

INSPECTION REPORT

STONDON LOWER SCHOOL

Stondon

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109469

Headteacher: Mrs C Stroud

Reporting inspector: Mr B Mahoney
18175

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 April 2002

Inspection number: 244931

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hillside Road Stondon Bedfordshire
Postcode:	SG16 6LQ
Telephone number:	01462 850 288
Fax number:	01462 850 288
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Clarke
Date of previous inspection:	March 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18175	B Mahoney	Registered Inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Information and communication technology English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9619	R E Miller	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?
23658	S Parker	Team Inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28320	R Willey	Team Inspector	Science Music Physical education	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stondon Lower School is a smaller than average size school about three miles from the rural town of Shefford, and most pupils live in the villages of Upper and Lower Stondon, with a few living in neighbouring villages. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with expectations. At the time of the inspection there were 82 pupils on roll. There are 12 pupils with special educational needs (15 per cent), which is below the national average, of whom seven (nine per cent) are on stages three to five of the school's register of special educational needs. Three pupils (four per cent) have a statement of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Pupils' special educational needs range from moderate and profound learning difficulties to emotional, behavioural, speech, hearing and autism. There are ten per cent more boys than girls in the school. A very small number of pupils are from other than white ethnic heritages, and one pupil speaks English as an additional language. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. There are four pupils (five per cent) looked after by the local authority. The newly appointed headteacher has been in post since April 2000, although as acting headteacher since December 1998 following the illness of the previous headteacher. The school house has recently been used to create space for an additional classroom, office and ICT suite.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Across the school, pupils attain at least satisfactory standards in most subjects, with good standards in English and science, owing to the sound and often good teaching. Pupils behave well and are interested in their work. The leadership and management of the school is sound. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with particularly good teaching for pupils aged five to nine and this is having a good effect upon pupils' learning.
- Pupils achieve good standards in English and science as a result of good quality teaching in these subjects.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and this effectively fosters their very good attitudes to learning, good behaviour and good personal development.
- Pupils' attendance is very good, and this has a positive effect upon pupils' learning.
- Relationships within the school are good and this enhances pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 in mathematics.
- More challenge for higher attaining pupils, including teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The curriculum and provision for children of Reception age, and its relevance to the needs of these children.
- The quality of short-term curricular planning, particularly when more than one teacher has responsibility for a class.
- The quality of long term school development planning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1995. It has responded satisfactorily to the previously identified key issues. Standards have been broadly maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' attendance has improved significantly. The quality of teaching and learning in geography and history has improved. Classroom management strategies are now very effective and are having a good effect upon pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Pupils no longer miss out on important experiences when withdrawn from lessons for additional support. Although school development planning has improved, it still lacks a long-term view in its strategic planning. Provision and challenge for higher attaining pupils remains a weakness since the last inspection. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	C	B	C
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	E	C	D

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

Reception children achieve satisfactorily. They broaden and consolidate their knowledge in all areas of learning. By the time they get to the end of the Reception year, most are broadly achieving the standards expected for children of this age. Pupils' achieved well above the national average in writing, above the average in reading, and in line with the average in mathematics in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 for seven-year-olds. Standards are well above average in writing, in line with the average in reading, yet below average in mathematics when compared with similar schools. Results for science, based upon teachers' assessments, show that pupils are achieving close to the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 is well above the national average in writing. Trends over time indicate that since 1997, although standards for Year 2 pupils have been very variable, they show an improvement overall, with substantial improvements seen in reading and writing. However, standards in mathematics and reading fell significantly in 2000 before recovering in 2001. Variations in results from year to year are largely due to differences in the overall levels of attainment of each year group, particularly in the proportion of higher attaining pupils.

From an average starting point, pupils achieve at least satisfactory and often good standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 are above expectations in English, science, art and design, music, and in design and technology in Year 2. Standards meet expectations in mathematics, information and communication technology, religious education, geography and history. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in physical education. Appropriate targets are set for year groups and individual pupils. However, higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4 are achieving insufficiently high standards. During the inspection, there were no significant variations observed in the performance between girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show genuine enthusiasm when coming to school, where they show very good interest and involvement in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. This contributes significantly to pupils' learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other and with all adults in the school.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance rates are above the national average. Punctuality is good and there is very little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and leads to good learning, particularly for those pupils aged five to nine. The quality of teaching for Reception children is satisfactory overall. However, provision for these children is under-developed because it is insufficiently linked to their learning needs. There is insufficient use of the outdoor area to extend children's learning and there are limited opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning. For pupils aged five to nine, the quality of teaching is good in English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and music and, as a result, pupils learn well in these subjects. It is satisfactory in mathematics, religious education, geography and history. No judgement was made concerning the overall quality of teaching and learning in physical education as insufficient lessons were observed. Literacy and numeracy are taught satisfactorily across the school and this has a satisfactory impact upon pupils' learning, with better standards observed for pupils aged five to seven. Strengths in the quality of teaching include good subject knowledge, effective management of pupils and good day to day assessment of pupils' learning. Pupils' learning is enhanced by their interest and concentration and their ability to work independently. However, planning is insufficiently detailed for some groups of pupils, and particularly the higher attaining pupils, where there is often a lack of planned extension activities or work planned at a more challenging level and this is more noticeable for pupils aged seven to nine. There is some lack of continuity between lessons taught by different teachers, and this has a negative impact upon pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported and they make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum for children in the reception year is under-developed.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for all pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are identified early and good support is given.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good care for its pupils.

The school has a good partnership with parents. The school has developed good procedures for assessing pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science. As yet, there are no formal systems for assessment in other subjects. At breaktimes the playground is dominated by boys playing football and this restricts other pupils' opportunities and sometimes presents a hazard for others. Staff do not always supervise pupils in the playground when dismissed at the end of the school day.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The senior teacher and staff effectively support the headteacher and together they have identified areas to move the school forward.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. They have supported the school well during a period of instability.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. It informally monitors the quality of teaching and learning and analyses its test results appropriately.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of available resources.

The school is well staffed and there is an appropriate balance of experience and expertise. However, there is a higher than average number of teachers employed on a part-time basis and there are weaknesses in teachers' short term planning, which sometimes has a negative effect upon pupils' learning. The outside play space is small for the number of pupils on roll and particularly during wet weather. The school is beginning to make good use of the newly established ICT suite and this is raising standards in this area. The outside play area is insufficiently developed for use by children in the reception year and this restricts opportunities for learning. The library area is too small to effectively promote pupils' research skills. The principles of best value for money are applied well to decisions relating to the school budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. • Children's behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more interesting range of activities outside lessons. • A closer working relationship between the school and parents. • The right amount of homework for children. • More information on how children are getting on.

The inspection team supports parents' positive views of the school, but considers that the range of activities outside lessons for older pupils is good. However, there are insufficient opportunities for younger pupils to take part. The inspection team judges that provision for homework is appropriate for pupils of this age and that information provided for parents on their children's progress is good. The inspection team agrees that there is a need to improve communication between school and parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry, as measured by assessment tests administered by teachers, is broadly in line with expectations. Children achieve satisfactorily in the Reception/Year 1 class and broaden and consolidate their knowledge in all areas of learning. By the time children end the Reception year, most are broadly achieving the standards expected for their age.
2. Pupils' performance was well above the national average in writing, above the average in reading, and in line with the average in mathematics in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 for seven-year-olds. Standards are well above average in writing, in line with the average in reading, yet below average in mathematics when compared with similar schools. Results for science, based upon teachers' assessments, show that pupils are achieving close to the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 is well above the national average in writing. Two pupils even reached the level in reading expected of pupils aged eleven in the 2001 national tests.
3. Trends over time indicate that since 1997, although standards for Year 2 pupils have been very variable, they show an improvement overall, with substantial improvements seen in reading and writing. However, standards in mathematics and reading fell significantly in 2000 before recovering in 2001. These variations largely reflect differences in the make up of different year groups, notably the proportion of higher attaining pupils. Over the three years 1999 to 2001 National Curriculum test results indicate that the performance of girls fell below the national average in reading and mathematics, yet exceeded the national average in writing. Meanwhile the performance of boys exceeded the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, with particular strengths being seen in the achievement of pupils aged five to seven, where the quality of teaching is consistently stronger. The good quality teaching and the attention given to identifying areas of weakness also contribute to these pupils' good achievements. Inspection evidence shows that high standards in reading and writing are being maintained for both boys and girls, with no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls observed during the inspection.
5. Pupils' attainment in English is above expectations for Year 2 and Year 4 pupils and they make good progress from age five to nine in reading, speaking and listening. Progress in writing is satisfactory, but the quantity, accuracy and presentation of written work is not consistent and does not develop at the rate promised by the consistently high results of the Year 2 tests.
6. Pupils' attainment in mathematics meets national expectations and satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By Year 2, pupils are developing a good grasp of number facts and their skill in manipulating numbers mentally is developing well. Scrutiny of older pupils' work indicated some untidy written work, revealing inconsistencies in the quality and accuracy of marking as well as examples of pupils' muddled thinking; often caused by errors in the layout of written questions. There was little evidence of work in using and applying aspects of mathematics and this is a weakness and are reasons why standards are not higher by the end of Year 4.

7. In science, standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 are above national expectations. Standards have improved since the last inspection, and this is partly due to the direct teaching involvement and subject co-ordination of the subject by the headteacher. Pupils develop a good interest in the world around them and extend their skills of scientific enquiry. Clear learning objectives and good levels of motivation mean that pupils acquire skills and subject knowledge at a good rate and most pupils express their knowledge well.
8. Standards achieved in information and communication technology (ICT) by Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are in line with national expectations. The school has worked hard recently to improve provision in the subject and this is now beginning to have a good impact upon raising standards. The school is now in a good position to raise standards further.
9. Standards achieved by the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are above expectations in art and design, and music. They are in line with expectations in religious education, geography and history. Year 4 pupils achieved good standards in design and technology, although it was not possible to make a judgement relating to standards achieved by Year 2 pupils. Similarly, it was not possible to make a judgement about standards overall in physical education for pupils in Years 2 and 4, as an insufficient range of lessons were observed. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Their needs are identified as soon as possible after entry to the school so that they can be given appropriate individual education plans. Teachers and other adults give positive encouragement to pupils with special educational needs to promote their self-esteem, so that they play a full part in all aspects of school life.
10. Higher attaining pupils, although effectively identified, are not always effectively challenged, and this was more noticeable for pupils in Year 3 and Year 4. The very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well supported and they make appropriate progress. The headteacher, staff and governors are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and set appropriate targets for year groups and individual pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good, and these high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. They enjoy school and are eager to learn. All pupils responded enthusiastically to learning about personal values illustrated by a story from the Bible in a whole school assembly. In a Year 4 music lesson, pupils, together with the teacher, sang a Viking song, with expression, rhythm and obvious enjoyment.
12. In classes, pupils settle quickly to work. They listen well to each other and to adults and are always willing to answer questions and discuss their ideas. Pupils show good levels of concentration; for example, pupils in a Year 1/2 class were engrossed in their work on mathematics when using a computer programme and they co-operated well in pairs.

13. Behaviour in and around the school is good and these high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. High standards are set and pupils respond well. There was one exclusion from school in the last academic year and none so far in this current year. Children play and work well together, sharing equipment and there is no evidence of bullying or inappropriate behaviour. However, older boys play football in the small playground during morning break and lunchtimes. This activity dominates the playground and restricts other pupils' activities. It is sometimes over boisterous and is a hazard to other pupils. Pupils are polite and friendly to each other, staff and visitors alike. There is no damage or litter around the school buildings and pupils use resources with care.
14. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are consistently good and these high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This has a good impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their values and beliefs in religious education lessons and acts of collective worship. They are beginning to respect the values and beliefs of others; for example, when visiting a Mosque in nearby Bedford. The personal development of pupils is good. Most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature individuals. Pupils learn quickly to adjust to the school routines and are soon settled happily into the school community. They respond well to opportunities for them to use initiative. Pupils exercise responsibility in class as they prepare for lessons and perform duties sensibly, such as clearing away after lessons.
15. Pupils' attendance is very good for all pupils, and these high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The school day starts punctually and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good overall and, as a result, pupils make good gains in their learning, particularly for those pupils aged five to nine. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or better in 72 per cent of lessons, of which 17 per cent were very good. Twenty-eight per cent of lessons were satisfactory. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed. The quality of teaching overall has improved since the last inspection.
17. Throughout the week, two part-time teachers and a learning support assistant teach the youngest children in school. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall for Reception children. There are very few children of reception age and these often work with Year 1 pupils; for example at the beginning of literacy and numeracy lessons and this is appropriate. These children then work with a learning support assistant for the remainder of sessions, with some appropriate intervention and support by the class teacher. The learning support assistant knows the children well and often skilfully intervenes and extends their learning successfully through good open-ended questioning and interesting activities; for example, growing plants from seeds for the "Garden Centre." These children are well managed by class teachers and the support assistant. However, planning of lessons for these children is often insufficiently linked to the Early Learning Goals for children of this age and their learning needs are sometimes overlooked because of activities for older pupils.

18. There is an appropriate emphasis upon activities that will promote speaking and listening; for example, through the introduction to the literacy and numeracy sessions. However, opportunities provided for children to take responsibility for their own learning is more limited. There are few opportunities for children to select and talk about the activities that they have chosen for themselves; resources used are often uninspiring and well worn. In addition, children have little regular use of the outdoor area to extend their learning.
19. For pupils aged five to nine, the quality of teaching is good in English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and music and, as a result, pupils learn well in these subjects. It is satisfactory in mathematics, religious education, geography and history. No judgement was made concerning the overall quality of teaching and learning in physical education as insufficient lessons were observed.
20. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory for Reception children and for pupils aged seven to nine and good for pupils aged five to seven. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies teaching objectives have been adopted as part of the school's planning; most lessons have an appropriate balance between the various elements. Reading and writing in literacy lessons build effectively on skills developed in speaking and listening. Good examples were seen of teachers reinforcing phonic and spelling skills. However, this was seen to be more effective for pupils aged five to seven.
21. Numeracy is also taught well overall. Most sessions have an effective mental warm-up and an appropriate review of learning at the end, and this is particularly effective for pupils aged five to seven. However, sometimes the "mental starter" element to the lesson lacks pace and challenge as was observed in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are beginning to apply their understanding of number satisfactorily; for example, when making a time line. However, as yet the application of number is often under-developed throughout the school.
22. Long and medium term planning is carried out carefully, lessons are mostly planned with clear learning objectives and these objectives are often shared with pupils and referred to during lessons. Much work is planned jointly between teachers on a two-year cycle, due to mixed-age classes, and this helps to ensure that work is not repeated. However, short-term planning is sometimes insufficiently detailed to provide continuity when more than one teacher is taking the class during the week. Planning is insufficiently detailed for some groups of pupils, and particularly the higher attaining pupils, where there is often a lack of planned extension activities or work planned at a more challenging level.
23. Teachers' planning is often insufficiently precise and with some lack of continuity between lessons taught by different teachers, and this sometimes has a negative impact upon the continuity of pupils' learning. Learning support staff make a satisfactory contribution to lessons and to the maintenance of good order throughout the school, although their role in some lessons is not always clearly defined in planning.
24. The pace of lessons is mostly good. In the best lessons, teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers, giving praise and successfully adapting activities to follow themes that develop as the lesson progresses. This makes lessons more interesting for pupils; the enthusiasm of most pupils is a significant element in their quality of learning. However, teachers' expectations of the needs of higher attaining pupils are sometimes insufficiently high and this is particularly noticeable for pupils aged seven to nine. As a

result, often these pupils do not achieve as high as might be expected. Boys and girls are given equal opportunities within lessons.

25. The management of pupils is usually very good and pupils respond well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this has a good impact upon the quality of pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff are a calming presence in the school; they rarely raise their voices and exercise their authority in a courteous fashion. There is mutual respect between pupils and teachers. The quality and use of on-going assessment is mostly good and this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Teachers' assessments of pupils' needs is often effective and they seek to engage all pupils in lessons by perceptive questioning. The marking of written work is satisfactory overall, although there are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking throughout the school. Despite the high number of part-time staff, teachers know pupils very well, know their capabilities and work hard to maximise them, and particularly for pupils aged five to seven.
26. The use of ICT in lessons is satisfactory and developing well. The school has worked particularly hard to improve provision in this area recently and it is already having a good impact upon pupils' learning. As well as recently purchased additional computers for group use within the new computer suite, all classrooms have computers for pupils to use. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used as a tool to develop pupils' learning. Skills in this subject are being developed in other subjects across the curriculum; for example, in science, history and geography.
27. Review sessions at the end of lessons are often good and they are used as opportunities for informal assessment. In the best teaching, pupils are reminded of what they have learned, and are praised when they provide evidence of what they know. Teachers usually modify subsequent lesson planning as a result of this type of assessment. Pupils and parents participate well in the home-school reading arrangements. Homework expectations are communicated effectively to parents, and homework is regularly set. This includes reading, spellings as well researching information about a current topic.
28. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the main activities in class lessons. They work with other pupils at a similar level and are given additional support wherever possible. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in this support, particularly in relation to teaching basic skills. Their help is generally well focused because they work with teachers to plan appropriate material, resources and activities for individuals or small groups. When withdrawn for intensive instruction, pupils with special educational needs take part in a range of well-structured and interesting activities so that they learn in small steps with a high degree of success. As a result, withdrawal sessions are productive and happy, because pupils realise for themselves that they are making good progress. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well supported.

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

29. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that includes National Curriculum subjects and religious education and statutory requirements are fully met. National guidelines have been adopted for all subjects, giving teachers' planning a sound foundation. As noted in the previous report, the curriculum remains strong in the wide range of practical activities, special occasions, visits and visitors to stimulate pupils' interest and focus their learning. Very effective arrangements are made to give staff occasional opportunities to teach their specialist subject to pupils throughout the school. The weekly "activities" afternoon is a valuable occasion, when pupils from different classes work together, led by teachers with special expertise and helped by other staff and visiting adults. The approach has a strong impact on standards in art and design, design and technology, ICT and music.
30. The curriculum offered to children in the Reception year is generally sound. The number of children of this age is small and they form part of the Year 1 class. However, planning is mainly focused on the needs of the larger number of Year 1 pupils, and the main activities are not always best suited to the needs of the younger children and the curriculum is not effectively linked to the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. Children lack the opportunity to select activities for themselves and to discuss and review their choices. There are insufficient opportunities provided for children to use the outdoor area to enhance their learning.
31. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been put in place satisfactorily, and planning within English and mathematics is securely based on national guidelines. There are some limited opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematics skills in other subjects. Opportunities are also missed to develop extended writing and reading for information in such subjects as geography and history, but particularly in religious education, where older pupils produce no written work of significance. Provision for ICT has developed well, following the creation of a computer suite, and suitable ICT applications have been planned into most subjects. Overall, pupils have a good amount of practical activity in their studies; for example, the enquiry and investigation element of the science programme of study is well planned and organised but is less successful in mathematics.
32. The library has been moved to a smaller room since the previous inspection in order to create an additional classroom. The new library, although well stocked, limits pupils' opportunities for developing more advanced reading and research skills, and is therefore less effective than previously.
33. The balance of time given to each subject has improved since the previous inspection, and the time allowed for geography and history is now adequate. The breadth of coverage of the National Curriculum is therefore satisfactory, but in most subjects pupils produce a significant number of short pieces of work that have not been sufficiently developed. This is in part because short-term planning is not always detailed enough for the high number of part-time teachers, who share the same class, to develop work already started by their colleagues.
34. Individual Education Plans are devised for pupils with special educational needs. The targets in these plans are clear, specific and suitably challenging for their academic and personal development. Their progress is carefully monitored and their targets are regularly adjusted so that they sustain a good quality of learning. The timing of withdrawal from class for intensive instruction is arranged so that they do not miss

significant teaching in other subjects, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school has also begun to develop Individual Education Plans for pupils identified as gifted and talented. This is a good principle, though the targets set out are not specific enough to guide teachers in planning challenging work on a regular basis.

35. The programme of study for personal, social and health education has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The programme for science includes topics on drug awareness and healthy living and this is appropriate. Pupils have opportunities to take part in class discussions, called “circle time”, where issues of concern can be raised. With the approval of the governing body, sex education is taught informally when issues arise. Issues of citizenship are raised in assemblies and in class discussions. There are plans to set up a school council so that pupil representatives can take part in discussing issues concerning school life.
36. The school takes care to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to benefit from the curriculum. Tasks are planned to match the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment in English and mathematics, and this is generally most successful for pupils of average attainment and below. However, tasks in these subjects and in geography, history and religious education are often not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils. In some lessons, the same task is set for all pupils, irrespective of pupils’ prior attainment. In other lessons, a more difficult task is sometimes planned as a follow-up activity after all have completed the main task, but those with higher attainment do not always have enough time left to give the more difficult task their best efforts. At morning playtimes, the small playground is dominated by the energetic game of football played by a relatively small group of older boys. This arrangement is unsatisfactory in that their game excludes all other pupils, significantly restricts their choice of activities and presents a potential hazard both to them and the players in such a small space.
37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are provided with Individual Education Plans setting out specific targets to guide their development, mainly in language, mathematics and behaviour. Their targets are regularly reviewed and appropriately updated so that pupils make consistently good progress. Support in class is planned so that they take full part in the main activities. They are at times withdrawn for intensive instruction as individuals or in small groups, and this support is well targeted on their needs. The pattern of withdrawal is planned appropriately so that they do not miss teaching in another subject.
38. The curriculum is extended through a good range of visits, visitors and other activities. These experiences are used well to stimulate interest and raise attainment in the subjects concerned. All pupils take part in end-of-term performances for parents and the community. Older pupils go on a residential visit and this is successful in extending their learning. There are clubs for academic interests, including art, French, mathematics and science. There are recorder and singing groups. Sports activities offered include football and athletics. This wide range of out-of-class activities mainly benefits older pupils, but overall there is better provision than generally found for this age range in schools of a similar size.

39. There are good relations with the local community. The school takes a full part in local events and festivals, and pupils visit significant sites to support study in geography and history. A range of visitors from local churches and other walks of life present good role models of citizenship. There are substantial contacts with neighbouring schools for purposes of professional development, and the school hosts student teacher placements. There are good relations with the main receiving middle school to negotiate curriculum provision and to ensure that pupils make a smooth transfer to the next stage in their education.
40. The provision for pupils' personal development is good and these high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. School and class assemblies are well planned to promote spiritual development through an act of worship that includes singing, reflection and prayer on a specific theme. Themes are chosen to reflect aspects of the curriculum and are delivered in a dramatic way that involves pupils across the age range and gives them much to think about. This thoughtful and appreciative approach continues in lessons, particularly in religious education, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and explore questions of meaning and purpose. In formal and informal ways, teachers show that they value pupils' ideas. Class discussions known as "circle time" are used well to develop knowledge and insight into other peoples' values and beliefs.
41. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Moral concerns are well integrated into the ethos of the school. Formal rules are present but given a low profile, because pupils behave well and show care for the physical and emotional well being of others. Teachers control behaviour through encouragement, stressing principles of fairness and self-respect and encouraging reflection on the consequences of one's actions. Adults promote values of honesty, fairness and truthfulness in their caring relationships with pupils.
42. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils develop very good social skills through working productively in pairs and groups in the positive, harmonious atmosphere of lessons. When asked to work independently, they begin quickly and stay on task for extended periods of time. All help with routine classroom tasks, and the level of responsibility is increased through the school. The weekly activities' afternoon is very well organised to develop social skills. Older pupils are expected to be responsible for younger ones, helping and guiding them, ensuring they follow safe practice in using tools and equipment. Pupils develop wider understanding of citizenship through taking part in charitable fund-raising and hearing of the experiences of a wide range of visiting adults.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The curriculum makes a sound contribution to pupils' understanding of British and other cultures. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for life in a diverse multi-cultural society. Pupils visit the locality and further afield as part of their studies in geography and history. The music and art of different times and traditions is appreciated and used as a stimulus for pupils' own creativity. The principles and practices of two world faiths are studied in religious education, although there is more scope for significant festivals of these religions to be included in the programme for assemblies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. During the school day, pupils are cared for well. There is good overall provision for the needs of pupils and standards have been broadly maintained since the last inspection. They are respected and valued as individuals and are well known by all staff who have good relationships with them. The “activities” afternoon each week enables staff to form relationships with pupils beyond their own classes. There is a friendly, family atmosphere in the school. The whole school celebrates birthdays each Friday in assembly. Pupils are given the opportunity to ‘show and share’ during this time, and teaching pupils to value each other. Older pupils have been taught to help and care for younger pupils and this they do well. The school has satisfactory arrangements for child protection. The headteacher is the named person responsible, and staff are well aware of procedures to follow should the need arise. The school has an effective health and safety policy, which is implemented appropriately.
45. At the end of the school day, pupils are dismissed directly from the classroom and sent onto the playground to meet parents and carers. However, staff do not accompany pupils to ensure the safe transfer from school to parents and carers. Not all the waiting adults come onto the playground, choosing instead to stand beyond the school gate. Pupils know that should their carer not arrive, they should report to the headteacher. This lack of direct supervision by the school is a weakness.
46. The curriculum for personal, social and health education policy has been in place since September 2000 and was revised in January of this year. A co-ordinator, who is part time, was appointed at the start of the school year to help with the introduction of the scheme of work. An aspect of the scheme is the focus for class assemblies each Wednesday morning. There is timetabled provision for personal, social and health education lessons or circle time every week, the latter being used throughout the school as appropriate. Most work during these sessions is carried out orally although occasionally pupils may produce posters to illustrate the topic being discussed. In a class assembly with Year 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher read a moving story about new pupils in a school. Pupils listened intently and put forward excellent suggestions to help newcomers feel at ease. The session made a good impact on pupils and contributed well to their social and moral development.
47. There are sound procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality. Registration procedures meet statutory requirements, but unexplained absences are not always followed up quickly enough. There are good links with the Education Welfare Officer in dealing with individual problems when they arise.
48. The school’s behaviour policy is based on positive encouragement. There are well-understood routines in place for managing poor behaviour both in class and on the playground. However, there is rarely any need to implement these as ‘a quiet word’ brings pupils back into line. This was endorsed by lunchtime assistants who, whilst knowing the sequence of procedures in dealing with persistent misbehaviour, found that they rarely had to go beyond this initial step. Good work and behaviour are encouraged by rewards. There is a celebration board in the hall where good work is displayed. This is changed regularly and is used well to raise the self-esteem of as many pupils as possible.

49. At break and after wet weather, pupils are restricted to the playground for recreation. This puts significant pressure on the space available. It is dominated by games of football. During the inspection, these were played exclusively by boys, so that the girls, pupils considered too young to be included and those boys who dislike football were confined to the edges of the playground. The pattern of play for these children differs significantly during dry lunch times when the games of football do not dominate the larger space afforded by the school field. The current situation represents a lack of equal opportunities and is a weakness.
50. Standards of teacher assessment are good, and the school has developed good tracking procedures, and standards have improved since the last inspection. Assessment procedures for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are now fully in place, operate well and are very effective. Individual targets, recorded on bookmarks, are set in literacy, and group targets set in mathematics. A card reminding pupils of the latter is placed on each table. Target setting in science is planned. Assessment procedures are developing well in these subjects.
51. The quality of assessment in other subjects varies. As the art and design co-ordinator teaches throughout the school, she has collected a portfolio of levelled work to track pupils' progress. There are also effective assessment procedures in design and technology, but in other subjects they are more informal. Class teachers each judge the level at which their pupils have been working when reporting to parents in the summer term. The school recognises that this is a weakness and is to develop portfolios of levelled work for each subject. A co-ordinator was appointed in September 2001 to oversee this.
52. The school provides a good standard of care for pupils who have special educational needs. Their progress is carefully monitored and adjustments are made to their individual education plans so that future lessons meet their needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents consider this to be a good school. They are happy, overall, with what the school provides and achieves. Most parents feel welcomed into the school, but a small number do not think the school works closely enough with parents. The inspection team judges that there is a need to improve communication, both verbally and in writing, in an attempt to overcome this obstacle, and the school has recognised this. A significant minority of parents does not consider that the school provides enough in the way of extra-curricular activities, particularly for the younger children. The inspection confirms the parents' view and the school has recognised the need to address this issue.
54. A good number of parents attend consultation evenings and a small number help in school listening to pupils read. The parent school association is very active in securing funds to buy resources for the school and they were heavily involved in equipping the new computer suite. They regularly organise events that are well attended by parents and other villagers.
55. The quantity and quality of information provided for parents are good and an improvement on the previous inspection. A regular newsletter and a home-school diary serve to act as regular dialogues between home and school. Most parents support their child's learning at home and this is having a positive impact on standards achieved by pupils. The end-of-year academic reports are good and set out targets for pupils to

achieve. The school prospectus is comprehensive and contains helpful information for parents whose children are new entrants to the school.

56. Parents are given clear information about the school's special educational needs policy and practice. They are kept fully informed of their children's progress and are invited to annual reviews in addition to parents' evenings. Whenever parents have concerns, they are able to contact the class teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher has been in post since April 2000, although as acting headteacher since December 1998 following the illness of the previous headteacher. As a result, since July 1999, the school has been through an unsettled period and the newly appointed headteacher has provided a period of stability. The senior teacher is also newly appointed to the post and together with the headteacher, they closely work together as a team. The headteacher has also announced her intention to retire at the end of the summer term 2002.
58. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher is well supported by the senior teacher, and together they have identified areas for development and are beginning to develop a range of appropriate strategies to continue to move the school forward. They have good support from staff, governors and parents.
59. A team approach is well developed, although relying heavily upon a high number of part-time staff. All teaching staff have responsibilities for co-ordinating areas of the curriculum, and because of the part-time nature of most of the teaching posts, the roles of some curriculum co-ordinators is underdeveloped. There have been too few opportunities for co-ordinators to work alongside colleagues, monitor the quality of teaching and learning, or the quality of pupils' written work and evaluating the work of the school in their subject. The school recognises this need and has already begun to provide planned opportunities for co-ordinators to directly monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
60. The governing body has increased its involvement in the school since the last inspection by accepting curriculum responsibilities. A small number of governors visit the school on a regular basis, observe teaching and report their findings. The Chair of Governors visits the school regularly to assist in design and technology lessons and this is helpful in maintaining regular links with the school. Overall, governors are making a satisfactory contribution to the life of the school and have supported the school well during an unsettled period. Governors are becoming aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. A range of its responsibilities is delegated to committees that satisfactorily support the work of the school. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities appropriately and are satisfactorily involved in the overall monitoring of the work of the school.
61. The school has clear aims that are supported by pupils, parents, staff and governors. These include creating an environment that effectively promotes learning and positive attitudes, together with the development of self-confidence, self-worth, and the skills and qualities required to be caring and fulfilled members of society. These aims are appropriately incorporated into all aspects of the school. The school development plan is a satisfactory document that clearly identifies the areas for development. The planning process is appropriate and the document is clearly laid out and identifies resource implications, key personnel and time scales, together with costings. However,

there is a lack of a long-term strategic plan as the school development plan only covers a one-year period and this is a weakness.

62. Financial planning for the current year is satisfactory and special grants, such as allocations for special educational needs are used appropriately. The full governing body agrees the budget allocations annually, and governors monitor expenditure regularly in order to check that actual expenditure is in line with the agreed budget. Sufficient financial information is made available to all governors. The governors make satisfactory use of resources and link spending decisions to educational priorities. There are appropriate procedures to review and evaluate the effects of financial decisions, and governors have a good understanding of best value principles and apply them appropriately; for example, in obtaining a wide range of tenders for developing the use of the school house and the creation of an ICT suite.
63. The school budget is well managed on a day to day basis, and financial control and administration are good overall. The school has recently appointed a new school secretary who is currently undergoing further training, and who has quickly identified the areas for improvement in day to day administration and financial control and is also effectively supporting the endeavours of teachers. During this period of transition, the school has received appropriate support from a local education authority bursar who visits the school regularly.
64. There is satisfactory monitoring of teaching and the curriculum by the headteacher and this is proving to be satisfactory in raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. However, this is not on a regular planned basis, with an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and its impact upon standards achieved by pupils. However, the headteacher is well aware of the strengths and areas for development in the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher maintains a high profile throughout the school, regularly working alongside staff and with groups of pupils throughout the school; for example, during science and design and technology lessons, and this is an effective monitoring strategy.
65. The school's approach to staff development has an appropriate emphasis upon literacy and numeracy. The school is making a considerable investment in ICT and has recognised the need to improve staff skills in teaching this subject. Performance management strategies are now in place and operating appropriately. Staff and governors have received appropriate training.
66. Special educational needs provision is well managed. There is a named governor for special educational needs, who makes formal reports to the governing body on all relevant matters. Good use is made of funds for pupils with special educational needs in providing well-focused support. Equality of opportunity is appropriately promoted. The school complies with the Code of Practice and fulfils its statutory requirements.
67. The school is appropriately staffed and there is a satisfactory balance of experience and expertise. However, there is a higher than usual number of part-time teachers, necessitating the need for consistency and continuity of planning throughout the school, together with effective monitoring. To this end, the school is only partly successful, with planning that is often insufficiently precise and with some lack of continuity between lessons taught by different teachers. Learning support staff make a satisfactory contribution to lessons and to the maintenance of good order throughout the school, although their role in some lessons is not always clearly defined in planning.

68. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and is well maintained. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to provide an ICT suite. This is a welcome addition to the school's provision and is used well by pupils throughout the school. Although the space is quite cramped, it is well ventilated. The headteacher's office and staffroom have been re-sited in what was the old school house. Classrooms are of a good size and are pleasant areas to work. The outside play area is small and barely adequate for the current number of pupils and this can have a negative impact upon pupils' behaviour; for example when playing football at breaktimes. The library has been moved to a smaller room since the previous inspection in order to create an additional classroom. However, the new library area, although well stocked, makes the teaching of research and study skills less effective than previously.
69. Since the last inspection, the school governors have removed the swimming pool as it has reached the end of its useful life. Alternative facilities for swimming are now provided at the nearby RAF base. The outdoor area has been insufficiently developed to support learning for the youngest children in school and there are difficulties with ease of access and close supervision of children. The quality, range and accessibility of resources to support learning are good overall. However, a number of resources for the youngest children, such as for role-play, are well worn and fail to inspire imaginative play.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve the standard of education further, the headteacher, staff and governors should focus upon the following key issues:
- (1) Raise standards further in subjects where shortcomings are identified, and particularly in mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve; (paragraphs 2, 6, 10, 31, 83, 87, 88, 90, 93, 119, 140)
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching and learning is effectively monitored; (paragraphs 6, 21, 31, 59, 64, 90, 114)
 - providing more challenge for higher attaining pupils. (paragraphs 10, 21, 22, 24, 36, 83, 87, 88, 95, 118)
 - (2) Improve the provision for children in the Reception Year by:
 - ensuring that planning is securely linked to the Early Learning Goals and enhancing provision for role-play; (paragraphs 17, 30, 73)
 - improving the quality of teaching to ensure that children learn effectively across the six areas of learning; (paragraphs 17, 30, 73)
 - providing more opportunities for children to become independent and to plan and review their own learning; (paragraphs 17, 30, 73)
 - ensuring that resources and facilities reflect and enhance their curricular needs; (paragraphs 18, 30, 69, 74, 76, 78)
 - providing a secure outdoor play area and ensuring that a purposeful range of activities is provided. (paragraphs 18, 30, 74, 78, 79, 80)

- (3) Improve the quality of teachers' short-term curricular planning, particularly when more than one teacher has responsibility for a class. (paragraphs 67, 110, 22, 23, 33)
- (4) Extend the current school development planning by including a longer term strategic view of school priorities. (paragraphs 61)

OTHER ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Ensure that the quantity, accuracy and presentation of pupils' written work is consistent across the school. (paragraphs 5, 25, 81, 85, 87, 88, 95)
- Ensure that boys' football games at breaktime in the playground do not restrict opportunities for play by other pupils, and that this does not present a safety hazard. (paragraphs 13, 36, 49, 68)
- Provide more opportunities to develop pupils' reading and writing skills in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. (paragraphs 31, 36, 114, 118, 139)
- Consider ways of effectively promoting pupils' library and research skills. (paragraphs 32, 68, 83, 89)
- Review supervision procedures for dismissing pupils at the end of the school day. (paragraph 45)
- Establish assessment procedures for all subjects matching the existing effective arrangements in English, mathematics and science. (paragraphs 51, 126, 132, 136)
- Improve communication between the school and parents, and consider extending provision for extra-curricular activities to younger pupils. (paragraph 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	16	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	55	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	82
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	12

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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	8	11	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	17	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (71)	89 (76)	89 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	11	10	11
	Total	18	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (76)	89 (95)	95 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	80
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	20.5

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	87

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	218,426
Total expenditure	208,719
Expenditure per pupil	2,546
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,312
Balance carried forward to next year	14,019

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	82
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	44	2	2	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	58	2	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	52	8	8	0
The teaching is good.	48	40	0	2	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	62	12	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	36	2	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	30	56	4	0	10
The school works closely with parents.	24	52	16	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	28	50	4	8	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	60	0	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	30	28	14	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. Children enter the Reception/Year 1 class prior to their fifth birthday and this follows a period of part-time attendance. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children of reception age, four of whom were in school for mornings only. Children start school with broadly average levels of attainment. Children make satisfactory progress, and broaden and consolidate their knowledge in all areas of learning. By the time children reach Year 1, most attain standards that are broadly in line with expectations in all areas of learning. Overall provision for these children is satisfactory, and standards in this area of the school's work have been maintained since the last inspection.
72. Reception children work as a group within the combined Reception/Year 1 class. For part of their time in the class, children work with Year 1 pupils; for example during the introduction to literacy and numeracy sessions, and for the remainder of the lesson they work with a learning support assistant. During the week, children are taught by more than one class teacher. Overall, the quality of teaching for Reception children is satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal and social development, creative development, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Class teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the needs of children of this age, and of the curriculum to meet those needs. There is an appropriate emphasis upon activities that will promote speaking and listening and numeracy; for example, by including Reception children in the introduction of Year 1 literacy and numeracy lessons.
73. Planning is satisfactory overall, and includes some references to national guidance for children of this age. However, as a result of the very small number of Reception children, this age group tends to be overshadowed by planning and curriculum requirements for older pupils. As a result, some areas of the curriculum for these children receive only limited attention, is often fragmented and the overall provision lacks continuity and richness. Expectations of children's behaviour are high, and relationships are secure. Provision for children with special educational needs is good and they are well supported.
74. There is a satisfactory range of resources available. However, some of the equipment; for example, in the role-play area, looks "tired" and unappealing. Little regular use is made of the outdoor area to extend learning, and this area is under-developed. This is partly because there is no easy and ready access to the outdoor play area. Although there are a few large wheeled toys, children lack the regular opportunity to develop their climbing and balancing skills. There is equality of learning opportunities for boys and girls.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. Children achieve what is expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress through opportunities to establish constructive relationships with other children and adults. Planning for sessions provides a range of opportunities for children to work alone, in small groups or with Year 1 pupils. However, there are few regular opportunities for children to select and plan activities for themselves. Children are responsive, interested in what they are doing, and are beginning to concentrate and persevere with their learning. Children listen well, and are happy to contribute their own

ideas during discussion; for example, when discussing letter sounds or when sharing a book together.

Communication, language and literacy

76. Children listen well to their teachers and are becoming confident in their use of a growing vocabulary and range of expression. Children broaden and consolidate their use of language and achieve what is expected for their age. Appropriate opportunities are provided for children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings. Progress in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall. Early writing skills are satisfactorily promoted and children are encouraged in their mark making. They are taught how to form letters with increasing accuracy and how to write words. Reading skills are effectively promoted and children make good progress. They enjoy selecting books to take home and demonstrate confidence and enjoyment when sharing books together. Reception children are included for part of the Year 1 literacy hour, when they share a book with older pupils. Children respond well to this, they listen well, answer questions and talk readily about the story that they have heard before moving on to other activities with the learning support assistant. However, overall, opportunities for role-play are under-developed; for example, there is a lack of dressing-up clothes and quality resources for children to use, and this restricts creative language development.

Mathematical development

77. Mathematical development is satisfactorily promoted and there are good opportunities for children to count, sort, match, seek patterns and recognise relationships when working with numbers, shapes, space and measures. Attainment in mathematics is in line with expectations, and children make good progress in colour, shape and number recognition; for example, when making numerals out of play dough. There are few opportunities for children to experience number and singing games. Numeracy skills are developing appropriately. Children are beginning to identify and create patterns and compare, sort and count objects and count up to ten and beyond. Good opportunities are taken during registration to encourage children to use numbers; for example, in counting forwards and backwards to ten. Reception children are included for the first part of numeracy sessions with Year 1 pupils. Children were observed taking part successfully in the brisk mental warm up activity with older pupils, before moving on to other activities with the learning support assistant and this had a good impact upon their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children achieve in line with expectations for their age, and they make satisfactory progress. The activities provided help children to develop a satisfactory understanding of the world around them. Some children talk about where they live, their families and their immediate environment, and they recall their experiences through a range and variety of role-play. Children learn about a garden centre and are involved in growing plants from seeds. Children effectively develop the skills of cutting, joining and building using a good range of materials. They have access to a satisfactory range of construction materials. In one lesson observed, children enjoyed making rubbings of a range of natural and man-made materials. They looked closely at the patterns and texture. However, there are limited opportunities for children to use ICT to support their learning. Teachers make appropriate use of resources to stimulate children's enthusiasm, and often use good questioning skills to develop children's knowledge and understanding. However, insufficient use is made of the outside area to extend children's learning.

Physical development

79. Children's physical development is in line with expectations for their age, and they make good progress. They handle scissors, glue, paintbrushes and crayons appropriately. Children used a range of pastels, chalks and crayons well when making rubbings of a range of man-made and natural materials. Children have regular access to the school hall to extend their physical development, although it was not possible to observe any of these lessons during the inspection. There are limited regular opportunities for children to climb and balance. Children showed control and care when using large wheeled toys.

Creative development

80. Children's creative development is in line with expectations for their age and they make satisfactory progress. Although there are appropriately planned activities to stimulate children's interest and creativity; for example in the "Garden Centre", this is insufficiently developed. Items to stimulate play; for example, dressing up clothes, are not readily available for children to select for themselves. Children enjoy working in the "Garden Centre Café", but some of the equipment used is well worn and does not effectively enhance play. Children show an appropriate appreciation of the effects of different textures, colours, shapes and patterns.

ENGLISH

81. Standards reached by pupils in Years 2 and 4 are above average overall, and they make good progress throughout the school. In the National Curriculum tests and tasks for pupils aged seven, the school's results in writing have been well above the national average and the average of similar schools in each year since 1998. Results in reading were similarly high until a dip in 2000, although they were still average in that year. They rose in 2001 to above the national average, a result that was average compared with similar schools. In both the reading and the writing tests in 2001, fewer pupils recorded low scores than found nationally, while a third of pupils attained the higher level (Level 3). Two pupils even reached the level in reading expected of pupils aged eleven. Progress in reading, speaking and listening continues to be good in Years 3 and 4. Progress in writing is satisfactory, but the quantity, accuracy and presentation of written work do not develop at the rate promised by the consistently high results of the Year 2 tests.
82. The routines of the literacy hour are well established by Year 2 so that pupils know what is expected of them and listen carefully to instructions. Teachers develop very good relationships and are sensitive to involve all pupils in discussions. As a result, all take an active part, showing great enthusiasm when learning involves a game or competition. Teachers spread their questioning widely and adjust their questions to keep all pupils on task. In answer to questions, pupils speak clearly, using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. They listen politely to others and work very well together on shared tasks. Most attempt to read aloud with dramatic expression. They are confident in talking to adults, and explain their ideas carefully. The conventions of Standard English are well established by age nine. Pupils with higher attainment give detailed answers, and most others try hard to explain their ideas. They use more formal language appropriately in class discussions, with correct use of technical terms. This helps their learning in other subjects, where ideas are explored and developed through talk. Occasional sessions of improvised drama and school productions extend their experience of speaking in different roles to a wider audience.

83. The school has taken significant steps to improve standards in reading. A commercial reading scheme guides pupils' progress, and books for personal reading have been graded for difficulty so that pupils can choose for themselves with confidence. A recommended teaching programme has been adopted to ensure that the skill of sounding out new words to find their meaning is taught systematically. Those having difficulty or with special educational needs are given additional support, and are carefully monitored so that they build on success. As a result, pupils aged seven have a good understanding of what they read and talk confidently about books they have enjoyed. Interest in reading of all kinds is strong throughout the school, with a significant interest in non-fiction, some of which is accessed using computers. Pupils' experience widens so that, by age nine, those with higher attainment have read a good range, including poetry and non-fiction. Many have established favourites, which they explain and compare. Their understanding of how to use the library and find specific information develops well. However, not enough use is made of these skills to challenge the highest attaining pupils in particular, through independent study in such subjects as history, geography and religious education.
84. Throughout the school, pupils learn to write for a widening range of purposes and audiences, including poetry, stories and factual reports. Their good standard of spoken English is reflected in their wide choice of words and range of sentence structures. By age seven, they write clear personal accounts and lively stories. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional support so that they too write for real purposes. Most pupils spell frequently used words correctly and punctuate accurately. A joined style of handwriting is developed early through regular practice, and some work is word-processed. By age nine, they have a good understanding of how to create atmosphere and character in their stories. Their use of punctuation is generally good, with particularly impressive use of dramatic speech in stories.
85. Pupils describe technical processes accurately in other subjects, using the correct terminology. However, it is a significant weakness that older pupils make too many spelling mistakes in their independent writing. Although they are confident in using a dictionary in specific exercises, they do not learn to proof read their own work, and this undermines the value of their spelling homework. Some pieces by older pupils are of a good standard when they have been corrected and improved for display. Otherwise, much of their written work in English and other subjects is brief, forming a series of short and unrelated topics, and often very untidily presented. Pupils do not spend enough time on significant pieces of writing in English and other subjects to learn how to improve the quality of their work through a process of planning, re-drafting and correcting. A similar criticism was made in the last inspection report.
86. The quality of teaching is good overall. Half the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2 were good and half were very good. Of the lessons seen in Years 3 and 4, one was good and the other two were satisfactory. Teachers' planning is soundly based on the framework of the National Literacy Strategy so that lessons have a clear sense of purpose. Pupils are told the targets for the lesson at the outset, and they co-operate well in their learning because they understand what is expected of them. In the best lessons, teachers read aloud well with dramatic expression, so helping pupils to understand and raising their interest in books. Their questioning is generally brisk, with the intention of involving and challenging all to learn and remember. All pupils are fully included at such times, because the difficulty of questions is adjusted to match different levels of attainment, and those who do not volunteer to answer are asked directly. Language features are well taught. In a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils showed keen interest in working together in pairs to improve the descriptive quality of simple

sentences. They used individual white-boards to write down their ideas, and their teacher made good use of their suggestions to focus attention on word patterns and shades of meaning. Similarly, the vocabulary range of pupils in Year 4 was extended through a dictionary exercise to find compound words, and an element of competition was successful in keeping them on task.

87. The routines of the literacy hour are well established, which promotes a good pace and pupils' confidence in working on their own. Learning support assistants give very effective help to individuals and groups as they work, particularly those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, enabling them to make good progress. A weaker element in some lessons is that tasks for independent work are not challenging enough for pupils with potentially higher attainment. In some instances, there is no follow-up task ready for those who finish the main task early. When written work is to be completed within one session, pupils do not always achieve their best results in either the quantity or quality of the product. Pupils sometimes lack responsibility for improving and correcting their written work. The final review session of literacy lessons is used well to evaluate progress, develop pupils' speaking skills and reinforce the lesson's targets.
88. In the best marking, teachers give encouragement and identify significant weaknesses that need attention. These are listed as targets on a card for each pupil, and this is very good practice. However, pupils are not routinely required to do corrections or follow-up work, and marking in other subjects often ignores significant literacy errors. Expectations for accuracy and presentation are not consistently high enough.
89. The subject is well led and managed. The literacy strategy is securely in place. Results of annual tests and samples of pupils' work are carefully analysed to identify future needs, and the school responds effectively to this information. Resources are good, with recent improvements in the book stock lifting pupils' interest. Work in class is extended through regular homework, particularly in reading, and library borrowing is well supported. However, the library has been moved to a smaller room since the previous inspection in order to create an additional classroom. The new library, although well stocked, makes the teaching of research and study skills less effective than previously. Teachers work hard and skilfully to display pupils' best work and print of all kinds to encourage interest and pride in achievement. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.

MATHEMATICS

90. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 meets national expectations and satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection. National Curriculum test results in 2001 show standards that are in line with the national average at the end of Year 2. In Year 2, since 1998, standards have been very erratic, with well above average standards being reported in 1998 and very low standards reported in 2000. The small size and nature of year groups explain some of these differences from year to year. In 2001, the number of Year 2 pupils achieving the higher level 3 was above the national average. Pupils' performance in the 2001 national tests was also below average when compared with similar schools. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls observed during the inspection.
91. By Year 2, pupils are developing a good grasp of number facts and their skill in manipulating numbers mentally is developing well. Pupils recognise odd and even numbers, confidently double and halve numbers up to 20. There is a good focus on securing pupils' number skills, and as a result, pupils are developing a good

understanding of the mathematical ideas of multiplication and division as repeated addition and subtraction. They identify many two- and some three-dimensional shapes and explain some of their properties. Pupils understand some basic measures; for example, they tell the time on digital and analogue clocks and are developing a secure understanding of simple fractions such as halves and quarters. Mathematical vocabulary is developing well; pupils understand and correctly use words such as 'multiples', 'digit', 'share' and 'equally'. They add coins to a value of ten pence and understand the concept of halves.

92. In one successful Year 1 lesson, pupils confidently worked with a 100 number square. The class teacher's effective questioning ensured that pupils were clear about the tasks that they had to complete in groups. Good discussion between pupils, with skilful intervention by the class teacher, enabled them to quickly sort number strips and to place them accurately on a 100 number square. As a result of good teaching, pupils recognised gaps in numbering during a later activity and accurately filled in the missing boxes. By the end of the lesson pupils were fully aware of the composition of a 100 square and could count in 10s and learning was effective.
93. Links with other subjects, and particularly in science, in the use of graphs and tallies, are developing satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 4 understand the use of various graphical layouts to communicate information; for example, Venn diagrams, bar charts and graphs. In one lesson observed, pupils showed a satisfactory understanding of classification criteria in order to prepare a Carroll diagram. Pupils were well supported by the class teacher, with effective questioning and the use of pupils' own ideas to extend their learning, with good use of appropriate mathematical vocabulary. However, there is little evidence that tasks are designed to develop pupils' numeracy skills across the curriculum; for example, in carrying out surveys, using map references and interpreting weather data.
94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced satisfactorily and learning objectives are often shared with pupils, which helps them to understand the purpose of their work and to reflect afterwards on how well they have achieved. Good questioning and use of ongoing assessment are also strong features of lessons for younger pupils; for example, teachers give pupils good opportunities to explain the strategies they use and, from this, assess how well they have understood new ideas or acquired new skills. Teachers then modify questions to individuals to provide relevant challenge and opportunities for all to achieve success. Other features of the good teaching seen, particularly for pupils aged 5 to 7, included good subject knowledge and the maintenance of a brisk pace to lessons. Teacher set groups of pupils targets in mathematics and these are sometimes referred to during lessons and this is a successful strategy and helping pupils to be aware of their progress.
95. The quality of teaching observed for pupils aged seven to nine is more variable, with some slowing of pace and insufficient attention being given to a brisk mental starter to the lesson, as was observed in one Year 4 lesson. Within this age group, insufficient attention was given to the needs of higher attaining pupils. In some instances, there is no follow-up task ready for those who finish the main task early and, as a result, these pupils were insufficiently challenged. Scrutiny of older pupils' work also indicated some untidy written work, revealing inconsistencies in the quality and accuracy of marking as well as examples of pupils' muddled thinking; often caused by errors in the layout of written questions. There was little evidence of work in using and applying aspects of mathematics and this is a weakness which is preventing pupils from achieving higher results by the end of Year 4.

96. The subject is soundly led and the school has made a number of subject improvements since the last inspection, including the quality of planning, assessment and resources, and this is beginning to have a positive impact upon standards. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress. Information and communication technology is little used on a regular basis, although there were limited examples of pupils using number programs to support their learning and some evidence of the use of ICT to communicate the results of data collection.

SCIENCE

97. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 are above national expectations. At the time of the last inspection attainment matched national expectations across the key stages whilst being above expectations in Year 2. Standards have improved since the last inspection, and this is partly due to the direct teaching involvement, monitoring and subject co-ordination of the subject by the headteacher. Progress is at least satisfactory from year to year. There is a good volume of work produced showing no significant differences between gender or minority ethnic groups. Pupils make similar progress across all aspects of the subject.
98. By the end of Year 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and possess a sound scientific knowledge and vocabulary. They use appropriate terms confidently and are beginning to understand the notion of fair testing. They understand the differences between 'natural' and 'man-made'. They learn about how plants grow, and about how plants and animals adapt to their environments. Pupils explore magnetism and in Year 1 know that only some materials are magnetic, whilst Year 2 pupils have developed that understanding by looking at the properties of magnets themselves. They have discovered that magnets can "stick" to each other and that bar magnet "push each other away". Links with other subjects, particularly numeracy in the use of graphs and tallies, are developing well. Pupils' presentation and layout are good, and teachers have maintained a good balance between worksheets and work directly into books.
99. By age nine, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have well established, positive work habits. They develop the work on magnetism and understand that some magnets are more powerful than others. They test a variety of materials for their magnetic properties, predicting the degree of magnetism each might possess. They name the parts of a skeleton and have begun to understand how joints and muscles work to allow bones to move. They also test materials to ascertain which conduct heat well, and compile a table to show their results. There are good links with literacy and numeracy. Computers are used effectively, as in the lesson on plants when a parent was used to help individual pupils to work with a computer microscope. Pupils viewed magnified leaves and identified the hairs as water retaining agents and red spots as decay. Pupils enjoy the opportunity for group work. They support each other well, sharing ideas and helping each other with spelling. They present their work well, handwriting, spelling and punctuation are generally good, and their explanations show thought and understanding.
100. Teaching is good overall. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. It was with Year 3 pupils taken by the headteacher and was a very good lesson. Planning was very detailed, learning objectives clearly identified for the pupils and their attitudes and behaviour were very good. Pupils worked hard and displayed enthusiasm for the subject. They enjoyed the investigative aspects of the work. Coverage across all aspects of the science curriculum is good and there is a good balance between work

recorded on worksheets and by free writing. Marking is generally good, being affirming and yet showing pupils how their work might be improved. There was evidence of homework being set within the scrutiny of work and in the lesson seen. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that there is often insufficient differentiation of tasks for higher attaining pupils, or for those with special educational needs.

101. The headteacher is the co-ordinator for the subject. She leads the subject very effectively and has done much to raise standards in accordance with national guidelines. Work in Year 1 is focused upon materials and their properties and physical processes. Work in Year 2 is well structured to life and living processes and ensures an effective balance across the science curriculum over the two years. A two-year cycle is in place to teach the science curriculum in Years 3 and 4. There was appropriate liaison with the Middle School before determining the content of the curriculum for these years in order to ensure sound progression for pupils on transfer. The headteacher teaches Year 2 and Year 3 ensuring that the good practice established when children first enter the school is continued until they leave. Numerous investigative opportunities are created and this is a feature of science work throughout the school as these relate to all aspects of the subject. This is a strength. The subject curriculum is further enhanced with the extra-curricular science club. In addition, Year 4 pupils are to be taken to a Youth Hostel for two nights later this term. During the time they are away, the planned focus for them is to be science and history.
102. A sound system for assessment is in place. Target setting instigated by the local education authority several years ago has helped the school to develop good structures for recording pupils' achievements and tracking progress in science. This is to be extended into setting of group and individual targets for pupils similar to those already established in English and mathematics. The headteacher takes a leading role in these procedures and this gives her a secure grasp of the levels of attainment pupils are reaching.
103. The school is part of a school science consortium involving a number of local schools. This has generated a number of resources and has provided extra funding from commerce. As a result, resources for science are good. School pond and wildlife areas have been developed and are used well to promote first-hand observation and underpin work on habitats. The school has worked effectively to improve standards in science and the good leadership of the headteacher as co-ordinator has contributed significantly to it.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Standards are above those expected nationally by ages seven and nine, and this is an improvement on the previous inspection when standards were in line. The improvement has been achieved through more detailed planning that identifies how key skills are to be developed through the school, using a wide range of media, styles and subjects. Additionally, the co-ordinator plays a significant role in teaching the subject to pupils of all ages, so ensuring continuity and sharing her expertise.
105. From an early age, pupils have a sketchbook in which to try out techniques, such as colour mixing, and to plan their ideas. By age seven, they are confident in drawing from observation, working for instance with mirrors to draw self-portraits, where practice in drawing key features encourages their attention to detail. Their work with paint and pastels shows a good sense of composition, as in their abstract paintings on the subject of dreams, stimulated the work of Marc Chagall. By age nine, pupils mix paint to achieve subtle shades of colour. Their drawings and paintings are carefully finished,

as seen in their maps of the locality in the style of Aboriginal paintings and their scenes of African village life.

106. Throughout the school, pupils develop confidence in printing, collage and three-dimensional work, achieving good results because they develop their ideas in full through stages of planning and drafting before completion; for example, a study of seashells began with observational drawings, developing subtle use of line, shading and colour. The drawings were then developed into three-dimensional textile collages, using different threads and fabrics to express their observations of natural forms. They also draw patterns and abstract shapes using a computer programme. It is a good feature of teaching that pupils are encouraged to express their personal responses to stimuli, and they do this well, with a wide range of individual interpretations as a result. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included and achieve well.
107. The quality of teaching was good in the one lesson seen during the inspection. Pupils in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class made rubbings of textures they found outside the building. They showed strong interest in the activity and stayed on task well. From their rubbings, they selected parts that suggested an image, then cut and pasted them to form a collage. The process produced a wide range of images, including people, buildings and even dolphins. The lesson was successful because it was well organised and monitored so that pupils were kept usefully occupied without the need for direct control. Their interest was held, because they had free choice of surfaces and objects for their rubbings, and of their images for their own collage. Their cutting and pasting was carefully done.
108. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has been particularly effective in leading improvements to the scheme of work so that key skills are developed progressively. Short term planning is very detailed and a significant strength. Art and design activities contribute to learning in other subjects, including ICT where computer drawing software is used. Tasks are well designed to challenge and extend pupils' skills. It is a good feature that pupils' work is assessed and observations noted to guide future teaching and track progress. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development, with high quality displays of artwork around the school celebrating their achievement and creating a stimulating environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards of attainment are above national expectations by age nine. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were in line. The subject is taught as part of the weekly activities afternoon, when pupils of different ages work together on projects, so it is not possible to identify standards reached by pupils aged seven. However, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress through the school. Sessions are led by a subject specialist, which ensures consistent teaching of high quality and a carefully planned curriculum.
110. Pupils work together in small groups on projects that have an element of problem solving. Products of past projects show a good range of materials and techniques. Pupils measure and cut wood, plastics, textiles and card to make model houses, then construct circuits to light a bulb in a room or ring a door buzzer. Their model market stalls are colourful, with displays of miniature boxes of fruit, made to scale and with well-proportioned lettering on sale notices. Other projects on display include battery-powered vehicles and model water wells. The products seen are well designed for a specific purpose, showing a good understanding of mechanical principles and construction techniques. A relative weakness in the programme of study is that

planning and evaluation are not formally recorded. Some pupils make rough sketches of their intentions, but this is not a regular part of the process. Pupils show others their results and comment on them, but there is no formally recorded evaluation.

111. The quality of teaching was very good in the one lesson observed. The challenge was to make a balance to weigh a snail. The teacher reviewed previous knowledge of techniques and materials very thoroughly, checking understanding and stressing safety considerations. The correct names for tools were emphasised, their proper use was demonstrated and possible problems explained. Pupils settled quickly to the task, because they knew the routines and expectations. Pupils of different ages worked very well together; one Year 3 boy was seen holding firm a piece of wood for a Year 1 girl to saw. Several parents and teaching assistants who ensured that pupils could use potentially dangerous tools in safety, supported well in the lesson. It is a good feature that these adults allow pupils to carry out processes for themselves as far as possible. The complex organisation of the activity was very well planned and supervised, ensuring a good pace and a highly productive session.
112. The subject is well led and managed. The curriculum is well planned to ensure key skills are learned progressively. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' social development.

GEOGRAPHY

113. By ages seven and nine, pupils' work is in line with expectations, and standards have been maintained at this level since the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress through a programme of study designed to develop their understanding across a broad range of topics. Those with special educational needs make progress in line with that of other pupils. They follow the same curriculum, and teachers help them take an active part by matching work to their needs.

114. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully interpret maps, atlases and globes to find their own home in relation to the school and the world beyond. They study the effects of seasonal change and weather patterns on our lives in terms of clothing, housing and outdoor activities. They consider how to improve the environment by planning recreational facilities in an imagined park. By age nine, pupils understand major features of their own locality and compare their experiences with those found elsewhere. It is a good feature of their study of Kenya that it is extended over a range of topics to broaden and deepen pupils' understanding. Earlier work on interpreting maps and plans is developed in the practical task of auditing the noise levels in different parts of the school through the day. However, the work of older pupils is generally brief, and does not reflect the high level reading and writing skills recorded in the national tests. Similarly, there is little evidence that tasks are designed to develop pupils' numeracy skills, for instance in carrying out surveys, using map references and interpreting weather data.
115. Only two lessons were seen, both to older pupils. Teaching was good in one and satisfactory in the other. The lessons were well planned and resourced. Teachers give clear instructions and manage activities effectively. As part of the Year 3 lesson, groups of pupils were taken to the ICT suite for a very good explanation of how to find an Ordnance Survey map on an internet web site, and how to interpret the contour lines on the map. This difficult material produced strong interest. The practical task of auditing noise levels in Year 4 was interesting for all, but pupils with the potential for high attainment lacked a higher level of technical challenge. Teachers use questioning well to check on understanding, though there is a tendency for this to go on too long, reducing the time for pupils' to record their findings. In these discussions, pupils show pride in knowing correct terminology and explaining important points in the topic studied.
116. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Time given to the subject has been increased since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory, and planning is now soundly based on national guidance. There are good links with other subjects, such as art and history. Effective use is made of visits into the local community and further afield, to give pupils practical experience in applying their knowledge and skills. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

HISTORY

117. Standards of achievement are in line with national expectations for pupils aged seven and nine. Standards have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same curriculum, and teachers help them take an active part by providing tasks that match their needs.
118. Pupils aged seven have a clear sense of what has changed over time in the context of their own families and everyday life. Using the evidence of objects, pictures and photographs, they identify the main differences between past and present and note significant dates on a time-line. They understand the contributions made to society by a range of famous men and women, including monarchs, inventors and social reformers. Pupils aged nine have a sound understanding of a range of historical periods, including the civilisation of ancient Egypt, and aspects of British history including the Roman and Saxon invaders, Tudors, Victorians and the Second World War. They have sound skills in identifying and interpreting evidence from a range of sources, including documents and objects from the periods studied. They study a wide range of topics, but much of the resulting factual writing of older pupils is very brief.

Some pieces of imaginative writing are better developed; for example, when they consider the experiences of children evacuated during the war. Nevertheless, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to read for information, using skills of note making, so as to develop particular interests in greater depth and detail, especially to pupils with higher attainment.

119. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in the two lessons seen. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, leading to successful class discussions, explanations and reviews of learning. Pupils listen attentively and give good responses to questions. It was a weaker element of both lessons that the same task was set for all pupils, and this approach did not offer enough challenge to those with potentially higher attainment. Evidence seen in pupils' work over time indicates that expectations for recorded work are not set out clearly in short-term planning. In particular, teachers' expectations of higher attaining pupils in terms of the quantity of work produced and the standard of its presentation is insufficiently high.
120. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Long-term planning is soundly based on national guidelines. To stimulate pupils' interest, there are good collections of objects from the past, including those from the school's own 140 years of history. There are useful links with other subjects, particularly geography. Good use is made of visits to local museums and sites of historic interest, and these visits are well planned to extend knowledge and enjoyment of the subject. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards achieved by pupils aged seven and nine are in line with expectations and satisfactory standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Currently, pupils are achieving soundly and as the school makes further use of recently installed equipment, standards are set to rise.
122. In recent months, conversion of the old school house has resulted in space being made available for the creation of a small ICT suite. The ICT suite includes 11 networked computers and pupils of all age groups have access to it during the week. In addition, each class has at least one computer, although these are not networked. In co-operation with the local cluster group of schools, the school helps to finance a learning support assistant who works with pupils in each school for one day each week. This is a successful strategy in helping to raise standards.
123. During the inspection, the learning support assistant successfully worked with groups of pupils throughout the school on a range of topics that supported pupils' learning in other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils throughout the school are gaining appropriate skills and experience in using computers to research information. One example of this included the use of the Internet in geography by Year 3 pupils to find out more about Seathwaite in Cumbria. Pupils made effective use of a website to identify features on the map. Year 4 pupils successfully used the Internet, supported by a student teacher, to find out more information about the Romans as part of their history topic. Pupils demonstrated confidence when using a search engine to find websites and knew how to "refresh a page", and use the scroll facility. Evidence such as this indicates that ICT is being used appropriately to support work across the curriculum, particularly when additional adult support is available. However, there was little evidence to indicate that classroom computers are being effectively used during lessons.

124. In Year 1, pupils know that many day to day electrical devices are controlled by switches and signals; for example, when operating a listening centre or telephone. They know and talk about the ICT that is used in many areas of everyday life; for example when operating a television, video recorder or disc player. In one Year 1 lesson observed, pupils understood that some machines work by using a sequence of physical actions; for example in controlling a cassette or video recorder. This lesson was successful because of effective planning and clear explanations. This resulted in good learning, with pupils clearly understanding the idea of a sequence of linked actions to control a machine.
125. Throughout the school, there are good examples of pupils using word processing effectively. Pupils in Year 2 use the keyboard well to write their work, to present it in simple forms; for example, to write items in a list. They know how to change the size and style of writing, save their work for future use and how to print it out. Pupils in Year 4 further develop their skills; for example, by using the 'cut and paste' facility and to check spellings with a spell checker. The subject contributes well to learning in other subjects; for example, in art and design, where computer drawing software is used.
126. The quality of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory. Teachers make satisfactory use of the nationally produced scheme of work to guide their teaching. However, record keeping of the acquisition of pupils' skills is not yet established throughout the school and therefore is not an effective planning tool to meet the different attainment levels, or to ensure appropriate progress for all pupils. During the inspection, some computer programs were used appropriately to complement other areas of the curriculum; for example, number and word games. Pupils' response to ICT is good. They are well motivated, well behaved and co-operate with each other. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress.
127. Satisfactory use is made of listening stations in classes for taped stories, music and songs. The subject is soundly led, and the subject co-ordinator is seeking to increase the use of computers across the curriculum. Staff are guided on how to use computers effectively.

MUSIC

128. Standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 and Year 4 are above national expectations. At the last inspection, standards in music were judged to be broadly in line with national expectations and satisfactory in relation to pupils' abilities, and standards have improved. Both strands within the music curriculum are now well addressed. This improvement is a result of good use of peripatetic support, input from a music specialist and the enthusiastic support of class teachers.
129. Pupils are given good opportunities both to perform and listen to music. A visiting specialist teacher is in school for one session each week and time is used well to support pupils' learning. Peripatetic teachers give instrumental lessons for keyboards, flute, clarinet, saxophone and violin. This provides a good range of instrumental opportunities for pupils in Years 3 and 4. There is also a recorder club run by a class teacher. Older pupils take part in the local 'Festival of Voices'.
130. Resources are good. A good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments is easily available to all class teachers. Pupils clearly enjoy music, sing well and join in musical activities enthusiastically. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons.

131. During the week of the inspection, two music lessons were seen taken by a class teacher and the other by a visiting specialist; one was very good and the other was good. These reflected the effective combination of specialist and non-specialist teaching. Planning was clear and the learning objectives clearly stated in both. Pupils responded enthusiastically, enjoyed the instrumental work, and behaved well in both lessons.
132. There is a policy and scheme of work based on national guidelines. This is well planned and provides continuity and progression for pupils' learning. No assessment procedures are currently in place. The school is aware of this and the issue is to be addressed as part of a wider review of assessment in all subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. As only one lesson for games activities in Year 4 was observed, it was not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in the subject. However, in this lesson pupils achieved satisfactory standards. The lesson was soundly planned and structured. It began with good brisk warm up activities and ended with a cool down activity, which is a feature of the lesson guidance within the scheme of work. Pupils worked hard in the lesson, enjoyed the activities and made at least satisfactory progress. This was not easy for pupils, because the playground slope often made the ball run away from the hockey stick at a rate that was difficult to control. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory.
134. No gymnastics or dance lessons were seen so it is not possible to judge pupils' levels of performance in these areas. Dance was described as a strength at the time of the last inspection.
135. The subject is well co-ordinated. The school's policy is based on a commercial scheme of work supplemented by the "Tops" scheme. These give clear lesson and teaching guidance and the latter has helped to improve the range of equipment in school. There is now a good supply of small equipment and an adequate supply of large apparatus. However, storage space for this is limited as the area is shared with staging blocks.
136. There is now no pool at the school as the existing pool had reached the end of its useful life. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 visit a pool at RAF Henlow, a short distance from the school, for ten sessions during the spring term. The school reports that most pupils achieve the minimum standard of swimming 25 metres, and this is a strong feature of the provision for physical education. However, as yet there are no procedures for assessing pupils' attainment beyond swimming. The school is aware of this and the issue is to be addressed as part of a wider programme of assessment development in subjects other than the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

137. After-school sports clubs for football and hockey make a good contribution to pupils' achievement in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Standards achieved by pupils aged seven and nine are in line with expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and achieve standards appropriate for their prior attainment.
139. By age seven, pupils have a sound understanding of Christian beliefs, practices and major festivals. They know how Jews worship, some of the features of a synagogue and the importance of the Torah. They have a good understanding of the relationship of the Torah to the Bible, and the role of the rabbi. Throughout the school, pupils show sensitivity and respect for the beliefs of others. By age nine, their understanding of Christianity is soundly developed so that they know Easter is a significant festival, and they retell important stories from the Bible. They compare key features of Christianity with their equivalents in other religions, including Islam. In discussion, older pupils show a satisfactory understanding and recollection of main facts of previous work. However, very little of their learning is written down, and this is a significant weakness that fails to focus and consolidate their study while extending their literacy skills.
140. Teaching was good in two lessons seen for pupils aged five to age seven and satisfactory in the one lesson seen for older pupils. Strong features of these lessons were teachers' high expectations when reviewing earlier learning through closely focused discussion, and their use of precise terminology. Pupils are encouraged to make comparisons between religions and to make links with their own experiences and beliefs. They respond well in such discussions, taking an active part and trying hard to explain their thinking. Good use is made of resources, such as photographs to illustrate physical features and of the board to note down important ideas. Weaker features of lessons are class discussions that go on too long, leaving too little time for individual work, and expectations that are not high enough for the contributions of higher attaining pupils.
141. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The programme of study is based on the Locally Agreed syllabus and provides sound guidance for teachers' lesson planning. Good use is made of a range of resources to make lessons interesting, including videos, photographs and religious objects. Provision also includes visits to local churches and visits from local ministers to lead collective worship. School and class assemblies make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of Christianity. However, there remain opportunities to widen pupils' experience of other faiths, for instance by visiting other places of worship and reflecting their major festivals in the programme of school assemblies. There was very limited evidence of ICT being used to extend pupils' learning.