teachers provide helpful feedback, providing questions for pupils to consider further.

134. Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on first-hand experience, including the use of artefacts. The school has produced a curriculum map and a two-year cycle of work, which ensures that no pupil will repeat the same topics. The scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicates that both the scheme of work and the time available for history needs to be reviewed to ensure that each topic is adequately and appropriately covered. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors to the school for events such as the 'Victorian Day' and the 'Egyptian Day'. The results of pupils' work are used to create very well produced and stimulating displays around the school. The curriculum effectively supports pupils with special educational needs. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution towards pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

135. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator for history has only held responsibility for the subject since the beginning of the current school year. She has identified appropriate initial targets for development, begun a review of the current policy for history and produced a portfolio of pupils' work in the subject. Some pupils' work has been scrutinised but, because of other priorities in the school, teachers' planning and classroom teaching and learning have not

been monitored. As with other foundation subjects, procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' work are not properly developed.

136. Resources are satisfactory overall but inadequate for one recently introduced topic. Software is needed to extend pupils' experience in information and communication technology. The co-ordinator is aware of these deficiencies and is currently undertaking a review of resources across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

137. Since the last inspection, satisfactory standards have been maintained by the end of Year 2. They are now unsatisfactory at the end of Year 6 because the necessary equipment and software for the fulfilment of the curriculum has been out of order or is unavailable and the subject is not planned systematically in all subjects. The school is working hard to redress these deficiencies.

138. In Years 1 and 2, pupils acquire a broad range of skills and become increasingly confident in using computers. They recognise that many day-to-day devices, such as video recorders, respond to commands and signals. They know that information and communication technology is used in many places outside school, such as supermarkets and airports. By the time they are 7, most pupils word process competently to write short pieces of prose, poetry and lists. They include text, such as their names, on drawings in which they use a drawing package effectively, for example, when they chose a range of tools and colours to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. They save and retrieve their work and can make simple changes to what they have done. Pupils practise their spellings in a simple program which challenges their knowledge of words. In mathematics, they match shapes to complete pictures and test their knowledge of numbers. They also create simple graphs, for example, to record their favourite foods. Most pupils research confidently for information in CD-ROMs and print out pictures and short pieces of text to support their learning in subjects such as history and geography. There was little evidence of pupils' ability to plan and command to make things happen, but the school's long-term plan for information and communication technology includes opportunities for pupils to gain experience in control by directing simple robotic toys.

139. Although information and communication technology is not planned with sufficient rigour and included in long-term planning by all subject co-ordinators, teachers use the well-organised list of programs which have been linked to topics by the co-ordinator for information and communication technology. In Years 1 and 2, information and communication technology is used in short sessions to enhance pupils' skills, for example, during the last part of lessons, when teaching assistants work with pupils to sharpen up their skills in reading or writing. In Years 3 and 4, pupils build effectively on their earlier learning and achieve satisfactorily, but in Years 5 and 6, when increasingly sophisticated equipment has not been available and learning has not been sufficiently systematic, achievement is not high enough. For example, pupils have not had experience with electronic measuring equipment in science, nor have they had enough practice in controlling robotic toys. Their skills exchanging information and ideas through e-mail are secure. In an exciting project with the local police, pupils manned an imaginary emergency desk and responded to a range of problems. Decisions had to be made about who to contact and what kind of support was necessary. There were very good gains in pupils' learning, both socially and academically, during this project. Pupils' awareness of the uses of information and communication technology in the world outside school was raised and their skills in receiving and sending e-mail were greatly enhanced. Pupils look for

information in a range of websites, including that of a neighbouring school, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are planning their own website. They have explored ways to stimulate interest by designing an eye-catching page which tempts readers to want more information.

140. Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology and are keen to improve their skills and explore programs. They behave well when using the computers and share their knowledge considerably with their peers. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 helped one another to achieve success as they looked for different ways to draw lines and fill in spaces with specific colours. Pupils enjoy the excitement of getting news from round the world and this enhances their awareness of how other people live and work.

141. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, but it is hampered when machines or systems are out of order. During the inspection, only half of the machines in the suite of computers were in use. In specific lessons in which the skills of information and communication technology are taught, there is some good work, for example, when pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked hard to complete pictures and when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were involved in mature discussions about the effectiveness of website pages. The inclusion of information and communication technology in lessons is variable. It is used effectively for research in all classes. When it is used well, for example, in art and design, pupils make good gains in learning but teachers need the support of clearer planning by all subject co-ordinators so that information and communication technology is used more regularly as a tool for learning.

142. The co-ordinator for information and communication technology works hard to support staff, organise resources and ensure that the curriculum meets national requirements. She is enthusiastic and her planning is meticulous. Parents are told of their children's use of the Internet and appropriate precautions are taken to protect the pupils. The co-ordinator's involvement in projects, such as the initiative with the local police force, has brought relevance to the teaching of information and communication technology in the school. Pupils' work was recognised during a presentation about the project in Washington DC, when the co-ordinator represented the school. The development of information and communication technology is a priority in the school improvement plan. Issues concerning equipment, the extension of pupils' skills, the recording of assessments of pupils' progress and wider use of information and communication technology are clearly identified. Improvement in the subject is principally a management issue which has financial implications. The school recognises this and has it in hand.

MUSIC

143. Standards of attainment in music for pupils at the end of Year 2 are satisfactory and in line with national expectations. Only one lesson was observed in Years 3 to 6, but from scrutiny of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils, standards of attainment are below average. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, pupils' skills in composing and evaluating music remain underdeveloped and they have limited knowledge and understanding of composers and music from other cultures. Standards in singing, judged from whole-school assemblies, are satisfactory.

144. Recently the school introduced a set of comprehensive guidelines for teaching music. This gives a clear framework for the work to be covered by each class and ensures that skills, knowledge and understanding build up systematically as pupils move from year to year. In the

past this has not been the case, so that by the end of Year 6 there were significant gaps in pupils' learning, for example, opportunities to combine, compose and appraise music were limited. Pupils have not developed a vocabulary with which to describe their work, for example, they did not know the meaning of pitch, dynamics or timbre. They have not used computers to record, alter and combine sounds. A new programme of work gives a clearer shape to the school's provision and is having a positive effect. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are beginning to gain an overall grasp of composing, appraising and making music, for example, pupils in Year 4 recognise musical notation and chart the changing pitch of a sequence of notes and they are aware of great composers, such as Mozart.

145. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 recognise a range of instruments and identify the ways sounds are made, for example, they understand what is meant in music by shaking, strumming and blowing. Using percussion instruments they have composed simple rhythm stories; although they have had limited opportunities to record their compositions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can name musical notes and know that minim and crotchet have different time values. A minority of pupils have used keyboard instruments in school theatrical productions. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a little under half an hour's music teaching a week which severely limits what can be done. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that they have done only one piece of written work during the year. This limits opportunities for them to consolidate their work through writing and to use this as a tool for revision purposes. In the one lesson that was observed, an effective demonstration by the teacher meant that pupils were able to maintain the beat during a piece of syncopated music. Good use of appropriate resources increased the scope of the lesson, for example, when observing the picture 'Swinging' by the artist, Kandinsky, pupils gave good suggestions as to which beats appropriately portrayed the shapes and colours of the artist's work. Discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy music.

146. No overall judgement is given on teaching, as so little was seen. The music co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has developed good guidance notes to help teachers. There is a two-year rolling programme of work in music that addresses effectively the needs of classes which contain more than one age group. The co-ordinator has had no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms and there are no assessment procedures. Year 2 pupils take part in an annual music festival and pupils take part in concerts at Christmas and at other appropriate times during the year. This makes a fit contribution to pupils' singing and performance skills. The use of information and communication technology in music is underdeveloped. Recently a small group of Year 4 pupils used a CD-ROM to listen to the sounds that instruments make. Resources to support music are satisfactory. A visiting teacher gives violin lessons but there are few extra-curricular opportunities for pupils to make music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Pupils achieve standards appropriate to their ages by the end of Years 2 and 6. This is similar to the standards seen at the time of the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Currently, pupils in Years 2 to 6 enjoy six week blocks of swimming lessons, so that by the time they leave the school, almost all pupils swim at least 25 metres and many exceed this distance.

148. During Years 1 and 2, pupils develop sound hand and eye co-ordination, enabling them to confidently catch and retrieve a ball. In lessons, they make satisfactory progress, refining their actions appropriately. This is because teachers plan lessons in small structured stages

that build effectively on earlier learning. High attaining pupils anticipate where the ball will land and move quickly to retrieve it. Pupils show enthusiasm and motivation, organising themselves well, for example, in a successful Year 1 and 2 lesson observed, pupils working in pairs quickly collected equipment. They placed ropes between them, challenging themselves to move greater distances apart as they practised accurate bounce or over arm throw. Pupils play fairly, taking turns and counting accurately the number of catches. Teachers' good behaviour management skills result in pupils listening carefully and quickly adapting their actions in response to new instructions.

149. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 develop appropriate rules as they devise team games using bat and ball. They demonstrate skills appropriate to their age when sending, receiving and dodging a ball. Clear instructions from the teacher enables pupils to quickly organise themselves into teams and to work with interest and enthusiasm. Most pupils make sound progress in developing notions of fair play, abiding by the rules with tolerance. When fielding, high attaining pupils confidently throw the ball a good distance with appropriate aim. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding about the importance of exercise, explaining its impact on the heart and circulatory system and the benefits of a healthy life style. For example, they highlight strengthening of muscle, calorie burning and reduction of body fat. In well organised lessons to develop skills for athletics, pupils effectively refine their movements to beat their own personal-best targets, resulting in good progress and achievement in the lessons observed. For example, when developing the long-jump technique, in which they had to run, hop, skip and jump, pupils worked hard and persevered to increase the distance travelled. Pupils demonstrate skills appropriate to their age when accurately aiming and throwing a ball, jumping from a standing start or sprinting. Teachers plan a good range of interesting activities for this aspect of athletics, enabling pupils to make good progress in developing control and accuracy.

150. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons. They behave sensibly and show good levels of concentration and motivation. Pupils co-operate fairly. Most listen attentively to their teachers and confidently tackle new activities. A few older pupils, who had forgotten their kit, were attention seeking as they watched a lesson, causing some distraction to others who were enjoying the lesson; the teacher applied appropriate sanctions in line with school practice.

151. The quality of teaching is good overall. Where teaching is very good, it is because the teacher plans effectively to ensure that skills build carefully on prior learning so that pupils learn in a consistent, systematic way. The objectives of the lesson are clearly explained, so that pupils understand the task. Good behaviour management results in all behaving well, with a clear focus on learning and resultant sense of urgency about the work. In good indoor athletics lessons, teachers effectively plan a good variety of activities, interspersing skills training, such as standing jump, with aerobic bench stepping work. This maintains pupils' interest, enabling them to sustain the work for the period of the lesson. The lessons are well organised so that pupils have the resources to measure, record and compare their personal-best results. In some lessons, pupils do not evaluate their work, either through personal reflection or observation of other pupils. This limits opportunities to improve performance and reduces the rate of progress made in some lessons.

152. Co-ordination of the subject is good because the co-ordinator is well qualified, enthusiastic and a good practitioner. He has provided good subject guidance which effectively supports teachers and ensures that pupils learn new skills in a systematic way. There are no formal procedures for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the school. There is no agreed system for assessing and recording pupils'

progress. A football club is organised during the winter months but overall, extra-curricular provision is unsatisfactory. The school makes satisfactory use of visiting specialists, for example, a cricket coach, to increase the scope of provision. Older pupils sometimes compete in tournaments in the locality, extending their sporting experiences. Pupils in Year 6 take part in outdoor adventurous activities on their residential visit, enabling them to experience a range of challenging activities, such as kayaking. Resources are satisfactory overall, the school field contributing effectively to this provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

153. Since the last inspection the school has made some improvement in the provision for teaching religious education, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where standards are now satisfactory. For the older pupils there is still some way to go and, by the end of Year 6, standards are still not in line with expectations and pupils have not made satisfactory progress. The locally agreed syllabus is now being taught and resources for the teaching of religious education are improving. The school's daily act of worship meets statutory requirements.

154. By the end of Year 2, pupils know a number of Bible stories and can relate significant events in the life of Jesus. They know that these stories sometimes give us messages about how to behave and how to live our lives. For example, reading and discussing the story of the Good Samaritan vividly illustrates Jesus' teaching to love others and helps pupils understand the true meaning of friendship. Pupils begin to understand the similarities and differences between faiths. They are aware that each faith has its own festivals, special places of worship and holy books. They know that these holy books contain messages about how to behave.

155. By the end of Year 6, pupils know that the Bible is itself a collection of smaller books and investigate what they are about. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 discover that the Book of Psalms is a collection of poems and that proverbs are wise sayings. On questioning pupils in Year 6, they were unsure about the differences between the Old and New Testaments. In addition to Christianity, pupils study the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish and Moslem faiths. Throughout the school, pupils become increasingly aware of other cultures, but specific faiths have not been covered in sufficient depth and consequently older pupils do not attain as well as they should. Steps have been taken to address this issue. Pupils visit the local church but have not visited other places of worship. The time allocated to religious education and the part of the day used for lessons, often when pupils are mentally tired after intensive teaching of literacy or numeracy, adversely affect standards.

156. No overall judgement is given on teaching because too few lessons were seen. In Years 1 and 2, there was a deep feeling of respect in the classroom as special books were discussed and the Torah was carefully handled. The teacher organised the class well so that pupils sat in a circle and could see and hear one another clearly during the discussion. Pupils' ideas and views were valued and they listened well to each other's descriptions of special things in their lives. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 did not make such good progress because teachers did not gain the full attention of pupils during discussions.

157. The subject co-ordinator is making considerable efforts to raise standards for all pupils but plans are still at an early stage of development. A scheme of work, with accompanying assessment procedures, is being written, which closely matches the locally agreed syllabus. Although some resources have been bought recently there are still insufficient books about comparative religions.