

INSPECTION REPORT

HALWILL COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Halwill

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113151

Headteacher: David Jones

Reporting inspector: Peter Kerr

23583

Dates of inspection: 19th – 21st May 2003

Inspection number: 247314

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Halwill
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Barry Richards

Date of previous inspection: 26th March 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23583	P Kerr	Registered inspector	<p>Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Provision for pupils with special educational needs</p>	<p>Information about the school</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well the school is led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9769	M Morrissey	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
8845	H Sumner	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Religious education</p> <p>Educational inclusion</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Halwill is a small community primary school in a rural area of North Devon. There are 76 pupils on roll aged four to 11, with wide variations in numbers between year groups. A significant number of pupils join and leave the school during the school year. All the pupils are English speaking and of white ethnic origin, and none is from a travelling or refugee background. Overall, the pupils' social and economic circumstances are below average. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is 3.9 per cent, which is low compared to other schools. However, many of the children are from farming families that do not have high incomes, but do not claim free school meals. Also, the school draws pupils from some very deprived areas. The attainment of children starting the reception class covers a wide spread but is below average overall, especially in spoken language and social skills. Sixteen pupils are identified as having special educational needs of a learning or behavioural nature, and one pupil has a 'statement' of need. These figures represent an above average proportion of pupils with such needs compared to other schools. A new headteacher and infant teacher have been appointed since the previous inspection. Plans have been submitted for a more conveniently accessible new school to be built in the nearby larger settlement of Halwill Junction. The school is involved in a number of local and national initiatives, including Eco Schools (ECO) schools, and has strong links with a nearby Beacon School.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that provides a wide range of valuable learning opportunities for its pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and pupils achieve well to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. He is fully supported by a committed and hard-working staff and by a very good governing body. The staff and governors work together as a very effective team to ensure that the school delivers good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science
- Teaching is good overall and often very good, with some excellent lessons.
- The school provides a rich curriculum and gives good support for the pupils' personal and educational development.
- There is an excellent team spirit within the school and teaching assistants give very good support to the pupils' progress.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- The governors are very supportive and effective.
- The school has a very productive partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- Opportunities for reception children to learn more consistently through purposeful play.
- Standards in gymnastics
- The coverage of the National Curriculum in some subjects.
- The use of assessment to support pupils' progress in some subjects.

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 2001, when it was found to have serious weaknesses in leadership and management, accommodation, provision for the youngest children and information and communication technology (ICT). Since then, overall

improvement has been very good. Excellent improvements have been made to the leadership and management of the school, which is very good now, with an excellent team spirit. Good improvements have been made in provision for the youngest children, which is now satisfactory. The provision for ICT has improved from unsatisfactory to good. Many improvements have been made to the accommodation, which was in a very poor state. It is still inadequate for modern needs, but the staff make best use of it, and governors have plans in hand for a new school building. In addition, the overall quality of teaching and learning has improved from unsatisfactory to good, including planning in all subjects, which was especially weak, and the school prepares the pupils more effectively for life in a multicultural society. The school has a very good capacity for continuing improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	C	A	C
Mathematics	B	E	A	B
Science	A	C	A	A

Key

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

The school's test results declined from 1998 to 2001, but are now rising more quickly than the national trend. Results vary from year to year more than they do for larger schools because one or two pupils make such a difference to the overall scores. Taking this into account, the inspection found that pupils achieve well to reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school performed much better in 2002 than other schools with similar Year 2 results in 1998. This confirms that good value is added to the pupils' achievements during Years 3 to 6. The school achieved its targets for 2002 in English and mathematics of 85 per cent of pupils at Level 4 (the expected average level) or above in both subjects, and has set more demanding targets for 2003 and 2004, including a substantial proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5, indicating good challenge for more able pupils. The standard of work seen during the inspection was above average in English, mathematics and science. The pupils' achievements in science are particularly good due to the consistent emphasis on learning through experiments. Standards are above expectations in art and design and religious education. In other subjects, standards are in line with expectations. Pupils achieve well in all subjects except geography and physical education, where their achievements are below expectations. The school's results vary greatly from year to year due to the small cohorts. They were below average in 2001, well above average in 2002, and broadly average this year. Pupils achieve well at this stage due to good teaching, particularly in Year 2, enabling them to compensate for a legacy of under-achievement in reception in the past. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well relative to their ability and prior attainment throughout the school because of the support they receive. More able pupils make good progress because they are given suitably challenging work. Provision for gifted and talented pupils has been too recently put in place for outcomes to be judged fairly.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are happy to come to school and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Often very good in lessons due to high expectations and level of interest provided. There were no exclusions during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils show respect for others and establish good relationships with each other and with the adults working with them. They accept responsibility gladly and use their initiative when given the opportunity.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average and pupils come to school on time, reflecting their desire to learn.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Very 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. Within the mixed reception and infant class, the teaching is satisfactory. It is more effective in meeting the needs of the Year 1 and Year 2 pupils and the more able reception children than the average and below average reception children. The most successful lessons observed included at least some of the following:

- Good planning of activities that interest and challenge all the pupils in the class;
- Good questioning that ensures pupils of all ages and abilities are given the chance to answer;
- Good support for pupils with special educational needs by teachers and teaching assistants.

Throughout the school, the teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage them well. English and mathematics are taught well, especially basic skills of literacy and numeracy. There are some examples of excellent, mature written work resulting from challenging and creative teaching in the juniors. The 'specialist' teaching of ICT, music and dance is very good and sometimes excellent. In most of the lessons, the pupils show interest and sustain concentration. They respond well to opportunities to co-operate and collaborate and only fail to learn effectively on the rare occasions when the activities do not meet their needs. In some lessons, the need to keep close control of the pupils inhibits learning through discussion between pupils, independent research and investigation, but this does not prevent the teachers from ensuring that the pupils apply themselves to their tasks. In some subjects, for example history and religious education, creative and challenging teaching enables the pupils to learn exceptionally well through discussion and reflection to produce work of a very high standard. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for in lessons. Teaching assistants are very effective in ensuring that these pupils are fully included in all activities while at the same time pursuing their individual learning goals. The needs of the most able are also met in most lessons through extra challenging tasks and questions.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Apart from some aspects of provision for reception children, gymnastics and music, the school provides a very rich range of learning opportunities for all its pupils, enhanced by voluntary contributions such as the gardening club and football training.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified early and they are provided with suitable programmes of work, which are closely supervised.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Clear and high expectations by staff underpin the good attitudes and behaviour in the school. Opportunities for pupils to appreciate the spiritual side of life and to take responsibility for their own learning are areas for further improvement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Very good procedures for promoting good attendance and eliminating bullying. Very good tracking of pupils' progress in the core subjects, but not yet in other subjects.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents	The school has a very productive partnership with parents, who make a very strong contribution to the pupils' progress and achievements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and manages his team very well to harness all their good will and expertise towards their shared goal of raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors do their utmost to support the school and hold it to account for the standards achieved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The governors and staff measure the school's success by the pupils' performance over a wide range of endeavours with appropriate emphasis on the key skills of literacy and numeracy.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Governors seek best value well by consulting widely and ensuring that spending is closely linked to the School Improvement Plan, which has high standards as its ultimate objective. The accommodation has been much improved with a lot of voluntary help from parents and governors, though it is still inadequate for modern needs. Staffing levels are good. Staff are well deployed and supported so that everyone is making the best contribution they can to the pupils' education. Resources are satisfactory overall and good for ICT.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the information they receive about their children's progress• how closely the school works with them• how approachable the staff are• How hard the staff have worked to improve since the last inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The behaviour of a few pupils before and after school and at lunchtimes.

The team agrees with all the positive comments. The school takes effective measures to deal with any reported or observed instances of poor behaviour whenever and wherever it occurs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter reception with below average attainment overall, especially in language and communication skills. They make satisfactory progress during the reception year, but when they begin Year 1, the attainment for a significant number of children is below what is typical for their age in personal and social development, communication and language skills, mathematics development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. This is an area for improvement that the school recognises. Their attainment in physical development is average overall.

2. The school's results in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 vary considerably from year to year because the numbers of pupils taking the tests are small. One or two pupils with special educational needs or above average ability make a lot of difference to the overall scores. In 2001, the results were below average, but in 2002 they were well above average. The provisional results for 2003 are broadly average. The inspection found that good teaching, especially during Year 2, enables the pupils to achieve well in English and mathematics to reach standards that are commensurate with their abilities by the end of Years 1 and 2 and generally typical for their age. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when pupils were not achieving as well as they should at this stage. In 2002, the school's results were better than those for similar schools in reading and writing, and much better in mathematics.

3. The above average test results in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 reported at the last inspection have been maintained. The overall trend from 1998 to 2002 was below the national trend. However, there was an established downward trend between 1998 and 2001 that has now been reversed. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were well above the national average. They were above those of similar schools (measured by free school meals entitlement) in mathematics and science, and in line with such schools in English. However, when compared to schools that achieved similar end of Year 2 results in 1998 (the year these particular pupils took the tests), the results are well above average. This confirms the findings of the school's tracking of pupils' progress that those pupils who remain at the school from Year 2 to Year 6 make at least the expected gains in standards and often better than that. The school's results in the national tests, however, are influenced by the movement of pupils in and out of the school between Year 2 and Year 6. The most recent influx of pupils significantly lowered the attainment profile of the current Year 6. Standards in this year group are still above average, however, because of consistently good teaching. Pupils' achievements have improved from satisfactory to good overall because they now achieve well in Years 1 and 2.

4. Standards in reading are an established strength of the school, and continue to be above average at the end of Year 6. Standards in writing were identified as a weakness and have now improved to above average following a sustained drive to raise them. Overall, the pupils have well-developed literacy skills. Standards in the basic skills of numeracy, such as clearly setting out written calculations, are also good following recent moves to improve them.

5. In science, all the pupils gained at least the average Level 2 in the school-based assessments in 2002. This put the school in the top five per cent nationally. No pupils achieved the above average Level 3, however, except in experimental and investigative science, where the proportion was typical of an average school. The standard of the work

seen during the inspection was average overall, but above average in the experimental aspect. Good experimental skills are taught well throughout Years 3 to 6, so that standards are above average overall by the end of Year 6. The pupils' knowledge and understanding is secure because their learning is so firmly rooted in experimental procedures.

6. Standards in ICT are rapidly improving because of the very good teaching now being provided, and are in line with expectations overall at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils use their skills effectively to support their learning in most subjects. Standards are above expectations in art and design, history and religious education and in line with expectations in design and technology and geography at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2, but below expectations at the end of Year 6 because the school hall is inadequate for gymnastics and indoor games for the older pupils. In music, pupils achieve well in singing and some aspects of percussion playing, but achieve satisfactorily overall because they do not have enough opportunities to develop skills in composing and performing.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well relative to their prior attainment because of the good support they receive, both from teachers and from teaching assistants. The support given to those pupils with the most severe behavioural needs is particularly effective in ensuring that they are as fully included as possible in lessons without disrupting learning for other pupils. More able pupils extend their learning in some area, for example through special provision in mathematics in the upper juniors, but in some subjects, such as geography, music and physical education, the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they might because of shortcomings in curriculum provision.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils are happy to come to school and feel secure there. This helps them to develop good relationships with and respect for others and to progress in their learning.

9. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are very positive and keen to fulfil their role in the school community particularly through the recently introduced school council; this is an improvement since the last inspection. In lessons they are gaining confidence to express opinions; they show tolerance and interest when listening to each other's views, especially those of pupils who are still developing a full vocabulary.

10. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They understand the school's rules and absorb the values transmitted to them by teachers who are good role-models. In lessons, pupils' behaviour is at least good and often very good. No issues of bullying were observed and pupils are confident that any such issues will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively. The good behaviour in the school contributes to the good ethos of learning and is establishing a good basis for the extension of opportunities for pupils' personal development.

11. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils arrive punctually to school but any lateness is well recorded and action is taken if this is persistent. There have been no exclusions in the last year.

12. Relationships across the school are very good; pupils have a genuine respect and affection for all staff, which is reciprocated. This creates an environment of care and security where work and learning can progress.

13. The school has recognised the need to provide more opportunities to develop pupils' personal skills through their life in the school and there is evidence this is happening. The

recently formed school council is progressing well: pupils are enthusiastically working together as a team. The overriding aim of the council is to improve the school for all; consequently they are organising lunchtime games and are keen to start work on the ECO school project.

14. All pupils, to a degree dictated by age, have some opportunities to develop personal skills. In Years 5 and 6 this has been extended with the addition of the new computer suite and with the plans for pupil involvement in running the new library. Older pupils also work as playground monitors and general helpers around the school, but pupils do not play as active a role as they could in whole-school occasions such as assemblies. The school council is proving successful, giving pupils from each year group the opportunity to work and plan together. Pupils respond well when asked to take some responsibility for their own learning, for example by tracking their own skills in science, but there are not many such opportunities available.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. A relatively small number of lessons were observed during the inspection, so other evidence, such as the progress pupils make over time, indicated by the work in their books, is also used to arrive at an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. When all the evidence is taken into account, the quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in reception and Year 1 and very good in the top infants and juniors, with some examples of outstanding teaching.

16. All of the teaching that was seen during the inspection was at least of satisfactory quality and it was good or better in 70 per cent of the lessons observed. Teaching was excellent in two of the 24 lessons, both of which were taken by 'specialist' teachers rather than the class teacher. One was an ICT lesson taken by the headteacher and one a dance lesson by a visiting specialist teacher. All of the five such 'specialist' lessons seen were of at least very good quality. This helped to boost the teaching grades for the school as a whole.

17. The sustained high quality of much of the teaching for the top infants and junior pupils ensures that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress relative to their prior attainment and achieve the standards they are capable of in most subjects. Of the 16 lessons seen in this part of the school, 14 were good or better and 9 were very good. This is an exceptional level of performance for teachers to maintain under such close scrutiny. These and the other very good and excellent lessons were characterised by the use of a range of methods and resources to inspire the pupils and maintain their interest. The pupils respond extremely well to such stimulating teaching and learn very quickly. For example, reception and Year 1 children thoroughly enjoyed learning how to play African drums loudly and softly in an outdoor environment and to play different rhythms because they were given such quick, clear demonstrations to copy and were encouraged to experiment and express themselves and to listen carefully to others.

18. In the most successful lessons, teachers adapt their questions and presentations to the emerging needs of the pupils. When the teachers have excellent subject knowledge, as was demonstrated in all of the ICT lessons seen, in English lessons in Years 3 to 6 and in religious education in Years 5 and 6, the quality of learning is very good. The teachers plan these lessons very thoroughly, but respond quickly and imaginatively to the pupils' responses and engage them in quality thinking, discussion, writing and practical tasks to apply the skills they are learning. As a result, the pupils' learning is enjoyable and continuous and they achieve very good results.

19. An influx of pupils with less positive attitudes into the juniors has necessitated an emphasis on establishing discipline. This strategy has proved very successful as in all the lessons observed, the pupils were orderly and obedient and most showed a keen interest in learning. However, in some lessons, for example a design and technology lesson in which Year 5 pupils sampled and evaluated samples of bread, this approach resulted in an over-emphasis on the whole class working at one pace under the teacher's direction rather than encouraging learning through a range of activities such as paired and small group discussions.

20. Teaching for the reception children and younger infant pupils is satisfactory. The atmosphere in the classroom is warm and friendly and the children are interested and lively learners. The activities they are given are not as well matched to their needs as in the rest of the school, however, and the quality of questioning and discussion is not as good. The teachers and teaching assistants have very good relationships with the pupils and manage them very well throughout the school.

21. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall. In English, teaching and learning is very good in the top infants and juniors. The teachers have very good subject knowledge in English and good subject knowledge in mathematics, and a good grasp of how the pupils learn best at each stage of their development. They teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy very effectively.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for in lessons so that they are fully included in all activities and make good progress towards the targets in their individual educational plans. The teachers and teaching assistants know them well so that they are able to adjust their input to suit each individual pupil. For example, pupils with very severe emotional difficulties are taken out of lessons on occasions to work through their emotions with the teaching assistant before coming back into the classroom to resume their work. Some pupils who would probably have been excluded in many other settings are enabled to gain some self-esteem through this process, work through some of their problems and learn to manage their emotions more successfully with the eventual aim of being able to do so independently.

23. Teachers make good provision for the more able pupils in each year group in most lessons by planning activities that involve a greater degree of challenge. In mathematics, the more able pupils are given extra tuition to take them on further and help them to apply their skills to more difficult problems. This aspect of provision is in the early stages of development, however, in most subjects. Teachers use marking well in English to acknowledge achievement and provide pointers for further improvement. Marking is not used so effectively in most other subjects. Teachers carefully assess the pupils' progress in learning skills in English, mathematics, science and ICT. This aids the planning of lessons and makes them more effective. The tracking of pupils' skills in science is particularly effective. The pupils are fully aware of their progress through lists of skills pasted into their books. This gives them some knowledge and control of their own learning. Similar systems are not yet in place to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning in other subjects.

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

24. The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of its pupils. It fulfils statutory requirements. The quality and range of pupils' learning opportunities is good overall. It is good across both key stages- with good provision in a majority of subjects, but especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science, and in ICT. Religious education is also well supported by the effective use of the latest version of the locally Agreed

Syllabus for the subject. Other good areas are art and design, physical education and history. Provision for design and technology, geography and music are satisfactory, as is that for the Reception class. This is a very significant improvement on the curricular provision at the time of the last inspection when the curriculum was unsatisfactory overall, but especially in the Reception class and its links into Years 1 and 2. However, although the curriculum for these children is satisfactory, there are still significant areas for improvement, particularly in the key area of personal and social development, which underpins the children's learning in all the other areas. One result of this is that some of the average and lower attainment pupils are not as prepared for the National Curriculum in Year 1 as they could be. Weaknesses in science, history and religious education were also identified. The school now has an up to date curriculum policy which indicates the involvement of governors and teacher co-ordinators in each of the subject areas, clarifies key objectives, emphasises the key skills required by the National Curriculum and outlines its planning arrangements. Pupils' national test results are thoroughly scrutinised and priorities for curriculum improvement identified.

25. Much has been achieved since the last inspection, including the successful implementation and customisation of the national literacy and numeracy policies. Of other subjects taught in Years 3 to 6, science has been significantly improved by its increased emphasis on learning through experimentation. ICT is very effectively based on the sequencing of skill development and substantially enhanced by the application of these skills in other lessons. The effectiveness of otherwise very good planning in most other subjects is reduced somewhat by lack of attention to progression in the learning of the key skills and concepts which underpin higher levels of understanding and achievement. Examples include mapping and research skills in geography and the systematic development of awareness of the key elements in historical research. Some areas of the National Curriculum are not yet included in subjects ranging from ICT to music. In the latter, for example, opportunities to develop listening and composition skills are inadequate. The mixed age classes provide another level of difficulty in planning, if pupils' learning is not to be repetitive. In practice, teachers' lesson planning to suit several age groups and pupils with differing levels of prior achievement does much to avoid this, but the possibility of repetition of topics remains at present.

26. Arrangements for curriculum enrichment include teaching by specialists such as the teachers of singing and of African drumming and dancing and a range of visits to local sites including a reservoir, various factories, a sea-life museum and a Roman palace. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good for a small school such as this. It includes a gardening club, instrumental tuition, a French Club and a range of sporting activities. Pupils also sing and perform at venues in the locality.

27. Opportunities for pupils with special educational needs are good, with effective use of individual targets providing the basis for learning where appropriate. A few gifted and talented pupils have been informally identified and placed among older pupils to learn where appropriate though the school has no systematic arrangements for all such pupils in place as yet. The school makes no gender distinctions in its curriculum provision but is alert to any persisting differences between the achievements of boys and girls so that corrective arrangements can be put in place as necessary. Similarly, the school has no pupils at present for whom English is an additional language, though it is aware of the support arrangements available to them if needed. An effective multicultural approach is pervasive in the curriculum overall.

28. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Health education is covered within the science curriculum and there are policies to guide both sex and drugs education, which the school has suitable plans to update. Pupils' personal and social development is effectively promoted through continuing guidance in many contexts, including

assemblies and religious education lessons, but it is also directly addressed in weekly lessons which touch on personal relationships and issues of citizenship such as care for the environment and through opportunities such as the new school council. The further development of the provision is set out in an action plan which includes the mapping of suitable learning opportunities across the school, training for all involved in the school council and staff development.

29. The school has very good links with the local community. They include a good relationship with the church and substantial help from parents and local residents. The school also has effective links with the two local secondary schools and the area's playgroup. Though not yet in place, the school is moving towards building up educational links with the nearest teacher educational establishment.

30. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall, but that for spiritual development is less well developed. Findings are broadly similar to those at the time of the last inspection though arrangements for cultural and especially multicultural education have improved.

31. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. Good opportunities are created within ordinary lessons. In literacy, for instance, there is a considerable emphasis on poetry to which the pupils respond with imagination. Music lessons, too, encourage pupils to express feelings through singing and dance, while in art and design they generally find the skills, and sometimes the words, to articulate their insights into the magic of some of the world's most admired pictures. The school's emphasis on environmental preservation makes pupils especially sensitive to the wonders of nature and religious education provides them with insight into the spiritual aspects of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. More use could be made of music and other means of encouraging reflection in the daily acts of worship, however.

32. The most powerful element in the school's provision for pupils' moral development is the positive example set by staff in all their interactions with the pupils, as well as with other adults. It is this example that informs pupils' good behaviour, their helpfulness towards other pupils and their general insight into how others feel in particular situations. For instance, they wait turns to add their comments in class, freely share available equipment and go to the aid of younger pupils in difficulty. These caring and tolerant attitudes are also evident in their response to other cultures and faiths. Few have had personal contact with such people, but they show a warm interest in meeting them in the near future. In whole school assemblies, religious education lessons and personal development sessions, they hear stories, discuss issues and have opportunities to absorb the values which alert them to the distinctions between right and wrong in a variety of situations. In an assembly, for instance, they responded thoughtfully to a story which put materialistic gain before concern for others. In practice, pupils sing for the pleasure of elderly people in the locality and take up opportunities for charitable giving, to UNICEF, for example., and a fashion show was used to raise funds on Red Nose Day

33. The school accords high priority to pupils' social development though, currently, its provision for its youngest pupils is insufficiently effective. In the main school, older pupils are provided with the usual range of opportunities to exercise responsibility. Parents express satisfaction with this aspect of their children's development. Pupils' developing maturity is fostered through teachers' well judged assessment of their progress to date and their ability to undertake day to day responsibilities. Initiative is encouraged. For instance, a group of pupils were observed during their lunch hour, working on their own dance performances. The school's commitment to pupils' development as citizens in a democracy has led to the provision of a school council which is strengthened by links with a local Beacon school. Its

first initiative in exercising responsibility has been the setting up of a Healthy Eating tuck shop, initially funded by a bric-a-brac sale. A major environmental initiative in the school has provided opportunities for pupils to cooperate in regeneration of the school's garden. The widening of social horizons is encouraged through links with local schools and a developing relationship with an inner city school in Birmingham. A visit is in the planning, so that pupils will become more aware of today's multi cultural society.

34. Pupils' cultural development is strongly supported by the school's provision for literacy, art and design, music and history. In all these subjects, pupils have been inspired to become familiar with, and enjoy the riches of their cultural heritage. Their positive responses to these learning opportunities are testament to the teachers' success in communicating their own interest in and enjoyment of them. Visits to local venues of educational value add further enrichment. A French club provides an extra cultural experience for interested pupils. Additionally, the school has become very successful in seeking out local experts who are able to further enrich the quality of pupils' introduction to cultural treasures through learning opportunities which include music and dance of various origins and styles. Opportunities are taken to introduce multicultural elements into these experiences. Pupils are also benefiting from the introduction to other cultures which religious education provides. Their awareness and understanding stands to be enhanced by the burgeoning relationship with the inner city school. Pupils have already exchanged correspondence with them. The school is very alert to the urgent need for this type of experience, given the pupils' mono-cultural, rural environment. The school has developed a multicultural education plan and teachers have received further training to update them on the issues involved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school cares well for the health, safety, and personal welfare of all its pupils. Appropriate emphasis is given by teachers and all the staff to providing an establishment where pupils' personal welfare is a priority and is supported by a healthy and safe environment.

36. Pastoral care is provided by the class teachers and supported by the head teacher. Pupils are well known to all staff as individuals. Children are well supported and prepared for entry into the school; again, as they leave to continue their education in secondary school, personal care is good.

37. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good. The school's code of behaviour is understood and effectively and consistently used by teachers within the school policy; this helps create an environment in which lessons can progress with no interruption.

38. The school has very good procedures in place to eliminate bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour; these are used well in personal social and health education lessons and across the curriculum. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good and well known to staff. Registers are correctly marked and monitored for absence and punctuality. Attendance is above the national average: there are few problems related to good attendance but any that arise are fully supported by the education welfare officer. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last year.

39. Child protection procedures are very good. The school has an agreed policy that is well known to the staff. The designated member of staff has good working relationships with all relevant support agencies and overall this provides good protection for all pupils. Health and safety provision is good, monitored by the head teacher and the governing body. The health and safety policy based on the local education authority's model fully meets statutory requirements.

40. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained with recorded checks. During the inspection no new health and safety concerns were noted. There are clear notices of procedures for fire evacuation; fire drills are taken regularly and logged. First aid provision is good and training is up to date. Current first aid certificates are held by a designated officer and one other member of staff. Pupils understand who will help them if they have are injured and how this will happen. All serious accidents and head injuries are reported to parents and recorded. The school promotes healthy and safe living through the personal, social and health education programme, in circle time and across the curriculum. There are good relationships with a range of outside agencies to secure pupils' welfare.

41. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are very good in English and mathematics and the information gathered is used well to support pupils' progress. For example, pupils who make more than average gains are noted and given work to challenge them. Steps are also taken to find out what difficulties those pupils who make less than expected gains from one year to the next are having and putting measures in place to support them. Pupils' progress is also tracked effectively in ICT skills. The co-ordinator ensures that this information is used to tailor lessons so that the meet the changing needs of the pupils as they rapidly learn new skills. In science, very good measures are in place to track the pupils' acquisition of experimental skills, but not their knowledge and understanding in other areas of science. In other subjects, little is yet done to establish the exact level of skills that pupils have so that lessons can be more closely matched to their needs. This is an area for further development recognised by the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. Parents' views of the school as expressed through the questionnaire and the parents' meeting are very positive. They were unanimous in their view at the meeting that the school has improved since the last inspection, and wished to pay tribute to the staff for all the hard work they have put in to bring these improvements about. There is agreement that the school has high expectations of pupils to achieve and make good progress. All parents feel confident to approach the school with any concerns or suggestions; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The majority of parents feel teaching is good and that all teachers are very approachable. A majority of parents feel the school keeps them very well informed about their children's progress. This is another improvement since the last report. Parents confirm that pupils are keen to come to school, and that homework is achievable, appropriately challenging and complements current work in school. The inspection findings support all the parents' positive views.

43. Links between home and school are very good and this results in very effective parental involvement in pupils' learning. Parents give vital support at home by listening to their children read and by overseeing homework. Parent volunteers support classroom activities, such as reading, sports and school visits. Parents support after school clubs by assisting, for example, with the football and providing a French club. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are consulted regularly to ensure that the support provided for their children will help them to achieve their potential. School meetings and events are very well supported and build on the good home-school liaison which now permeates the school.

44. The Friends of Halwill School fulfils its aims by raising funds while furthering the valuable link between home, school and the community. It is an active and very hard working body and organises a wide range of fundraising and social events for parents and pupils. By raising substantial funds and working closely with governors it has provided the school with an excellent computer suite and library.

45. The quality and the quantity of information provided for parents are very good. Clear communications between home and school take place in a variety of ways including the school prospectus, governors' annual report to parents, home school agreements, newsletters and detailed and informative end-of-year reports. All prospective parents receive good information about class routines and how to prepare their child for school. Each year group has a termly curriculum letter on work to be covered, resources needed and an invitation to come into school and help. Prior to the changes in meetings and information, parents' views were surveyed and action taken according to the response. All parents are invited to attend the monthly parent clinics rather than a single parents' evening; parents are still welcome to see either their class-teacher or head teacher at any time. As a result of this good communication, parents are able to give good support to their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. At the last inspection, leadership and management were unsatisfactory. This serious weakness underpinned all the other weaknesses that were identified. Leadership and management are now very good. This excellent improvement underpins all the other many improvements that have been made to the quality of the school's provision over the past two years.

47. The key feature in the successful transformation of the school is the clear sense of educational direction brought by the new headteacher and the effectiveness with which he has communicated his vision to the staff, governors, parents and wider community. Everyone associated with the school now works together towards a common purpose. Whereas previously they had been ill informed and dispirited, they are now well informed and highly motivated. Staff, governors and parents have all communicated to the inspection team their appreciation of these changes and their determination to pull together to continue improving the school for the benefit of the pupils. The school's aims, which were not reflected in the school's work at the last inspection, are now clearly at the forefront of everything it does and are driving standards upwards by continually improving the quality of teaching and learning.

48. Delegation within the school is now effective. The headteacher has made sensible decisions about the amount of responsibility each member of staff should be expected to accept and is very active in ensuring that they have the support and advice they need to do so effectively. Very good support has been provided for the recently appointed newly qualified teacher in the reception class so that she has quickly been able to feel a full part of the school team. Teachers and teaching assistants who have been on the staff for some time have been empowered to do their jobs more effectively because of the support they receive and the team spirit that has been engendered. This was evident to the team during the inspection. The headteacher has brought in experience and advice from other schools which has made the teachers feel less isolated, given them new perspectives and made teaching and learning more effective.

49. Nearly all of the governors who were in post at the past inspection have stayed on to ensure that the serious weaknesses that were identified were tackled. They deserve great credit for the way they have stuck to their task and supported the school during this very difficult period. They now have a much clearer idea than they had then of the way the school works and what needs to be done to improve it. They have made very good use indeed of this information to prepare and pursue an action plan designed to put the school on a par with the best in the area and in the country. A central part of this plan is the quest to provide a new school building on a different site. Following the criticisms levelled at the accommodation the school provided at the last inspection, they commissioned a feasibility study to compare the costs of bringing the current site up to standard with a the cost of a new build. This enabled

them to pursue the latter course confident in the knowledge that the former would not provide value for money. The school now gives good value for money, compared to unsatisfactory at the last inspection, because the governors are much better informed and organised and have a much more productive partnership with the headteacher. This in turn makes their partnership with the local education authority more effective in improving the quality of education that school offers.

50. Financial management is very good. The budget is very closely tied in with the agreed priorities set out in the school improvement plan, which have clear success criteria and are based on realistic assessments of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what is possible to achieve. For example, money has been spent on improvements to the building that have had an immediate impact on the quality of provision, from the computer suite to staff facilities and an outdoor learning area for the reception children. The governors are aware of the need to measure the impact of such initiatives on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved and take measures to do so, including visits to school to see for themselves the benefits that have been brought. The vastly improved spirit within the school community has meant that volunteer help from parents, governors and others has contributed significantly to many of these projects, boosting the value that the school is adding to the pupils' education. The governors apply principles of best value well to all their spending. They compare the school's performance with other schools, consult parents, staff and pupils about what they would like to see improved, ensure that they are seeking the highest possible standards and put contracts out to competitive tender. Unlike at the last inspection, all grants that the school receives, such as money to support pupils with special educational needs, are spent entirely on the designated purpose, with an evidence trail to show how this has been done. The school administrative officer is very efficient, providing the headteacher and governors with the information they need to keep the school's affairs running smoothly. Good use is now made of ICT in this aspect of the school's work as in the classroom, which is another significant improvement since the last inspection.

51. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving the performance of the staff and for the induction of new staff, and its suitability for training new teachers were all unsatisfactory at the last inspection and are now good or very good. The governors set targets for the headteacher and procedures are in place to ensure that all staff are fully supported in their current posts and have optimum opportunities for professional development. Teaching assistants say that they greatly appreciate the way the headteacher has ensured that they are equal partners in this process. The staff are deployed much more effectively than they were, reducing the age and ability spread that each teacher has to deal with, though these are still unavoidably wide in such a small school. Flexible arrangements allow optimum use to be made of expertise within the staff, for example in ICT, and very good quality expertise is bought in to provide some excellent learning experiences for the pupils in music and dance. Teaching assistants are very effectively deployed and work very closely with the teachers, both as general classroom support and to provide individual guidance for pupils with special educational needs. This helps the school to fulfil its aim to be fully inclusive, as pupils with severe behavioural needs are helped to manage their anger and frustration without this leading to exclusion from lessons or from the school.

52. The staff now make such effective use of the existing accommodation that the impact on standards of shortcomings has been minimised except in physical education, where the lack of a suitable hall limits the progress older pupils can make in gymnastics and indoor games. These efforts take their toll, however, and staff are eagerly anticipating the envisaged move to new premises. Resources have been greatly improved in the areas highlighted as weaknesses last time, particularly ICT, the library and outdoor learning facilities for reception children. Current needs have been identified and plans put in hand to bring resources up to standard in all areas over a manageable time scale.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to maintain the very positive momentum of improvement that has been established since the last inspection and continue to raise standards throughout the school the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Continue strengthening provision for children in the Reception class so that they can make equally good progress in all the areas of learning in both the indoor and outdoor environment.
(Paragraphs: 1, 20, 23, 50 – 62)
- (2) Take steps to improve facilities for physical education so that standards in gymnastics can be raised.
(Paragraphs: 6, 48, 103)
- (3) Over a reasonable time-frame, adopt manageable systems to track pupils' progress in the key skills in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education.
(Paragraphs: 23, 25, 30, 37, 85, 92, 94, 99, 102)

In addition to the above key issues, the governors should consider including their following areas for further development in their action plan:

- Ensuring full coverage of all the programmes of learning in the National Curriculum in art and design, geography, history, ICT and music.
(Paragraphs: 25, 85, 92, 94, 99, 102)
- Extending opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative and take responsibility for their own learning.
(Paragraphs: 14, 19, 30)
- Strengthening provision for gifted and talented pupils.
(Paragraph: 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	9	6	7	0	0	0
Percentage	8	38	25	29	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y R– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.4
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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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	10	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not published

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	5	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	12	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (82)	86 (45)	83 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	N/A (73)	N/A (75)	N/A (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Where the number of boys or girls in the year group are ten or fewer the individual results are not published

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	64	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	12	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	233 013
Total expenditure	234 409
Expenditure per pupil	3 084
Balance brought forward from previous year	(7 270)
Balance carried forward to next year	(8 666)

Figures in parentheses indicate negative values

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
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	76
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	45	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	50	10	5	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	45	10	5	0
The teaching is good.	59	36	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	18	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	14	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	77	18	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	64	32	0	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	64	18	5	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	27	0	5	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	14	5	0

Other issues raised by parents

The parents at the meeting wanted it put on record how much they appreciated the hard work all the staff had put in to bring about the improvements that have been made since the last inspection.

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

54. Unsatisfactory provision for these children was a key issue at the last inspection. The accommodation was very poor, the resources were poor and teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. The improvements that have been made since then have brought the accommodation, quality and quantity of resources, and quality of teaching and learning up to a satisfactory level. The staff now make satisfactory use of the available resources, but still do not make best use of the room and the outdoor area as a reception learning environment, for example by the inclusion of more centres of interest in which the children can choose to play.

55. Most of the children have attended a local play group before they start reception in the term during which their fifth birthday falls. The school has good links with the playgroup, which help to ensure a smooth transition into school for the children. The transition into school is further enhanced by part time placements of two afternoons a week during the half term before the children start full time in reception. The playgroup passes the children's records on to the reception teacher, making it possible for activities to be planned that continue the children's development at the right level. These records use the Guidance contained in the government's recently introduced curriculum for the Reception class to track the pupils' progress in all the six areas of learning below. They show that the children have a broad spread of attainment, but are below average overall when they come in to the reception class. In particular, some children have poor language and communication skills and are socially and emotionally immature for their age. Two of the children have special educational needs. These pupils have very poor concentration, and this impedes their progress in all the areas of learning. They receive good support, however, and learn as well as the other children relative to their prior attainment.

56. The oldest and more able reception children are given the option of working with the Year 1 and 2 pupils when the teacher judges that they have attained most of the expected standards towards which the guidance is directed. This ensures that these children are not held back by having to take part in activities that do not really interest or challenge them. As a result, they make good progress and are well prepared for the National Curriculum in Year 1. Children of below average and average ability make satisfactory progress. The recently appointed, newly qualified teacher, inherited a very unsatisfactory learning environment for this mixed age group. She has received support from the Local Education Authority to plan a curriculum and organise the classroom and resources to cater for Reception class children and Years 1 and 2 pupils at the same time. This task has not yet been fully accomplished, and as a result, some of the children are not as well prepared as they could be for Year 1 work, especially in their work habits. Daily planning includes clear references to relevant learning objectives for the reception children, and in some lessons, the activities provided enable the children to make good progress towards them. At other times, however, the youngest children are included for too long in direct teaching sessions that are not relevant to them. They then become restless, lose interest and make insufficient progress. This reflects a continuing need for training and support for both the teacher and classroom assistant in how best to provide for these children throughout the day.

57. The outside learning area was deemed unsatisfactory at the last inspection. With help from parents and governors, the school has enhanced outside learning opportunities through the construction of a canopy outside the classroom to keep off the worst of the weather. Good use was being made of this area during some lessons during the inspection, but it is not yet fully exploited as a learning resource.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. Children begin their reception year with below average personal and social development overall. They make satisfactory progress and achieve many of the expected standards before they begin Year 1. For example, they show an interest in new activities, make good relationships with their friends and with the staff, and begin to understand what is right and what is wrong and why. They are largely independent when changing for physical education, although some children, mostly boys, still need help with this. The main area for improvement is in the children's independence and concentration when they are working. This is good in some occasions, especially when the activity they are engaged in allows them to use and develop their own ideas. For example, a group of boys decided to make a pirate ship from large wooden construction blocks. They worked with concentration and enjoyment, sometimes talking to each other about their ideas. One socially advanced child suggested working together, saying: 'Lets make a bridge to join your bit to my bit' while the least mature boy worked mostly on his own and refused to share. The teacher observed the activity closely, guiding the children to pool and develop their ideas and encouraging the socially immature child to take some notice of what others were doing. As a result, all the children made some progress. On some occasions, the children make unsatisfactory progress in this aspect of their development because the activities are not matched to their needs. For example, after a lengthy introduction, some reception children were asked to weigh an object using apples. The children had been tired by the introduction and had not grasped the purpose of the exercise, so that when they were left to their own devices, they 'played about' in a haphazard way with the apples and equipment, making little headway with either their mathematical understanding or their attitudes to learning.

59. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory overall. The teacher and teaching assistant provide a safe environment in which the children feel secure and valued, and in which they can develop good relationships with each other and learn in a relaxed atmosphere. Parents comment on how happy they are in this class and how much they like their teacher. The organisation of the classroom has been greatly improved, but from a very low base. There are some good areas in which the children can choose to 'play' in ways that develop positive attitudes to learning. For example, many pupils chose to play in the writing area, and while doing so made good gains in their understanding of the purpose of text and illustrations as they made 'pirate' booklets. The main area for improvement is in extending and improving this aspect of provision so that the children spend more time on such chosen 'play' activities that enable them to become effective and independent learners.

Communication, language and literacy

60. The children begin reception with below average attainment overall. Although some are good communicators, others have very little vocabulary and very immature speech. Overall, the children are still below average in this area of learning by the time they begin Year 1. The more able children make good progress because of their confidence and their ability to get the most out of discussions, lessons and activities. They listen carefully to explanations and instructions, relate what they hear to their own experiences and express their own developing thoughts and ideas to their friends and to adults working with them. Children with average and below average starting points make satisfactory progress overall, but do not learn as quickly as they could on occasions because they lack skilled support from adults to develop their ideas through talking about what they are doing. For example, insufficient use is made of role-play or puppets to encourage direct communication. The pupils make satisfactory progress in developing an interest in books and in learning the initial skills that will help them to become effective readers. This is because they are included in story-telling and reading sessions, and given good opportunities to share and talk about the books that

interested them. They also make sound gains in their ability to write through play opportunities in the writing area when they 'draw' their stories and ideas and begin to write them down. Systematic teaching of the sounds that letters make helps them to make realistic attempts at writing simple words. The more able children write in full sentences, with most simple words spelled more or less correctly, and achieve the relevant expected standards before the end of the reception year.

61. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is satisfactory overall. It is good in some aspects of reading and writing skills, but not so effective in speaking and listening skills. More training and support is needed to ensure that the staff make best use of opportunities to discuss with children what they are doing as they work to develop their spoken language.

Mathematical development

62. The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning but many do not achieve all the relevant expected standards before the end of reception. The more able children count to 50, put numbers in the correct order and understand basic addition and subtraction. They use mathematical ideas to help them in other aspects of their learning. For example, a boy who was building a pirate ship wanted to make a ladder out of paper sticks, and measured it against his model before cutting it to make sure it was the correct length. A considerable number of the children are nowhere near this level of competence, however; they do not recognise and follow simple patterns in shape and colour and have only a limited understanding of numbers up to 20.

63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in this area of learning, though weak in some aspects. The activities provided do not consistently help the children to develop good learning skills. The most able children make satisfactory progress because they have the confidence and maturity to make the most of the opportunities that are provided. The average and lower-attaining children do not make enough progress in some lessons because the expectations placed on them are too ambitious. The planning of lessons includes learning objectives for reception children, but the children are then expected to join in whole class teaching that does not relate to these objectives. For example, the children sat through a lesson in which the weights of three objects were being compared before having properly understood the ideas of heavier and lighter. However, in the key area of numeracy, the teacher provides a sufficiently wide range of opportunities for the children to learn and use numbers in enjoyable contexts, such as nursery rhymes and counting games for them to begin Year 1 with reasonable confidence despite their below average attainment. In shape and measure, some good activities are provided that enable the pupils to explore and understand shape through creative activities such as cutting and sticking shapes to make flowers and printing shape pictures. More help is needed, however, to enable staff to make the most of these opportunities through bringing out key mathematical features in what the children are doing.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children begin reception with below average attainment in this area of learning. They make sound progress overall, but most have still not achieved the expected standard when they start Year 1. They have a sound awareness of their immediate environment because the teacher helps them to explore it through various walks and visits. They talk about what they like and what they don't like about their surroundings. The more able children make comparisons between their own environment and others that they learn about through stories, such as a Scottish island. They bring aspects of their own lives into conversations in a mature way. For example, a more able girl, while discussing the flower she had made by

arranging cut out shapes, explained that she had flowers like this in her garden at home. They have a reasonable grasp of how things change with the passage of time through discussions about their families and through observing things that change in the classroom, for example when they grow cress seeds. Their knowledge of basic science ideas, such as plants needing to be watered in order to grow, is also sound. The children have expected levels of skills in designing and making things, such as pirate ships. This is one of the stronger aspects of their development. They have a clear idea in their minds of what they want to make, select the materials and tools they need from the range provided by the teacher, and work with good concentration to finish their models, using tools and glue sticks confidently and competently. Their competence with computers is beginning to develop through their use of the new suite, but is still a little below average. For example, they do not understand some of the very basic vocabulary, such as 'click on the mouse'. The legal requirements to teach religious education are met. Learning is effectively promoted through discussions, for example on the theme of 'being special', though the use of questions to stimulate and extend the children's thinking is limited. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with strengths in helping the children to develop designing and making skills and areas for development in improving their understanding of time and place through conversations while they work.

Physical development

65. The children have expected levels of skill in this area of development when they enter reception. Sound progress enables them to maintain these standards until they begin Year 1. They handle tools and equipment in the classroom, such as paintbrushes and pencils with a level of confidence and skill expected for their age. Left-handed scissors are available for those children who need them. The children show reasonable control of their movements during play, and an awareness of the people and objects around them. During the physical education lesson seen, some of the children showed exceptional hand-eye co-ordination when catching, throwing and kicking balls and bean bags. The children enjoy physical activities. They work hard, concentrate on the tasks they are doing and persevere when trying to learn a new skill. The teacher's calm, relaxed demeanour encourages them to try things out and not to worry if they don't do it right first time. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in this area of development. The teacher provides a sufficiently broad range of opportunities for the pupils to engage in physical activities indoor and out. The provision of a covered outdoor learning area has made a good contribution to this improvement, although it is still not ideal, being fairly exposed to the wind. Resources have also been improved to include some larger toys and equipment for the children to handle and play on in order to develop their co-ordination, balance and strength.

Creative development

66. Standards in this area of learning have improved since the last inspection, when they were below expectations. Children now reach the expected standards because they are provided with sufficient opportunities to engage in creative activities. They make good progress when the reception children are taught separately. During these sessions, they receive good support from the teacher and teaching assistant to try out their ideas, for example in designing flowers using shapes and making pirate hats. The more able children produce thoughtful designs and pictures. For example, one girl made a flower consisting of eight diamond shapes arranged symmetrically round the centre. Less skilled pupils are encouraged to experiment with colour and shapes to create patterns. Their pictures are of a lower standard, but they make sound progress because the staff give them guidance on how to improve their pictures as they work. Parents comment on the attractiveness of the displays of the children's work and on how their children enjoy these activities. By the time

they start Year 1, the children are well placed to take advantage of National Curriculum learning opportunities because of these positive experiences.

ENGLISH

67. Standards in English at the end of Year 2 have risen significantly since the time of the last inspection. Pupils' overall attainment is now at least in line with national expectations for the age group with a significant minority achieving above this level and very few pupils falling below in any of the three main aspects of the subject. The trend in the school's test results at the end of Year 6 is similar to the national trend. Currently, the great majority of pupils are attaining in line with national expectations for their age, with a few above and a small minority attaining below average expectations. This represents good achievement. On average, the performance of boys has been slightly better than that of girls over recent years, but there is no evidence of any difference of achievement by gender amongst current pupils. Records also indicate that though the school's standards in English have fallen below those of similar schools within recent years, they are now clearly above them by the end of Year 2 and in line with them at the end of Year 6. It has to be remembered, however, that these older pupils were attaining below national expectations in their earlier years and have been achieving well since.

68. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' performance in national tests and thoroughly scrutinises its results to identify areas that require further attention. Pupils who are on the borderline of success participate in 'booster' classes taken by the head teacher. The quality of teaching in the subject is good overall and often very good. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective extra support as they work towards their individual targets. Currently, all pupils speak English as their first language.

69. The majority of children enter the reception class with limited speaking and listening skills, some not achieving the expected standards before they move into Year 1. By the end of Year 2, however, most are showing an appropriate level of skill in both these aspects of communication. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils who are attentive in lessons and soon become confident enough to answer if not to ask questions in whole class groups. In smaller groupings they converse easily with each other. They listen carefully when given instructions and gradually increase their vocabulary. They improve their sentence structure in more formal conversations with teachers and visitors, eventually showing awareness of the need to match their speaking style to different situations and appreciating the need to listen carefully if they are to provide relevant answers. Pupils in Year 2 are much helped by the example of the older pupils in the mixed age class, learning from them how to take turns in speaking so as to pursue a simple conversation. While teaching encourages pupils to share their ideas, opportunities for role play or drama are limited, though there is good evidence of vocabulary development.

70. By Year 4, pupils are becoming fluent in conversations in a variety of contexts, some managing to convey subtle ideas in discussion about famous paintings, for instance. They listen intently and learn to put a contrary point of view in a socially acceptable manner. By the end of Year 6 pupils participate effectively in informal discussions about complex matters such as their responses to different religions and issues of prejudice. They develop arguments in favour of different positions on environmental issues, for instance, as they prepare to participate in debate. The new school council is providing further opportunities for refining these skills.

71. Achievement in reading is an established strength in the school, with at least half the pupils reading at an above average level by the end of Year 2. Few are unable to reach an acceptable level of competence for their age. Given the low level literacy skills they have on entry to the school, this is indicative of the good application to learning which they eventually develop, of the good quality teaching they receive and the committed support of many parents. Teachers provide systematic teaching of letter sounds and the irregular, everyday words which pupils learn to recognise on sight. Shared reading of big, illustrated books provides a good introduction to the pleasures of reading and stimulating topics such as pirates are used to introduce pupils in Year 1 to the use of the recently improved school library which is in the process of further development, under the guidance of a volunteer librarian. By the end of Year 2, most pupils the more advanced pupils have adapted to silent reading. When reading aloud, they are fluent and use appropriate expression. They read with understanding and recall incidents and characters in the storyline. These pupils use their knowledge of letter sounds where necessary, but can also guess what a word might be by reference to its context. Less advanced readers approach this level of competence, choosing their own reading books from an appropriately graded set. The few readers who are working towards the appropriate level of competency for their age show good progress in word recognition and the effective use of letter sounds to help them to decode the text. They can give a reasonably coherent account of the story line. By the end of Year 2, pupils have begun to develop basic book research skills, showing familiarity with the use of a contents list and index, the latter of which the majority recognise as being in alphabetical order.

72. By the end of Year 6, pupils are taking responsibility for their own reading choices and most are reading at an above average level. A significant proportion have their own stocks of books at home and a few belong to libraries. Currently, they are refining their book research skills in the reorganised school library. They are also using their reading skills effectively to gather information from the internet. These skills are significantly enhancing their work across other subjects in the curriculum. When reading story books, the majority read with fluency and are able to interpret new words using a range of de-coding strategies developed over the years. When baffled, they make effective use of dictionaries. Most pupils can give a satisfactory, if not good synopsis of the story line in reading books. The higher level readers especially, are alert to atmosphere and underlying messages in what they read. A short, informal session on verses from "The Highwayman" poem showed that pupils recognise rhythm and rhyme in poems and style their reading accordingly. Some were quick to spot well chosen adjectives and turns of phrase. Most find pleasure in reading poetry and echo its inspirational nature in their own poems - a consequence of a skilled and significant emphasis on this in literacy lessons.

73. Writing has been recognised by the school as a relative weakness, and taken action to remedy it. The substantial quantity of written work of all kinds that pupils have produced shows that considerable progress has been made. It is clear, also, that pupils take a pride in their work. Their presentation and handwriting are of good quality, especially in Years 3 to 6, though it takes time to develop to an acceptable level in Years 1 and 2 as pupils move from the writing of individual letters on to joined writing. Teachers' marking is thorough and encouraging. Pupils' follow up teachers' remarks, especially those connected with vocabulary, spelling, paragraphs and punctuation.

74. Termly tests in Years 2 to 6 indicate that pupils are making good progress over the years. Teachers' planning for literacy lessons is meticulous and provides appropriately challenging and interesting learning activities for pupils at differing stages of development. Lesson objectives are clearly set out and the timing of lessons is good. Teachers emphasise the importance of independent learning activities for which they provide clear direction in the initial stages of lessons. Examples include a well-focused introduction to the school library for Year 1 pupils who proceeded to find information on pirates, the comprehension of a text on

cares for the environment for younger Years 3 to 6 pupils and preparations for a debate on a planning issue for older ones - part of a focus on persuasive speaking and writing. There is a substantial emphasis on the teaching of the required aspects of grammar and on the techniques used by poets to enhance the impact of their work. Pupils' responses to these learning opportunities are very positive. They concentrate in lessons, do not waste time and achieve creditable results, especially in poetry and story writing. Class poetry anthologies show colourful and imaginative responses to the opportunities provided.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with many examples of very good teaching. Developments in English are led by a highly committed teacher who has good expertise and is well supported by colleagues and the headteacher. Literacy skills are widely used across the curriculum and in-service training is provided for staff as needed.

MATHEMATICS

76. Pupils achieve well in mathematics to reach the standards they are capable of at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Overall, standards are above average.

77. In 2002, the results of the national tests at the end of Year 2 were very high compared to the national average and well above those of similar schools because a high proportion of pupils gained the higher Level 3. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when standards were below average at this stage. The provisional results of this year's tests show a dip again to broadly average results, with many fewer pupils expected to gain Level 3. This is because this cohort is not as able in mathematics as the previous Year 2. Over time, standards are above average at this stage.

78. The school's test results at the end of Year 6 were above average at the last inspection. They dipped to below average in 2001, but improved again in 2002 to above average, with a good proportion of pupils reaching the above average Level 5. This year, the school's assessment is that the results will be more in line with the national average because fewer pupils are predicted to reach both Level 4 and Level 5. This is because a number of pupils with lower levels of attainment joined this cohort from other schools. The school's records show that those pupils who remain at the school from Year 3 to Year 6 make good progress and achieve well in the tests. Over time, standards are above average at this stage.

79. The inspection found that standards are below average overall at the beginning of Year 1. Good teaching, with some very effective teaching during Year 2, enables the pupils to make good progress and achieve well by the end of the key stage. They become confident mathematicians who are able to apply their developing knowledge and skills to solve a range of practical problems at their own level. They make very good progress in numeracy, learning their times tables and becoming increasingly confident when adding, subtracting and multiplying numbers together. The more able pupils have a good understanding of how larger numbers can be broken down into smaller, manageable parts in order to multiply them by a smaller number. Average attaining pupils find this difficult. The pupils have a good knowledge of wider aspects of mathematics. They know the names and properties of common shapes and use some of the metric units such as metres and kilograms to measure length and weight. During the inspection, they made good progress in learning how to make information easier to understand using diagrams and graphs. For example, they wrote all the possible pizza fillings into a Carroll diagram to show all the possible combinations. Their discussion of these diagrams illustrates a good understanding of this concept for their age.

80. Pupils make good progress overall during Years 3 to 6 and very good progress in numeracy to achieve well by the end of Year 6. Standards in the current Year 6 are in line with expectations, with most pupils working at the average Level 4, but only few at Level 5.

They use fractions, decimals and percentages confidently to solve problems and have good basic skills in multiplying and dividing using traditional formal methods as well as being able to discuss alternative ways of working out the answers. They use metric units to measure length, weight and volume and measure angles to the nearest degree using protractors. They have a good understanding of the angular properties of shapes and use a wide range of correct mathematical vocabulary. The more able pupils use simple algebra to solve problems involving two unknown quantities. One or two examples of individual investigations were seen, but the pupils are not very confident in applying their existing knowledge and skill to new problems. This is an area the school recognises needs developing and arrangements are already in hand to provide more such challenges.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Planning for the mixed age classes is more effective and there is better team work between teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching is consistently good or better in Years 2 to 6, with some very good teaching. The teachers have a good knowledge of mathematics and of the National Numeracy Strategy. They keep very good records of the pupils' progress so that they can plan lessons that offer challenge and support for pupils in each age and ability group within each class. Within this framework, they encourage the pupils to strive towards the highest possible standards. For example, in a very effective lesson for Years 2 to 4, the teacher aimed times tables questions at each year group in the introduction, but encouraged the younger pupils to have a go at the older pupils' questions. The pupils respond enthusiastically to such challenges, making great efforts to get the right answer. They are not afraid to make mistakes because they know they can learn from them. Pupils work hard throughout the year in response to the teachers' high expectations. The work in their books is neatly presented and covers all aspects of the National Curriculum in mathematics, with due emphasis on numeracy. The teachers' marking is encouraging, giving praise for effort, speed and accuracy. An area for development is the use of marking to suggest extra challenges for some of the pupils, especially the more able, when they are getting most things right first time. The teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and manage them very well, minimising the amount of time that has to be spent on discipline and ensuring a positive attitude to work.

82. The subject is well led and managed. The coordinator has established a very positive approach to learning, with a focus on the basic skills of numeracy, especially written forms of multiplying and dividing. This ensures that the pupils are very confident when handling bigger numbers and decimals, and prepares them well for their secondary education. The teachers make good use of the school's adopted scheme of work, dipping into books from different year groups to ensure that the pupils get the right level of challenge. Special provision is now being made for the most able pupils, including separate lessons in which they are given more demanding work. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for with individual learning targets and good support in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants, who are fully aware of their needs. The pupils use some mathematical computer programmes, but this aspect of their work is at the early stages of development as the school has only recently taken delivery of various relevant software packages. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in other subjects, such as when constructing graphs to illustrate science results.

SCIENCE

83. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved since the last inspection from below average to average overall. In experimental science, the pupils have above average skills. This reflects the impact of the more effective leadership and management and tracking of skills that have been established since the last inspection. Above average standards have been maintained at the end of Year 6. Pupils have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the science they have studied because their learning is rooted in rigorous experimentation and investigation. A striking feature of the Year 6 test results in 2002 was the high proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. This year, because the composition of the year group is so different, fewer pupils are expected to reach this level, but most are on course to achieve the average Level 4. They have above average experimental skills, however, which is of vital importance for further learning. Overall, pupils' achievements in science are good.

84. Pupils have a good basic understanding of living things by the end of Year 2. They can describe what conditions plants need to thrive, for example, and can name the different parts of a flower. They understand that physical forces can either push or pull an object and describe a simple electrical circuit. They find information out independently from a variety of sources, including computers, and present the information in an interesting variety of ways including diagrams and drawings. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a very good range of knowledge across the subject and have a very good understanding of the method of scientific enquiry. They know that when conducting an experiment, all the factors must be kept the same except the one they have decided to investigate. They realise the importance of having a control sample in some experiments so that they can observe the effects of what they have changed. The pupils have a good understanding of the basic functions of the different organs of the human body, such as the heart as a pump, and describe clearly the functions of different parts of a flower. They describe the effects of forces such as gravity, know the properties of liquids, solids and gases and say why some changes, such as melting are reversible while others such as combustion are not. More able pupils give much more detailed explanations than other pupils, for example of the difference between veins and arteries, using good scientific vocabulary. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress because they work in groups with more able pupils and learn from them as well as being supported by the teachers and teaching assistants.

85. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with some excellent features. This is a big improvement since the last inspection, when it was unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The main strength in the teaching is the emphasis given to learning through experimentation and investigation. The pupils make such good progress because this aspect of science is so well taught, especially in the upper juniors. The co-ordinator is beginning to establish an effective influence throughout Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6, however. All teachers now keep track of the pupils' progress in this aspect of science and plan lessons to develop their skills. The pupils respond very positively. They enjoy doing the experiments and make every effort to present their results clearly. Teachers expect more from the pupils by way of explanation as they get older; this develops the pupils' scientific vocabulary well and encourages them to ask why things happen as they do. Classrooms contain good displays that reflect the pupils' successes and point the way to further investigations. This encourages the more able pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding and helps to explain the particularly good test results in science compared to English and mathematics in recent years.

86. The subject is used well to help pupils use and improve their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Teachers expect them to discuss their ideas with each other, read for information and write in an appropriate style when making notes or explaining their results. The pupils are encouraged to use and improve their mathematics skills, when taking and recording measurements, for example, and when presenting results in graph form. ICT is beginning to be used well to support the pupils' learning. For example, during the inspection, Year 5 and 6 pupils used an electron-microscope to examine more closely the structure of the different parts of plants. The difficulties with accommodation and mixed year groups described in the last inspection report have been largely overcome through more effective planning, better use of the available space and more effective teamwork with classroom assistants.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Pupils achieve well in this subject, with the majority exceeding national expectations for their age by the end of both key stages, though the attainment of most pupils in Year 1 is satisfactory. They become confident in using computer derived pictures to enhance their written work and produce acceptable collages of sea-side scenes embellished with cotton wool clouds and sea-shell enhanced beaches, for example. However, their progress in basic elements of art such as colour mixing is limited by a lack of systematic progression in planning for art and design and modest expectations of these younger pupils. By the end of Year 2, in a mixed age class, Year 2 pupils have caught up. This is in response to good quality teaching which introduces pupils to the magic of art and design and matches challenges to the potential of the pupils. The older pupils, who have developed an enthusiasm for the subject, demonstrate what can be achieved and this has a very positive influence on the younger ones. They listen in to the teacher's lesson introductions and begin to recognise the differing ways in which artists use line, shape and colour to create a variety of effects. They learn how to print on fabric, arranging the various features with care to produce a colourful, floral drape, for example. This work was linked to study of 'The Secret Garden' in literacy lessons. Year 2 pupils also use the computer to paint simple pictures based on sketches most have prepared as homework.

88. Pupils' good progress continues into Years 3 to 6 as those in Years 3 and 4 take inspiration from painters such as Van Gogh, Monet and Seurat, learning to produce their colourful, impressionistic effects, using pastels and paint or on the computer. In this latter case, pupils managed to produce the pointillist style which was pioneered by Seurat. Teachers communicate their own enthusiasm for art and design to the pupils who respond with thoughtful observations. In their own work, pupils have made an immense effort to use pastels to capture the atmosphere of the various impressionists. A few are very successful, but teachers acknowledge that more emphasis on direct teaching of skills in the use of pastels and other media is needed to enable pupils to develop their creativity more effectively. For example, Year 4 drawings of famous Tudor figures showed good observational skills, capturing the personalities of King Henry and his several wives in most cases, though pupils were not able to make effective use of various grades of pencil to achieve three dimensional effects. Teachers take opportunities to re-enforce mathematical concepts as they arise, for example by emphasising the attractive symmetry of the pupils' collages.

89. By Year 6, pupils are achieving well as they learn to appreciate and replicate the styles of abstract expressionists such as Kandinsky and Pollock. In the lesson observed, an initial exercise showed pupils' skill in evoking the moods of sadness, happiness and anger by sensitive use of colour, line and shape. They went on to apply these skills in paintings of their own. Three dimensional work is insufficiently represented in the work of all pupils but opportunities are taken to make models of various kinds to support learning in other subjects such as history and religious education, which introduces multicultural elements. Pupils also

visit firms manufacturing items made of glass and clay. The latter provided opportunities for pupils to engage in practical work.

90. Provision for art and design is producing good results, resulting largely from the good quality, well informed teaching and learning, especially the very good use of the work of famous artists as a source of inspiration. However, there remain several areas that are underdeveloped. These are systematic planning based on the key elements and media in art and design, increased emphasis on the direct teaching of basic skills, more opportunities for three dimensional work and the development of a simple, but effective, system for the assessment of individual pupils' progress. A whole school exercise in still life drawing using pastels produced a very useful picture of progress over the years in this aspect of art and design, but was less effective in measuring the achievement of individual pupils. Art and design in the school contributes significantly to the spiritual and cultural development of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties who are well supported by teachers' assistants and achieve well as a result.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. Standards have been maintained at the same level as the last inspection and are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, representing satisfactory achievement.

92. By the end of Year 2, pupils draw and label simple designs to show how they will make a product. They use a range of tools such as scissors confidently and select materials to suit their purpose. They take pride in the finished product and say what they think is good about it and what could be improved. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have successfully designed and made a range of products after thinking through at some length the requirements of the end user. They use a range of materials, including wood and plastic, which they cut and shape with appropriate tools. Their designs are detailed, with specifications given for materials and fixing and joining methods. They make small scale prototypes before embarking on full-scale models of large items such as chairs, and sometimes modify their designs in the light of things they discover while making the prototype, reflecting a good understanding of the design process. The quality of the finished products on display in the school is good, and has been considerably enhanced in some cases by help at home with the provision of tools and materials.

93. Only one lesson was observed, but a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work suggests that teaching and learning are at least satisfactory with many good features. Teachers plan lessons to cover the topics suggested in government guidelines for each year groups, with a sound focus on the key skills of designing and making. They display the pupils' work to good effect and insist on pupils evaluating the effectiveness of their designs. The lesson that was seen in Year 5 reflected very careful planning and preparation of resources, and all the pupils were kept working so that they all completed the set task. This was to decide on which of a number of samples of bread they preferred, according to criteria they had decided on beforehand. The range of learning styles was limited in this lesson, however, as all the pupils were kept working at the same pace under the teacher's direction. This precluded individual pupils from fully exploiting the learning opportunities that arise through discussions and decision-making in groups. For example, a decision needed to be made on what should be considered as additives in bread. The teacher decided this without discussion in order to move the lesson on. As a result, the pupils were led into making assumptions that may have been misleading, for example that the white sliced bread that they were tasting did not contain additives. A good opportunity to link the lesson to the pupils' personal development through a discussion on the refinement of food and its possible impact on health was also missed here.

94. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and there are sufficient tools and materials available to enable the full National Curriculum to be covered. The teachers have a good informal knowledge of the pupils' progress, but there is no formal system in place to track and support the pupils' development of key skills.

GEOGRAPHY

95. Standards in geography are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, representing satisfactory achievement. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory at the end of Year 2.

96. Pupils in Year 2 know a range of geographical features of their locality. For example, they have undertaken a traffic survey to determine the level of traffic flow through the village. They begin this process in Year 1, with walks around the school and village, noting features they like and don't like. By the time they reach the end of Year 2, they are aware that there are places in the world, such as the rain forests and deserts, that have very different landscapes and climates, and have compared some aspects of life on a Scottish Island to their own experiences. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a sound grasp of the main physical features that define a region, such as rivers, mountains, forests and plains, and a good working knowledge of the location in the world of the continents and many countries. They also understand the physical causes of violent events such as earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis. They use maps at different scaled to suit their purpose and calculate distances on the ground from the given scales, but these skills have not been systematically developed. The pupils undertake independent research in these topics from time to time, occasionally using computers, both at school and at home. For example, a Year 2 girl had enlisted her father's aid in scanning a picture of a rain forest into the computer so that she could print it for inclusion in her topic book.

97. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but teachers' planning and conversations with pupils and samples of their work indicate that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pupils undertake a range of research and practical activities that cover the National Curriculum and develop a sound range of geography skills. They finish off tasks and present their work neatly. The teachers' marking praises their efforts and encourages neatness and correct spelling and grammar, making a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. However, there are few if any comments that identify the skills used or point the way to further learning. Teachers use opportunities in other lessons to develop the pupils' geographical skills and understanding. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 debated the pros and cons of a by-pass from the perspective of different local groups as represented in newspaper reports. There is no system for assessing skills in each year group, however, so teachers cannot be sure that pupils are achieving as well as they should. The co-coordinator recognises this. She has a clear overview of the subject and provides confident leadership. She is in the process of changing the topics that are taught to improve levels of interest, and of updating resources to accommodate this development.

HISTORY

98. Pupils achieve well in history to reach above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers provide motivating activities such as visits to local sites of historical interest to stimulate good learning. Pupils make good use of reference books, CD-ROM and the Internet to find information, but insufficient use of primary sources of evidence, such as documents and oral records. Another area for development in their skills is in the use of role play and other means that lead them to question the validity of historical facts from different perspectives.

99. Although little teaching was observed during the inspection, other evidence shows that teaching and learning are good, except for pupils in Year 1, who are taught alongside reception pupils. Here, although the teaching is satisfactory, it does not challenge the pupils to develop appropriate concepts and vocabulary, such as past and present instead of old and new, for example when comparing teddy bears. Good teaching in the rest of Years 1 and 2, however, matches expectations to individual pupils' maturity and prior attainment to ensure that they make good progress in learning about different historical periods using a variety of sources of evidence and develop a good historical vocabulary. For example, they acquire a good knowledge of the Viking invasions, settlements and way of life, including artistic achievements, and learn to write their names in Viking 'runes'. Their learning about the Tudor period is enriched through the study of genuine artefacts such as Tudor toys and a visit to a Tudor house. The teachers also make the subject more relevant and develop the pupils' literacy skills by helping them to imagine what it was like in detail for individuals living in a particular period, for example by writing an account of a day in the life of a monk at the time of the Viking invasion. The pupils' increasing maturity as young historians enables them to draw on an increasingly wide range of sources of evidence to support their learning. For example, older junior pupils use archaeological records to extend their knowledge and understanding of life in ancient Egypt. The pupils' folders, for example on life in Britain since 1945, contain an impressive amount of work that reflects a high level of commitment, sustained concentration, pride in presentation and familiarity with a wide range of sources of evidence.

100. The teachers' knowledgeable enthusiasm for history is contagious. They provide attractive and inviting displays that include pupils' previous work and aids to learning such as portraits of historical figures, time lines, references and artefacts. These enrich the pupils' knowledge of their cultural heritage as well as stimulating their interest in history. Behaviour is good because of the pupils' levels of interest, and those with particular needs are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants to make good progress. Teachers use marking well as a means of acknowledging pupils' achievements and encouraging them to greater efforts. There is no system in place, however, to measure the pupils' progress so that teachers can be sure that lessons are pitched at just the right level of challenge.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

101. The recently provided ICT suite is transforming the situation. Most pupils are achieving well in all year groups and standards meet national expectations by the end of both key stages. Until very recently, the school had very limited ICT facilities. The result reported at the time of the last inspection was below average attainment at the end of Year 6. A particular strength is the widespread application of the newly learned ICT skills across the curriculum. There is hardly a lesson in which computers are not in use and in many lessons small groups of pupils move off into the computer suite to enrich their work, under the supervision of very competent teachers' assistants. Pupils' opportunities for using ICT to strengthen their work by using it for research and higher levels of presentation are having a positive, pervasive effect across the curriculum. It is evident that pupils feel that their work is sufficiently valued to be worth its enhancement through more detailed content from the internet and the more polished presentation which comes from word processing skills and computer-based art work. Their pride in it is enhanced and their efforts to achieve higher standards reinforced.

102. The teaching of the ICT skills themselves is very good. The teacher has excellent knowledge of the subject and lesson planning leads to very effective use of the time available. Class teachers are sufficiently well informed to support the application of computer skills in their classrooms. At least one teacher assistant is available in each ICT lesson to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. Pupils in all age groups systematically enhance their word processing skills as they become skilled in mouse control, respond effectively to

on-screen prompts and become familiar with the keyboard and printing out facilities which computers offer. Computers are frequently used to support achievement in numeracy, especially in basic calculations and the production of graphs of various kinds.

103. The learning of computer skills is usually set into a motivating context. Year 1 pupils, for instance, looked forward to using the computer to re-draw pirate pictures produced in the context of a literacy unit of work. Those in Year 2 and 3 mastered the use of brush tools and colour selection to make attractive repeat patterns and to replicate flower pictures which they had prepared in advance. This particular lesson was linked to pupils' art and design lessons on the work of impressionist painters, such as Monet. It began with discussion of the key features of a selection of famous examples and was followed by a key question. "Is it possible to achieve similar effects using a computer?" In the good quality plenary sessions when the progress made by the pupils is reviewed, such questions lead to a thoughtful evaluation of the impact of computers in today's world. Pupils respond well to such challenges which are a feature of ICT lessons generally. Year 6 pupils, for instance worked on the development of spreadsheet skills made relevant to the development of a small business. In this, as in all ICT lessons, three levels of challenge were planned so that pupils at various stages of prior attainment were enabled to achieve well. The quality of learning invariably reflects the high quality of teaching in these lessons and pupils are highly motivated to succeed. Detailed records of individual progress are made and held within each pupils' portfolio of ICT work. Not every area of the curriculum is sufficiently supported by ICT as yet, however. The school does not possess the computer attached sensors to record differences in sounds and temperatures in scientific experiments. Support for the analysis and composition of music is also missing at present, though the school is committed to improving its provision in these areas.

MUSIC

104. Standards in music vary from one aspect of the subject to another. Pupils achieve well in singing, for example, to reach above national expectations, but below the expected standards in composing and performing their own musical pieces, where they receive few learning opportunities. Pupils achieve well where the appropriate opportunities are provided but their overall attainment in the subject is no more than average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The basic problem is a matter of curriculum planning. Currently, there is barely adequate coverage of National Curriculum requirements. The school relies on part-time teachers who are experts. Their contributions to the school's standards in music are at least very good and often excellent. They make every effort to link their teaching to topic work in other subjects, introducing Elizabethan music to complement pupils' history lessons on the Tudor period, for instance. They also prepare the pupils for various concerts as required. The curriculum is enriched by occasional lessons from specialist musicians. For example, each class has benefited from a recent lesson in drumming using African drums. Instrumental tuition is provided after school for the few pupils who request it, though they rarely perform in whole school situations such as assemblies. The school has a good quality choir. Good as these initiatives are, they do not add up to a systematic coverage of the listening, composing, appraisal and performing skills required by the National Curriculum.

105. Pupils respond with enthusiasm in music lessons. Year 1 pupils learning to play the school's set of African drums made every effort to follow the teacher's lead as he introduced various rhythms. Most showed growing skills, but a few pupils found it difficult to follow the beat. By Year 2, most are achieving well in the areas of pitch and dynamics as they sing together. They are alert to the lead provided by instrumental accompaniments. During Years 3 to 6, these earlier skills are enhanced and pupils sing with confidence. They sing in unison with good volume, but they are also sensitive to different rhythms, moods and dynamics. Pupils' articulate their words well. Those in Year 3 and 4 participate in an Opera

Workshop which involves both vocal exercises and movements which are subsequently used together to convey various emotions. In a music and dance lesson, the majority of pupils showed sensitivity to different styles of dance, moving effectively to the contrasting types of music. This was an inspirational music lesson which was part of a sequence of lessons with underlying multicultural objectives as, through movement, pupils captured the differences in styles of European country dancing, rock and roll from the USA, Tudor dancing, the break dancing of the ghetto with one other example, probably African to come. In each case, the teacher provides a short, but enlightening introduction to key factors in the contrasting societies which have had an influence on their dance music. Pupils of all levels of prior experience are given chances to succeed in music and pupils are often pleased to say that music is their favourite subject.

106. The quality of teaching provided by the visiting specialists is very good and gives rise to very good learning in the areas covered. However, this does not ensure good learning in all aspects of the subject. The school is aware of the limitations in its provision, but it also recognises its potential for high standards of achievement by the pupils. It has a vision for the future but knows there is some way to go, especially in relation to systematic assessment and curriculum planning to ensure progression in all the required aspects of the subject and the introduction of complementary teaching and use of music in classrooms. It is beginning to take steps to improve matters. For instance, it has just purchased a computer program to support pupils' composition skills and has recognised the value of the daily familiarisation of pupils with a range of classical music and examples from other cultures, chosen to enhance the atmosphere in daily acts of worship. Music contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, emotional, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. Standards are in line with expectations in the aspects of physical education that were observed during the inspection. The school accepts that standards in gymnastics are below expectations at the end of Year 6 because there are no facilities on site to teach it properly. The achievements of pupils at the end of Year 6 are therefore unsatisfactory in this aspect of the subject. Achievement overall is satisfactory, however, due to the progress made in dance and games.

108. The only lesson that was seen was a dance lesson involving pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. The pupils showed good skills in interpreting music through dance. They are sensitive to changes in tempo and mood, and also to the movements of their partners when they work in pairs. They refine their movements in response to comments for the teacher and their fellow pupils, and show grace and control in moments of stillness as well as in movement. Year 1 pupils were observed participating in a games lesson with reception children, during which they showed expected levels of skill in throwing accurately and catching a ball or bean bag, with one or two pupils demonstrating exceptional hand-eye co-ordination.

109. Too few lessons or activities were seen to judge the quality of teaching and learning overall. Some pupils benefit from an after-school football club run by a parent, which gives those pupils who need it the opportunity to participate in inter-school competition. The school makes use of swimming facilities in the local comprehensive school for two terms. The parents appreciate this and say that it has had a positive effect on their children. They would like to see more physical education, but understand why this is difficult to arrange. Currently, there are no systems in place to track and record the pupils' progress in each strand of the subject to help teachers plan lessons that build on existing skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. Standards have improved since the last inspection. They meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and exceed them by the end of Year 6. When they leave the school, the pupils have a wide knowledge of religious beliefs and values and the ceremonies and traditions of the major world faiths, particularly Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. This represents good achievement overall.

111. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the concepts of caring and belonging that underpin their recent studies. For example, they have discussed the meaning of friendship and reasons for giving Christmas presents and written their own thoughtful prayers thanking God for 'His Beautiful World'. The latter work chimes well with the school's focus on environmental awareness. The pupils also understand how Jesus inspired others through parables and miracles and have a basic knowledge of some Hindu beliefs and celebrations.

112. The pupils' knowledge and understanding advances at a good pace in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Year 5, for example, consider how belief affects actions when they contrast the scientific 'Big Bang' theory with the biblical 'Creation story' and the 'Dreamtime' explanation of the Australian Aborigines. The pupils' work enjoyment of this well planned unit of work is reflected in the humour used in some of their work on evolution. For example, they add speech bubbles to their drawings of early man saying: "I used to be a monkey" or "I want some clothes". Very effective teaching in Years 5 and 6 guides the pupils into genuine reflection on their own beliefs and values. For example, they compare their own temptations to those of Jesus described in the New Testament of the Bible. Their discussion of the life of Jesus and the concept of Him being the 'Light of the World' led to some very thoughtful and sophisticated extended writing about the nature of Christianity by Year 6 pupils. The pupils compare Christian concepts, beliefs and practices to those of Hindus, with details of the Hindu gods and their roles and the daily 'Puja' acts of worship in the home. This level of achievement is the product of well-informed, imaginative teaching and makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.