

INSPECTION REPORT

HERON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115749

Headteacher: Mr J Coles

Reporting inspector: Mr G D Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 31 March – 3 April 2003

Inspection number: 247588

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Heron Way Abbeydale Gloucester
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Jones
Date of previous inspection:	10 – 13 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21038	Mr G D Timms	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards. How well is the school led and managed? Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
9542	Mr B Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11419	Mrs J Underwood	Team inspector	English Religious education Music	How well are pupils taught?
30000	Mr J Tresadern	Team inspector	Science Geography History	
20645	Mrs R Webber	Team inspector	Mathematics Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
32596	Mrs G Phillips	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 430 pupils (185 girls and 245 boys) on the roll, the school is bigger than average for primary schools nationally. The school takes children in the September of the year they are five until they are eleven when they move on to local secondary schools. It serves the new estate of Abbeydale and the surrounding area. The school has a very small percentage of pupils who have English as an additional language, and while they have experience and competence in their heritage languages, their English language acquisition is strong and they are able to take a full part in classroom learning. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with that expected although each cohort has a wide range of abilities. Sixty-two pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average. Seven of these pupils have statements of special need and the main needs are moderate learning difficulties and speech and communication difficulties. A below average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Few pupils join or leave the school at times other than are usual.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a very effective education for the pupils. It successfully ensures that almost all pupils make at least very good progress and achieve high standards by the time they leave the school. The headteacher provides excellent leadership; he has a clear and fully shared vision of where he wants the school to be and he has created an atmosphere and ethos where the governing body, teachers and other staff work together for the benefit of the pupils. The quality of the teaching is very good and pupils' attitudes towards learning are excellent. Their personal development is excellent and the school is successfully producing pupils with very good learning skills who are very well prepared for secondary school. Considering all factors, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave the school. Standards are also well above those typically found at Year 6 in history, music and physical education. Standards are above those expected in geography, information and communication technology, and religious education.
- The leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher, senior staff, subject co-ordinators and governing body all work very closely and successfully to ensure a very effective education for the pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are excellent. Their behaviour is very good and excellent relationships are created throughout the school.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent, as is the contribution of the community to pupils' learning.
- The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The provision for their moral and spiritual development is very good.

What could be improved

- The work in science and the non-core subjects is not always well matched to the skills and prior attainment of all pupils.
- The marking of pupils' work does not always make clear what they have done well and how they can improve in the future.

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 November 1997. Since then it has made a very good level of improvement and is well placed to maintain, and even improve on, the present very effective education provided for pupils. The key issues from the last inspection have been fully addressed. Standards have risen and the weaknesses identified in design and technology have been remedied successfully. There are very good procedures for monitoring the quality of the teaching and these have had a positive impact on the improved standards. In addition, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully, the curriculum has been updated in line with national changes and the Foundation Stage curriculum has been introduced and resourced, with the most recent improvement being the provision of an outdoor play area. Training, resources and the teaching of information and communication technology have also improved greatly since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	B	A	B
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	B	B	A	A

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

Since the last inspection in 1997 standards have risen and are now at a consistently high level. Achievement is very good and standards should continue to rise in the future. The children in the reception classes make good progress and, by the time they begin Year 1, the majority will have achieved the expected early learning goals and many have exceeded them. The national tests for the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that standards were well above average in reading and writing, and in line with the national average in mathematics. The dip in the mathematics results in Year 2 prompted a review of the mathematics teaching and the school has put into place a range of measures to raise standards to their previous level.

The national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above average in English, mathematics and science. This was due to the high proportion who exceeded national expectations and the small proportion who did not manage to meet the expected level. These very high standards are due to the very good quality of teaching in the school, the well-planned and broad curriculum, and the excellent leadership and management. The targets were met for English and mathematics. The targets for the present year are sufficiently challenging and based appropriately on the pupils' prior attainment. The trend in standards by the end of Year 6 is an upward one in line with that found nationally.

The current standards in the school are similar to those in last year's tests. In Year 2, standards are well above those expected in geography and above those expected in reading, science, information and communication technology, history and physical education. Standards in Year 2 in writing, mathematics, art and design and design and technology are all broadly in line with those expected. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in Year 2 in music and religious education. In Year 6, current standards are well above those expected in English, mathematics, science, history, music and physical education. Standards are above those expected in information and communication technology, religious education and geography. In art and design and design and technology, standards are broadly in line with those typically expected. Standards are also very good in literacy and numeracy, and these skills are effectively developed through a range of other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. The pupils are very well motivated, interested and enthusiastic. They take a full part in the learning and other opportunities offered to them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils' behaviour is supported by the very positive ethos. They are happy to accept praise and they respond to the system of rewards and sanctions well.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils are mature and show a very good level of initiative when required. They respond to responsibility very effectively.
Attendance	Excellent. The attendance figures are well above average.

Pupils are pleasant, polite and hard working. They show a real pride in their work and their school. The systems for enabling older pupils to help younger ones, alongside the work of the school council, are very successful in developing their maturity and awareness of the needs of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very 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 in English and mathematics is very good throughout the school. Numeracy and literacy skills, including phonics and other basic skills, are well taught and used effectively in other subjects. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and those with the potential to be higher attaining are well taught, largely with sufficiently challenging tasks provided. Planning is effective. In English and mathematics, the teachers have very high expectations of their pupils, use effective methods, and manage the pupils well. Because of these, the pupils respond well to the teaching and learn quickly. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good and the teachers manage the pupils well. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is good in the core subjects of English and mathematics. In these subjects, pupils have a clear awareness of their own learning and a strong desire to achieve their targets. Resources, time and learning support workers are used efficiently and effectively. However, the marking in science and some of the non-core subjects is insufficiently consistent to ensure that it is evaluative and constructive throughout, thus helping pupils to improve. In addition, the good practice of matching work to pupils' needs, as seen in English and mathematics, is less evident in the non-core subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The planning ensures a very good, broad and balanced curriculum that is suitable for all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. All groups of pupils in the school have full access to all the learning opportunities the school provides. Pupils with severe learning difficulties are well supported by both teachers and learning support staff and this enables them to take a full part in most activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Very few pupils have a mother tongue other than English, but when it has occurred the provision has been very effective in helping them learn the language and settle in the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent and has a clear impact on their learning. The provision for their moral and spiritual development is very good, and the provision for their cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a very good level of care and support for its pupils. Assessment arrangements in English, mathematics and science are very effective and enable teachers to plan work well matched to pupils' prior attainment.

The requirements for collective worship are met. The school works very closely and effectively with parents. A number of parents help in school while many others support their children's learning at home. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. There are many clubs, and opportunities for trips and visits, as well as visitors who enrich pupils' learning in school. There is provision in the junior classes for some modern foreign language teaching of French and German.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher and key staff have a clear vision and provide the school with a strongly focused educational direction. They have created an ethos that accepts hard work and celebrates success, as well as providing a caring and secure environment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governing body are hard working, supportive and very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have a very effective structure and provide the school with an appropriate level of critical friendship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The tracking and evaluation of test results and individual pupils' progress are very effective in enabling teachers to set appropriate targets. Where underachievement is recognised it is appropriately addressed.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school's finances are very well managed by the governing body and the finance administrator.

There is a good level of resources, staffing and the accommodation is of a good standard. The school is very well managed through an efficient and effective structure of senior staff, team leaders and subject co-ordinators. The principles of best value are applied to all aspects of the school's work to a very high level. A budget surplus of about six per cent is set aside for development purposes.

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 school is well led and managed. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions and problems. Their children like school. The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They would like to be better informed about how well their children are getting on. They would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection findings support the parents' very positive views. Only a few parents had any minor misgivings about the work of the school. The parents wanting a more interesting range of activities outside of lessons represent the younger pupils, whose experience of the excellent range of clubs and extra-curricular opportunities are limited until they are older. The school keeps parents well informed about how well their children are getting on, through parents' evenings and reports. Parents who require more could take advantage of the school's open door policy to meet their child's teacher or a senior member of staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The pupils' level of attainment when they start in the reception classes is broadly in line with that expected for their ages. They make good progress in all of the areas of learning that make up the Foundation Stage and by the end of the year almost all will have achieved the expected early learning goals and many will have exceeded these, except in mathematical development where fewer are likely to exceed the expected level.
2. The national test results for Year 6 pupils in 2002 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were well above average in mathematics and science, and above average in English. In English and mathematics, half of the pupils achieved a level higher than that expected for Year 6, while in science 66 per cent reached the higher level. This is an indication of how well the school is supporting its more able pupils, enabling them to achieve well. In addition, far fewer pupils remain at a below average level in all three subjects than is the case nationally. Following on from the broadly average standards on entry to the school this represents at least very good progress over time.
3. These very high standards are due to the very good quality of teaching in the school, the well-planned and broad curriculum, and the excellent leadership and management, which help to create the very effective learning ethos evident in all year groups. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been very successfully introduced and the school has a clear focus on raising standards and identifying any weaknesses that result in underachievement.
4. The national test results for Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. Teacher assessment showed attainment in science to be above average, with a well above average proportion reaching the higher levels. The reading and writing results have been at a consistent well above average level for at least three years. The mathematics results were also well above average until 2002 when they fell. The school immediately investigated this and has worked hard to address the issue. In fact, an above average proportion of the pupils reached the higher levels than most schools nationally, but there was a small, though bigger than average, group who did not make the expected progress and remained at a below average level. The current standards show that the present Year 2 pupils are once again at a level at least in line with that expected. At the end of Year 2, the boys often perform better than the girls, and this is different to the national picture. This picture has been reversed by the end of Year 6, when, particularly in science, girls are outperforming boys. However, the inspection evidence found no reasons for this and no differences in provision for pupils.
5. The trends in standards over time show that they have improved to a good degree at the end of Year 2 in reading and writing, but dipped in 2002 in mathematics after substantially improving since 1998. By the end of Year 6, the trend in test results shows a good level of improvement on what were already good standards in all three subjects.
6. The current picture is that standards in reading, science and information and communication technology are above those typically expected by the end of Year 2. Standards in history and physical education are also above those expected. In geography, standards are well above those normally found by the end of Year 2. Standards in writing, mathematics, art and design and design and technology are all broadly in line with those normally found. Pupils' achievement is very good. There was insufficient evidence for judgements to be made on standards in music and religious education.
7. The current picture of standards by the end of Year 6 shows that they are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents a very good level of achievement since pupils started at the school. Standards are also well above those expected in history, music and physical education. Standards are above those typically found in information and communication technology, religious education and geography, and are broadly in line with those typically found in art and design, and design and technology. Standards are also very good in literacy and numeracy, and these skills are effectively developed through a range of other subjects. Improvements since the last inspection are particularly evident in information and communication technology, due to the training, resources and facilities now in

place. Standards have improved to a high level in music and history. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is very good and they attain standards in line with their peers.

8. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in the Foundation Stage and in the infant classes, and they make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment in the junior classes. This group of pupils makes significant gains in their learning because of the very good support given to them by the learning support staff and teachers. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, when pupils are well provided for through small groups in order to receive extra support and work is well planned to match their specific learning needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' excellent attitudes and interest in learning are strengths of the school. They result directly from the school's strong spiritual, moral and social provision. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils show great interest in their work. They concentrate intently in lessons. A mother who came to a recent curriculum evening writes 'It was a real joy to see the enthusiasm shown by all the children present.' Pupils are proud of their work and the school's successes in studies, the creative arts and sports. Their pride in the school is particularly apparent when they take part in outside activities. An organiser from last year's Cheltenham Festival wrote 'We were delighted by the interest and enthusiasm shown by the pupils.' At a school council meeting, one suggestion was that pupils should come to school in non-uniform on their birthday. The council quickly rejected the idea because it might look odd to people outside the school, demonstrating a maturity of understanding beyond that normally found. Pupils with special educational needs have excellent attitudes to their learning. They show very good levels of perseverance when overcoming difficulties and are able to work with good levels of interest and sustained concentration.
10. Pupils behave very well. Their behaviour is orderly in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand and respect the school's expectations. The policy for inclusion means it has some pupils with behaviour difficulties. If these pupils misbehave, as happened in an infant mathematics lesson, the other pupils carry on learning without distraction. The school has not excluded any pupil in recent years. Even on an extremely wet day during the inspection, there was no disruption or aggressive behaviour. Parents say that bullying is rare, and that the school manages it effectively if it occurs. Boys and girls, and pupils from different countries and heritages, work and play very well together. Pupils take good care of the playgrounds and keep the outside areas free from litter. They welcome visitors with courtesy, friendship and a smile.
11. There are excellent relationships between the pupils themselves and the pupils and staff. Pupils learn well together in pairs and groups. Children joining the school have someone from Year 6 to be their buddy at lunchtime. This helps pupils to build friendships across the different age groups. Older pupils spontaneously help the younger children if they need help in the hall or the playgrounds. Pupils are aware of the effect of their actions on others. They welcome pupils from distant countries, including those who arrive with little or no English. Within a short time, classmates make them feel fully included in the life of the school.
12. Pupils show very good personal responsibility. From early days in Reception, children take the registers to the office and help to keep their classroom tidy. Pupils quickly develop an increasing responsibility for their learning. They know they can put forward their ideas and answers confidently, even if they get them wrong. This leads them to success in problem solving and research in a variety of subjects when they reach the upper junior classes. A pupil in Year 1 was having behaviour difficulties. Each day, he had to get his card signed by his teacher and his parents. One day, he came to school and said 'I don't need this any more.' He proved to be right. The charities that pupils collect for often reflect a particular need for people in their community. The death of a child from meningitis before he joined the school touched the school community, and they plan to raise money for research to prevent it happening to other children.
13. Attendance is excellent. Last year the rate was 2.7 percentage points above the national average. It has increased since the previous year. It is higher than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy their lessons and arrive very punctually. Lessons start promptly. These factors contribute very positively to pupils' achievements at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. All of the teaching is satisfactory or better, 86 per cent is good or better, including 47 per cent that is very good or excellent. The teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection, when there was a small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching, and is much better than the picture nationally.
15. The quality of learning is very good. In the reception class, 77 per cent of the teaching was good or better. All but 13 per cent of lessons in Years 1 and 2 were good or better, with eight per cent excellent. In Years 3 to 6, the vast majority of lessons were good or better, with 11 per cent being excellent. Overall, eight lessons were excellent and none were less than satisfactory. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection when only half the teaching in Years 1 and 2 was good or better and a significant percentage unsatisfactory; in Years 3 to 6, at the last inspection, only a third of lessons were good or better with a small percentage of unsatisfactory.
16. There are a number of strengths in the teaching throughout the school. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is very good. The school makes effective use of the national strategies for teaching the basic skills. As a result, by the end Year 6, pupils achieve very well and attainment in English and mathematics is well above average. Teachers plan very effectively with clear objectives for pupils' learning. The majority of teachers begin lessons by discussing the objectives with the pupils. All teachers have good strategies for questioning pupils, frequently directing questions at specific pupils. This ensures that higher attaining pupils are challenged and pupils with special educational needs are kept in touch with the learning. Teachers check what pupils learnt in the previous lesson to establish an appropriate starting point. This is effective use of day-to-day assessment. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their thinking and, in mathematics lessons, how they reached their answers. In English and mathematics, work is carefully matched to the needs of all the pupils. However, in other subjects this is less well done. This is an area for further development. Some marking of pupils' work is very good, and it challenges them by supporting them in what needs to be done to improve. However, this it is not consistently good across the school and is an area for further development.
17. Teachers manage pupils very well. They are consistent in their relationships and the pupils appreciate this. They are firm where necessary but also very quick to praise where praise is due. This encourages the pupils to want to do well and to persevere. It gives them confidence to explain and discuss their work. Learning resources are well planned and organised, so no time is lost. A sense of humour helps cement relationships. Learning support workers make a very good contribution to lessons and to the work of small groups. Teachers liaise regularly with them and provide them with detailed sheets to record pupils' progress or problems. They make a positive contribution to the learning of the pupils within their groups and help with the assessment of pupils' progress.
18. Teachers have very high expectations. They expect work to be completed, to be of a high standard and pupils to organise themselves and their work. They expect them to work together in a spirit of co-operation and sharing of tasks. They expect and get a good response to their questions and that pupils will settle quickly to their work. The majority of pupils live up to these expectations. Across the school, teachers plan and work together in pairs according to the year group. In Year 6, subjects are shared according to teacher expertise and this has a positive effect on learning as the pupils benefit from some degree of specialist teaching. This works very well. For example, one teacher teaches all the science. In Years 3 to 6, a specialist teacher takes all the music lessons, ensuring pupils build on prior knowledge and develop the appropriate skills. Her expertise and enthusiasm motivate the pupils to achieve at a high level. A teacher from a local secondary school provides good quality language teaching.
19. Homework is used well and plays an integral part of a lesson, both in preparation for the next lesson and for practising the skills taught in the lesson. The inspection team felt that research projects set for Year 6 sometimes took too much time. The school is reviewing this provision and should give parents more concise information about expectations, particularly about the length. In a very small number of otherwise satisfactory lessons, teachers missed opportunities to extend pupils' learning. The range of activities did not provide sufficient challenge to stretch the higher attaining pupils. Teachers' expectations were not high enough. The pace of lessons was slow and pupils remained sitting for too long. Classroom displays are good, as they celebrate and value pupils' efforts. They help to provide an interesting and attractive environment for learning.

20. The pupils respond well to the very good teaching they receive. They behave well and listen well, and this supports their very good learning. They enjoy the challenges set and explaining their thinking and the positive relationships with all adults. Although some presentation of work, particularly in Year 2, is a little untidy, much of the work of older pupils is neat, careful and well organised. Pupils concentrate and settle quickly to tasks.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are very well catered for in lessons. Members of the support staff are used very effectively to support pupils' learning across the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics, and they make a very significant contribution. Learning support workers are well trained by the school in ways of helping pupils learn and consequently they are very effective in directing pupils' learning through skilful questioning and demonstration techniques. Learning targets on individual educational plans are specific to the needs of pupils and are suitably taken into account by teachers when planning work.
22. The quality of learning for pupils is very good. The school promotes a very good quality of learning for pupils with identified learning difficulties. Teachers know their pupils well. They are understanding and give consistent support during class lessons and within smaller group situations. Much of the teaching in these groups is perceptive, well informed and enthusiastic. It is strongly focused on pupils' learning targets in literacy and numeracy. Both teachers and learning support workers make a very good contribution to this. For example, in a Year 6 small group for literacy, the teacher's perception of those pupils' needs, enthusiasm and knowledge gives them the experiences necessary to raise their attainment to the expected level for their age.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities the school provides for its pupils are good. The curriculum is broad and well balanced between subjects and it fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, including religious education. In addition to the statutory curriculum, the school provides good opportunities for pupils in the junior classes to learn French and German and this broadens the learning opportunities for pupils even further. This is organised with the local secondary school, which has a language college status, and provides a skilled teacher with very good subject expertise. A particular strength is the way pupils with special needs are included in the lessons, partly through the work of the very good learning support workers.
24. The curriculum is enhanced even further through the excellent extra-curricular activities provided by the school, which support and contribute very effectively to the learning and the standards achieved in subjects such as physical education, mathematics, information and communication technology and music. The provision the school makes for pupils' personal, social and health education, including citizenship, sex education and drugs misuse awareness is good.
25. All aspects of the National Curriculum are suitably covered in all subjects and this is ensured through the teachers' good curricular planning. This ensures clear learning objectives are identified both in medium term and short term planning in all subjects. The school has successfully implemented both the literacy and numeracy strategies. This, and the effective setting arrangements in Year 6, enables teachers to plan work that is well matched to pupils' different abilities and contributes well to the very good standards achieved in English and mathematics by the age of eleven.
26. The provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage is very good. There are plenty of opportunities for children to use large play equipment indoors and in the new outdoor play area which offers a secure area for adventurous play.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The school ensures all pupils are included in activities if appropriate, including those with special educational needs and those pupils who have English as an additional language. All groups of pupils in the school have full access to all the learning opportunities the school provides for its pupils. For example, pupils with severe learning difficulties are well supported by both teachers and learning support staff to enable them to take part fully in practical activities such as playing the recorder in music. Through the careful tracking of pupils' progress using very good assessment procedures, teachers know their pupils' needs well and the specific learning targets in the individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs are carefully thought through by teachers and are well matched to the specific needs of pupils. The school is aware of gender issues in

relation to curriculum provision and effectively monitors the performance of boys and girls in national test results in English, mathematics and science in order to address any weaknesses in attainment by any one gender.

28. The school has established excellent links with the community, particularly with local businesses in order to enhance pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum. For example, links with a local packaging firm and a number of major supermarkets and stores in the area supports pupils' studies in design and technology. Liaison with the local water authority and plant nurseries supports the science curriculum as well as helping develop pupils' personal and social development as they make decisions through the school council on the best way of using donated equipment and plants to improve the school environment. Links with the local rugby club supports pupils' learning in physical education well. The school has also established very good links with the local authority medical and educational support agencies in order to provide suitable support for those pupils with special educational needs.
29. The school has established good links with its partner institutions. For example, the school regularly takes students from the local college in order to contribute to the training of new teachers. Good links have been established with local secondary schools in order to set up Saturday school workshops for Years 5 and 6 pupils, and to provide opportunity for pupils to experience modern foreign languages through visiting teachers. Induction days arranged by local secondary schools, and visits by Year 7 teachers, ensure that Year 6 pupils have a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.
30. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school has a very supportive and caring, although also sufficiently challenging, culture for learning, where success is celebrated and those who have difficulties are well supported. The school provides a warm and welcoming environment in which its aims can be achieved and to which all adults, whatever their role, contribute effectively.
31. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Displays show that pupils are taught to appreciate the beauty of nature. For example, an inter-house art competition based on springtime showed a very good understanding of the importance of this time of year, new life and its part in the religious calendar. A number of opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on themselves and their lives. For example, in Year 4 pupils discuss feelings such as calmness, peace and relaxation. In addition, they can list things they are good or bad at, showing positive feelings about themselves. In assemblies, time for reflection and prayer is included. A particular focus in one was on celebrating the pupils' talents and skills without excessive pride. Other assembly themes included real beauty coming from within and the importance of saying sorry. These offer very good opportunities for reflection and mature thinking about quite difficult concepts. Younger pupils think about those who help us and one class in particular show a deep understanding of the needs of a pupil with special educational needs, and reflect their caring nature through a range of adoption schemes for abandoned or endangered animals.
32. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Older pupils show genuine frustration at acts of vandalism such as those that have occurred to the pond they look after. The teachers plan and provide many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. This may be as pairs or occasionally in a larger group, requiring negotiation skills. They show a very good understanding of the effect of their actions on others. This is particularly true of the school council and their discussions. Year 2 pupils are required to self evaluate in physical education, with the exhortation to 'be honest', which they respond to very well. All classes are finding time for debating issues under the broad heading of citizenship. For example, bullying, the needs of pets and comparison of good and bad behaviours are all evident as topics in Year 3.
33. The provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The pupils are divided into four houses with a clear system of points for rewards. In Year 2, pupils have thought about and discussed the nature of fame, thinking about the Queen, footballers and pop stars. They have also a good understanding of healthy eating. In Year 4, the extent of the pupils' involvement in issues was evident when three boys decided to write to the Prime Minister and the president of the United States with regard to alternatives to war. Year 5 pupils have studied the European Union in some detail, resulting in the designing of flags carrying appropriate symbols on them, often based on peace and friendship. Throughout the school, adults give pupils a high level of responsibility and they respond to this well. Older pupils help much younger ones at lunchtime, encouraging them to try food and helping cut their meals up. All classes are represented at the school council and this body has a growing influence on decisions made by the staff and senior management. The system of alternating classes for specific jobs means that no one class misses too much curriculum time, and all get very good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative.

34. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. In geography, they study a range of different countries, learning about food and fashion as well as geographical features. In history, they learn about past cultures and ancient civilizations, such as the Romans or Greeks. In religious education, they learn about other faiths. However, the school provides insufficient opportunities for pupils' to learn about and prepare themselves for life in our modern, multicultural society. An exception was the very good support offered to a pupil from Russia who had little English on arriving at the school but who was made to feel very welcome. The school made very good use of the pupils' parent to talk about the language he spoke and the culture they were from. In art and design, and music, a range of artists and composers are studied and opportunities to appraise cultural works are provided, although opportunities to discuss and appreciate the music played in assemblies are missed. Percussion instruments from a range of cultures are used, and a recent visit enabled pupils to experience the use of didgeridoos and aboriginal music. A racial equality working party, composed of staff, governors and members of the minority ethnic community, meets termly and has an agreed action plan to improve the multicultural aspects of the school's work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a very high standard of care for its pupils. It has extended the good procedures reported by the previous inspection and has updated its policy for health and safety. Subject leaders and senior managers complete a regular risk assessment for their areas of responsibility. The school undertakes appropriate risk assessments for all visits. Each term, governors from the premises committee survey the premises before their meeting. They report their findings to the full governing body. The school carries out fire drills and checks equipment regularly. The cleaner-in-charge and her team of cleaners keep the school in a good, clean condition.
36. Arrangements for first aid are very good. The school's ethos requires it to provide a high level of care for pupils when they need it. Two members of staff have full first aid certificates. Many others have trained in first aid for children. The school keeps written records and notifies parents appropriately when there has been an injury. The headteacher is the designated responsible adult for child protection. He makes sure that all staff are aware of the requirements. The school works closely with local agencies, and follows the correct procedures.
37. The monitoring of pupils' learning is very good. The school assesses children's attainment within a week of them joining their reception class. With the help of the learning support workers, teachers keep very well up-to-date on how the children are progressing. From Year 1 onwards, the school makes very good use of specialist software for assessment. The school has refined the system to make it simpler to use, and to have a direct impact on pupils' learning. The focus is on what pupils can do and how they are progressing in English and mathematics. A system of colour coding shows whether a pupil is improving as expected, faster or slower. It alerts teachers to the progress of different groups of pupils within their class. One of the system's strengths is that it tracks pupils' achievements to monitor their progress and set them targets for improvement. This has a positive effect on the standards of individuals, groups and whole classes.
38. The school uses its assessment information well to identify any areas of weakness in English and mathematics which need extra work. This does not happen as effectively in other subjects. However, the monitoring of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills helps teachers extend pupils' learning and achievement in science and other subjects. Teachers make effective use of assessment in planning the next stage of learning and to plan for pupils who learn at different rates. The school fully meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice¹ in support of pupils with special educational needs. Parents of pupils with special educational needs take part in reviews of their individual education plans. The school provides very well for pupils with formal statements of special educational need. There are very good assessment procedures in place to track the progress of pupils with special educational needs and assessments are used very effectively by teachers to identify those pupils needing extra support, particularly in English and mathematics, to inform future planning and set individual learning targets.
39. There is very good monitoring of pupils' personal development. The headteacher, the class teachers and the learning support workers know their pupils well, and support them very effectively. Progress in

¹ The new Code of Practice came into effect in September 2002. It gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 2001 Education Act.

attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development feature prominently in the meetings with parents and in the annual reports.

40. There is very good support for pupils' personal development. The school's strength in very good moral and excellent social provision helps pupils to work together effectively as they learn. The school expects that all pupils will take part in at least one of the extra-curricular activities. Most pupils far exceed this minimum. The school provides a wide range of clubs and teams, and pupils show great commitment. The teams reach high levels of success in sports such as football, netball and rugby. Pupils win renown for their choral and musical performances. More than 60 pupils join the lunchtime chess club. From the time they arrive in their reception class, pupils have classroom responsibilities. The school extends these as they grow older. Year 6 pupils eagerly take on the task of acting as lunchtime buddies to the younger children. They act as role models within the school, and guardians of the school's good name when they are outside it.
41. The school has very good procedures to sustain its high levels of attendance. Teachers take the registers very promptly at the start of each session. This encourages good punctuality, and there are few latecomers. If parents have not already notified the reason for absence, the school may contact them. Parents are reminded that family holidays in term time adversely affect their children's learning. The school records all holiday absences, and alerts parents if they apply for more than ten days in a school year.
42. The school has very good procedures to improve behaviour. As the mission statement says, it aims to provide 'a caring, secure and happy environment.' It has recently revised its behaviour policy. Pupils and parents are very clear about its system of rewards and sanctions. Although bullying is very rare, parents are confident that the school has procedures to resolve a problem speedily and effectively. Arrangements for monitoring behaviour at break times are very thorough. Five staff, including teachers and learning support workers, monitor the playgrounds at morning break. Ten midday supervisors and the headteacher monitor the lunch break.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Heron has an outstanding reputation with parents and the local community. Parents are very happy with the school. They are pleased with the quality of education the school provides for their children and with the standards they achieve. A mother says 'When we walk to school, it takes us 20 minutes, but it's worth it!' Comments at the pre-inspection meeting show very favourable responses. Eight of the 12 questions on the questionnaire had positive answers from 95 per cent or more parents. Parents value the way the school helps their children become mature and responsible. A mother of a Year 5 pupil says 'The school has really brought her out. Each year she's a little more brave about putting her hand up.' Some parents expressed concern about the range of activities outside lessons. The inspection finds that the school has an excellent range of outside activities.
44. The school has excellent links with parents. In the term before the children start school, parents are sent a helpful, practical booklet. It invites the parents to bring their child in for three introductory sessions in that term. Each autumn term, the class teacher meets parents and tells them what the children will be learning. In the spring term, teachers hold parents' evenings to review the child's progress. They discuss pupils' annual reports at the end of the summer term. The school is effective in giving parents up-to-date information on their child's progress. Pupils have individual targets set on target cards. Teachers acknowledge and set a new target when a pupil reaches a target. The school makes every effort to be an open school. Teachers and the headteacher keep closely in touch and give much information informally. The fact that parents now collect their children in class groups at the end of the day makes it easier for them to raise any concern. Some parents feel they would prefer more or earlier formal meetings to discuss their child's progress. The inspection judgement is that the school stays sufficiently closely in touch with parents.
45. The large-scale events are very successful. Over 1200 people attended the six performances of last Christmas's dramatic and musical production. The parent-teacher association arranges a range of events such as the very popular Christmas fair. Up to 700 parents, pupils and people from the local community take part in the summer barbecue. These events help develop pupils' confidence and social skills. They successfully raise funds that extend the facilities for pupils' learning and leisure, and add significantly to their life at school.

46. The school provides very good information for parents. Annual reports are well presented and individual to each child. They cover in detail what the child knows and can do in English, mathematics and science, and they include targets for improvement. They give shorter comments on the other subjects. There is a sensitive section on the child's personal development. At the start of each term, the school sends parents an account of what their children will be studying and the topic for the term. Parents get frequent newsletters about events and life at school. The school website demonstrates the work of the school well. It includes events, dates and enables comments via the online guest book. The governors' annual report and the prospectus are clear, easy to read and well presented. This year's annual report did not fully meet statutory requirements, which have changed recently. The school is aware of the new requirements and has undertaken to ensure they are met in future.
47. Parents make an excellent contribution to their children's learning. They accompany pupils on educational visits locally. The school has a clear, recently updated homework policy. Parents give outstanding support to their children's homework. The reading record keeps parents and teachers closely in touch. Parents of younger children share books with them frequently. Unusually, parents of older juniors continue to read with them at home. This is of great benefit to pupils as they develop higher reading skills. It helps them to extend their understanding of character and plot, and to find information across a wide range of subjects.
48. The school has built very good relationships with those parents who have children with special educational needs and as a result, parents are kept fully informed about their children's progress. Both parents and pupils are involved in identifying specific learning targets on pupils' individual educational plans and this enables parents to understand what it is their children need to learn. This in turn helps parents to support their children at home.
49. Pupils in Year 6 carry out a project in each term. The school sets the topic in autumn and spring. Pupils choose their own topic for the summer term. Parents interviewed value this topic work greatly although a minority feel that the workload is too heavy. A parent with older children in Years 7 and 8 says 'They find it so much easier to do the work required at secondary school'. Year 6 pupils interviewed show they have built up, in the course of the current year, their ability to manage their projects. They recognise that they need to limit the time they spend on the next project. They welcome the chance to choose their own projects. In a small group interviewed, the choice ranges from sports, to animals, to different countries of the world. Last autumn's project was 'The Tudors'. A few pupils undoubtedly did an excessive amount. One pupil produced superb work that filled 14 pages. This commitment may lead to high success in later studies, but it was way above the school's expectations of four pages of text and a picture. The school has undertaken to make it clear to pupils and parents, especially in the first term of Year 6, exactly what is expected from these projects.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The leadership and management demonstrated by the headteacher and key staff are excellent and have a tremendous impact on the overall ethos of the school, as well as on the high standards attained. This has improved since the last inspection, although the leadership and management at that time was very good. The improvement is due to the constant striving for improvement evident throughout the school and the very supportive but challenging relationships between staff. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and this is shared with staff and governors informally through day-to-day contact and through more formal means in meetings and documents. Members of staff are very appreciative of the headteacher's style of leadership, and the support offered to them, and this builds a creative ethos that is matched in relationships with pupils, helping to provide excellent learning opportunities.
51. The management structure is very effective. The system of three assistant headteachers enables a very effective level of delegation and they are clear about their roles. They play a very important role in the leadership of the school, through their work on the curriculum, their leading of different teams within the staff and their part in appointing staff. They have good links with the governing body, again sharing out the responsibilities very efficiently. The year group leaders and subject co-ordinators also have well-developed management skills and these are evident in the very good leadership in all subjects, especially in the core subjects. The hard working and well-organised Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides very good leadership and supports her colleagues very well. Under her leadership, all staff work extremely well together and provide a very caring, supportive environment in which young children feel safe and learn well. She knows the strengths and areas for development in the Foundation Stage and has very clear plans for raising standards even further.

52. The co-ordination of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator has a good overview of special educational needs provision and is fully involved in the identification and writing of targets in individual educational plans and she liaises very effectively with teachers, support staff and support agencies to ensure that the provision for pupils with special educational needs is appropriate.
53. The school has a very good policy for performance management. This includes a rigorous regime of monitoring and evaluating teaching, learning, planning and pupils' work. Together with the very good relationships created between staff, this provides an on-going system for continual improvement throughout the school. The objectives set are appropriately based on whole-school issues as well as more personal and professional matters. Objectives are also closely matched to the school's target setting process. This is based appropriately on the pupils' prior attainment and results in good, challenging but realistic targets for attainment in the national tests each year.
54. The school development plan is created after a very good process involving governors and staff. It is based on a three year overall plan, with more detailed action planning for the coming year. It is very well monitored as an agenda item at every governing body meeting. The plan contains the school's detailed vision statement and aims. It begins with a review of the previous year and makes important links to the local authority education development plan. The priorities are appropriate and firmly based on raising standards. The detailed action plans contain good success criteria and methods for monitoring and evaluating the progress made.
55. The school has very good systems in place for providing and encouraging teachers to continue their professional development. A critical and effective process ensures that the best value possible is obtained from training. For example, when the school found it was dissatisfied with the computer training received, one member of staff took on the role, training herself up to the same level as the trainers and then leading the staff in developing their skills and knowledge to the present good level. She has worked very hard to devise and produce very good materials that have had a positive impact on standards in information and communication technology within the school. The induction procedures for new staff and for staff who are newly qualified are very effective and have a positive impact, ensuring that they quickly and efficiently become part of this very successful team.
56. The school makes excellent use of the funds it has available for the benefit of its pupils and this has a very clear and positive impact on their learning. The governing body have a well-organised and effective finance committee that makes excellent use of the expertise available in setting and monitoring the budget. They receive very good support from the knowledgeable and hard-working finance administrator. She ensures that day-to-day finances are controlled very efficiently and that the budget is monitored very closely as the year unfolds, highlighting any unusual trends for the governors as necessary. She produces very good annotated reports for them and has an important role in setting the budget each year. The school uses very rigorous procedures for developing its finance policy and for auditing. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively. A budget surplus of about six per cent is set aside for developments.
57. The previous inspection found that the school had good staffing, accommodation and learning resources, and it has maintained this high standard. There have been some notable improvements. In particular, it has invested significantly in hardware, software and training for the use of computers. The school has good resources. It has greatly extended its number of computers since the previous inspection. The only weakness noted in any subject is in religious education. There are only ten Bibles, too few for a whole class to study together.
58. The staff composition has a good mix of ages, qualifications and experience. Members of staff work well together and share a strong sense of teamwork. The three assistant headteachers provide expert management throughout the school. Part-time teachers provide French, German and instrumental music. The previous report noted the close partnership between teachers and learning support workers in the classrooms. This continues to have a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The midday supervisory assistants and the cook and kitchen staff all play a valuable part in the smooth, happy running of the school and its very good ethos. The finance administrator and the secretary support teachers and the senior management team very effectively. All staff show high levels of commitment to the learning, well being and happiness of pupils.
59. The accommodation is good. The school has made several improvements since the previous inspection. Pupils and parents are very enthusiastic about the new computer suite. A governor used his professional

expertise to ensure that the suite offers comfortable seats from which a whole class can see the teacher and the interactive whiteboard. All classrooms are in the main building. The temporary building outside the school now serves for music and choral singing. Beautiful displays of pupils' work, including poems, artwork and photographs from the school's digital camera, feature all around the school. The library is spacious and inviting. It has a good display of books and pupils make very good use of them. The previous inspection noted that the hall was small and the Year 6 rooms were cramped for classes of over 30 pupils. This remains true. However, the outside area is spacious. Pupils make very full use of the sports field during the dry weather. The 'bug club' benefits from the environmental area with natural plants and wildlife. The playgrounds have adequate space and are well marked. There is now a good fenced area for outside learning and play in the Foundation Stage.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school provides a very effective education for its pupils. In order to maintain the strengths and to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:
- (a) extend the good match of work to pupils' prior attainment found in English and mathematics to that for higher attaining pupils in science and all pupils in the non-core subjects; **
(Paragraphs 16, 19, 92, 104, 109, 114, 120 and 136)
 - (b) improve the teachers' marking of pupils' work to ensure it makes clear what they have done well and what they need to do to improve in the future.
(Paragraphs 16, 78, 86, 109 and 114)

*** The school has recognised this as an area for development and has plans to address it.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	91
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	8	35	35	13	0	0	0
Percentage	9	38	38	14	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	430
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	62

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	28
	Girls	26	29	26
	Total	56	59	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	98 (97)	90 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	30	30
	Girls	29	27	28
	Total	59	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (95)	95 (98)	97 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	34	30	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	31
	Girls	29	29	30
	Total	55	55	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (83)	86 (76)	95 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	27
	Girls	30	30	30
	Total	54	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (87)	84 (79)	89 (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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	393	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	11	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	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	5	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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)	16.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.6
Average class size	30.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	236

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	757,489
Total expenditure	754,434
Expenditure per pupil	1,742
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,055
Balance carried forward to next year	47,110

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	430
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	30	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	61	33	2	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	39	2	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	43	8	1	4
The teaching is good.	66	32	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	42	16	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	26	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	41	10	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	41	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	41	13	1	12

Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents feel that the homework projects in Year 6 are excessive and take up too much time.

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

Personal, social and emotional development

61. The teaching is very good. Staff put a strong emphasis on this area of learning and children develop very good personal, social and emotional skills. All children are very clear about routines. They answer the register politely in the morning, know the routine of taking it to the office, and are confident and happy to do so. Relationships between children and adults are very good. Staff members give the children plenty of help but also encourage them to be independent. Teachers ensure that the activities encourage the children to co-operate, take turns, share equipment and help one another. For example, children take turns and share the large wheeled toys outside. When a child is struggling to join two pieces of paper to make a bag, another child holds the paper together while the child uses the sticky tape. Children work very well on tasks as a group, for example at clearing away time and when they put away the equipment in the hall. They are very polite and most remember to say 'please' and 'thank you'. They concentrate extremely well for long periods, for instance when they are involved in the literacy lessons.
62. Children behave very well because all the members of staff have clear expectations of good behaviour. Children are very enthusiastic and show very good attitudes to all their work. They know why they have to wash their hands before lunch and tidy away their belongings and are clear about why things are right or wrong. By the end of the reception year, pupils will reach a level of attainment above that expected for their age.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Children make good progress and by the end of the reception year most will exceed what is expected of children of their age. They listen very well to each other and to adults. For example, all the children listen very attentively as the teacher reads the story of 'Handa's Surprise' and listen to children who answer questions about the story. Teachers give children good opportunities to develop their communication skills in whole class discussions where they are encouraged to share their knowledge and experiences. Teachers plan activities which encourage children to talk to one another. For example, children making food with play dough talk to each other about what they are doing and one says 'I've made a birthday cake. I'm a cake seller. Blow out the candles. We're celebrating the teacher's birthday.'
64. The teaching is very good. Teachers know how to teach sounds to help children learn to read and write and they make good progress. There are regular daily sessions in which children learn sounds and most children can hear and say the initial, middle and final sounds in words. They put the sounds together to read simple words, for example 'dog' 'tin' and 'pat' and they read key words such as 'said' 'you' and 'this' in books. More able children use their knowledge of sounds to read words such as 'park' and 'goat' and read familiar words such as 'old', 'won't' and 'woman' in their books. Children take home books the teacher gives them from the graded reading scheme and library books, which they choose themselves on their weekly visit to the school library. All children enjoy books and look after them carefully. They talk about the characters and events in the books and some can re-tell the stories confidently. Most children can write their own names and are beginning to form letters correctly. They use their knowledge of sounds to make good attempts at spelling. Some children write simple sentences by themselves starting with a capital letter and ending with a full stop. Most children will achieve the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year and many exceed them.

Mathematical development

65. By the end of the reception year, most children will achieve the expected early learning goals and a few exceed them. The teaching is very good. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to develop their mathematical skills. For example during registration, children count the number in the class and some can recognise the number 26 on the number board. The children sing the numbers from one to 56 while 'helpers' take the register to the office. Most of them understand the words 'more' and 'count on'. They can roll a die and add on the numbers one to six when playing a game with an adult. A few children can recognise the numerals from one to 100 and one child knew that if he counted on six from 70 the answer was 76. When the teacher asks him how he knows he explained 'I kept the number in my head and

counted on six in my head.' Children use coins in a variety of play situations. For example, they buy tickets to go on a train ride. Children's mathematical vocabulary is built up quickly and teachers work hard to help them understand number concepts.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Children's understanding in this area is better than expected for children of this age. The majority will exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The teaching is very good. Teachers provide a wide variety of interesting challenges that encourage children to be alert and eager to find out about things. For example, children use a magnifying glass to look carefully at the inside and outside of fruit, and use all their senses when the adults help them to make a fruit salad. Teachers give the children very good opportunities to solve problems. For example, the teacher provides a good range of resources and asks a group of children to make a bag for a doll to carry three oranges. Children join pieces of paper with sticky tape, staples and string and know that they have to wait for glue to dry to join two pieces of paper together. They make vehicles with construction materials and test them to see if they are strong enough to carry three oranges. They have a good understanding of aspects of the Easter story and know about some of the signs of spring. Children use the computer regularly in the classroom and work in the computer suite once a week. They use the mouse confidently and can return to the menu to choose another game. They write their names in a variety of fonts and use a drawing program to draw houses. The annual visit to a wild life park provides good opportunities for children to find out more about animals. Children develop a basic understanding of plans and maps by drawing maps of treasure islands and labelling features such as beaches, trees and houses.

Physical development

67. Children move confidently and safely and have good control of their bodies and coordination. Most will achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class. The teaching is very good. They have access to a secure outdoor area where they control wheeled vehicles such as tricycles safely and without bumping into each other. They can throw quoits with reasonable accuracy. Most children can run, jump, climb, slide and hop safely and confidently. For example, they can jump off the benches in the hall, remembering to bend their knees as they land. They are aware of space and rarely bump into each other. They know it is important to 'warm up' before they exercise and feel their heart beating faster after exercise. With some adult help, they can carry equipment such as benches safely. They use scissors, staplers, and hole punches safely and confidently when they make bags from pieces of paper. They can hold pencils appropriately and can dress and undress themselves independently.

Creative development

68. Children enjoy singing and can join in number songs with the teacher. They enjoy a good range of creative activities using a variety of materials and tools and develop good skills. When they draw fruit they show good attention to colour and shape and experiment with effects by deliberately smudging the colours with their fingers. They use pencils, crayons, chalks, and pastels well and their drawings of Gingerbread Men show very good faces and body parts. The teaching is very good. Teachers provide plenty of opportunities for imaginative play. For example, a child takes on the role of the secretary in the 'school office', writes in a diary and talks on the telephone, saying 'Please can you pick your little girl up? She's been sick.' Children make models of ducks and other creatures. By the end of the reception year, most children will achieve the expected early learning goals and many exceed them.

ENGLISH

69. Standards by Year 6 are well above the national average. The 2002 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds indicated that standards were well above the national average and above average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. As judged against their prior attainment, pupils made very good progress in all aspects of the subject in 2002. The target for the current Year 6 indicates a slight decrease in the number of pupils achieving the expected level, but the majority will still do so. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, or English as an additional language, make very good progress as they develop appropriate skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening.
70. Standards in Year 2 are in line with national average in writing and above average in reading. The 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven indicated that standards were well above the national

average in writing and above the standards achieved by pupils in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In reading, the standards were above the national average but only in line with the standards achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Although standards in writing appear to have fallen, the attainment of these pupils on entry to the school, unlike most cohorts, was below average, so achievement has been good and they have made good progress, especially in reading.

71. Standards, particularly by the age of eleven, have improved considerably since the last inspection, when they were judged to be good. The quality of teaching has also improved considerably. In the last inspection there was some unsatisfactory teaching observed. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection and the teaching overall was very good.
72. Standards of speaking and listening are above average across the school. Pupils listen attentively in assemblies and discussions not only to their teachers but also to their peers. Throughout the school, the emphasis is on encouraging pupils to think about their work and to express themselves well, using interesting and grammatically accurate language. In lessons, they have many opportunities to express and develop their ideas and opinions, confident they will be listened to and their contribution valued. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy using a range of adjectives to improve a story, such as 'the princess is glamorous', 'the prince's castle is enchanted' and 'the forest is haunted'. Pupils in Year 4 become involved in a meaningful debate about the merits of school uniform. Through the discussion, they realise others may have different points of view and these they must respect. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are confident, articulate speakers. In one lesson, a pupil was put in the "hot seat" as his peers questioned him about his skills in English. The purpose of this activity was to enable others to make notes and produce a very brief but succinct report. Many good examples of discussion were seen in subjects such as religious education, science and history.
73. Standards achieved in reading by the age of seven are above average and, by the age of eleven, well above average. Younger pupils experience a range of books and stories and talk about their favourite authors. They read accurately and with expression. Lower attaining pupils have strategies for reading unfamiliar words, successfully sounding them out. Year 2 pupils build effectively on knowledge gained in Year 1, where emphasis is placed on letter sounds and sounding out new words. These pupils enjoy sharing a big book about Cinderella, reading the text and finding words to describe the characters in the story. All pupils express a joy in reading. This motivates them to achieve such good standards. The home reading records are filled in by parents and often contain their comments as well as those from school staff.
74. By Year 6, pupils are encouraged to read challenging texts of different genres. Pupils understand plot, settings and characterisation. They talk with enthusiasm about different writers and their styles and explain their preferences: favourite authors are Jacqueline Wilson and Sue Townsend. The pupils read confidently, accurately and with expression, holding the listener's interest. Occasionally an unfamiliar word, such as pseudonym, defeats them. They can retell the story and predict what might happen. All are avid readers and regularly enjoy a good book. Pupils are encouraged to develop research skills and to use them in other subjects such as history. They are very confident using reference books and getting information from the Internet.
75. A range of opportunities for writing for different purposes, such as retelling fairy stories, poetry, instructions, letters and diaries, is provided for the younger pupils. Their writing often contains limited use of unusual adjectives to describe settings or characters although higher attaining pupils use a greater variety of adjectives. Most pupils write in sentences, but few in complex sentences. When writing, pupils' punctuation is not always used accurately or correctly. Words are often spelt as they sound. The school is aware of a weakness in spelling and is planning action to rectify the problem.
76. The pupils in Year 6 build on the good standards achieved in years 3, 4 and 5 to develop their skills further. Opportunities are provided for pupils to write for many different purposes such as biographies, diaries, formal letters of complaint, newspaper reporting, persuasive writing supporting issues such as "should children be allowed to ride bikes to school", and many others. Their writing contains extended, complex sentences, accurate spelling, appropriate use of punctuation and imaginative use of descriptive language. For example, "The large hinges groaned in pain as the door swung open..." Pupils also produce some very mature views in their arguments. They take a pride in their work, particularly those in Years 3 to 6 where presentation is consistently neat and attractive. Work displayed around the school also highlights the care and attention pupils give to ensuring their work is carefully done. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond positively. They have many opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects such as history, science and design and technology.

77. Pupils listen attentively and participate in class discussions because they know their opinions will be valued. They are keen to respond to teachers' questions. They work very well together sharing ideas and are well focused on their tasks. Their motivation is high and they rise to the challenges the teachers set. The quality of teaching is very good and there has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. The majority of the teaching is good or better. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and this motivates pupils. They have very good relationships with the pupils and this gives them confidence to respond even if they are unsure their answer is correct. Questions are used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and to encourage them to share their thoughts and opinions. The closing few minutes of each lesson are also used very effectively to recap on the main points or check pupils' understanding. Lessons are well planned to ensure appropriate challenge to meet the needs of all pupils in the group. The clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils so they know what the teacher expects. The learning support workers provide positive support, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. Regular liaison with the teachers and a carefully thought out sheet to record pupils' successes or difficulties ensures good progress is made and work is well matched to their needs.
78. An area for development is the consistency in marking. Where it is good, it provides pupils with guidance on ways to improve the standard of their work but occasionally work is just ticked which does not provide sufficient guidance. Analysis of reading tests and optional and statutory test data is good and is used to highlight weaknesses. Each pupil has relevant targets for improvement and they strive to achieve a target as quickly as possible. These targets are having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
79. The school has a very good library with a good range of books, well looked after by a part-time librarian. Pupils are encouraged to use the library on a regular basis. The co-ordinator has had time to monitor planning and observe lessons to ensure continuity and progress across the school. The range of visitors includes puppeteers and a theatre company. The co-ordinator is exploring the possibility of an author or storyteller visiting to enhance the pupils' curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

80. Standards are well above the national average by the age of eleven. The performance of the pupils in the national tests since 1999 has been consistent and reflects these high standards. Standards were reported to be above the national average at the time of the last inspection so they have improved since then. The inspection findings and the results of the 2002 national tests for seven-year-olds show standards to be in line with the national average by the age of seven and they have been maintained at that level since the last inspection.
81. The very good improvement in standards by the age of eleven can be attributed to very good teaching and the rigorous monitoring and development of teaching and learning in the subject across the school by the co-ordinators. The pupils' performance and progress are carefully tracked to set appropriate targets for groups and individual pupils, which teachers take into account when planning.
82. Because teachers are very skilful at promoting different strategies and methods of calculating through well planned mathematical investigations, pupils make very good progress in understanding how to use and apply their knowledge and understanding of number and the four operations to solve problems. For example, in Year 6 pupils know how to divide a three digit number by a two digit number by more than one method and show they are able to use a range of strategies, such as breaking down a complex mathematical problem into simpler steps, before finding the solution.
83. From an early age, pupils acquire a good knowledge and understanding of place value. For example, in Year 2 pupils recognise the value of numbers in two digit numbers and use this to order numbers to 100. By the age of eleven, pupils show a very good understanding of place value and multiply, and divide whole numbers and decimals by 10, 100 and 1000, and calculate fractions or percentages of quantities. Because teachers use and promote correct mathematical terms consistently well in lessons, pupils across the school soon acquire a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. They demonstrate a good ability to use the appropriate mathematical terms confidently when explaining calculations.
84. In shape, space and measurement pupils throughout the school gain a good knowledge and understanding through a range of well-planned investigations. For example, in Year 1, pupils begin to identify and name a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and begin to recognise some of their properties such as the

number of sides. In Year 5, pupils rotate right-angled triangles and irregular shapes of different measures of degree in order to investigate rotational shape and pattern.

85. Computers are used well by teachers in geography and science in order to develop pupils' data handling skills. For example, in Year 2, pupils use grid references on a simple map to locate specific places. In Year 3, pupils use computers to produce frequency graphs and bar charts to represent data gathered about the frequency of eye colour in the class. Although data handling skills are effectively promoted in other subjects, this aspect of the subject is not as well developed within the numeracy lessons.
86. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to give very clear explanations and use a range of techniques very skilfully to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Their questioning is effective in extending pupils' thinking and they consistently challenge pupils to explain how they have worked answers out to develop even further pupils' skills and understanding. On-going assessment is used well during lessons to check and monitor pupils' understanding and progress. When teaching is satisfactory overall, but not so effective, the mental session at the start of the lesson is not sufficiently brisk to develop pupils' mental skills; the pace of lessons is sometimes too slow to keep all pupils sufficiently challenged and there needs to be more intensive teaching of key skills with a target group. The marking is not sufficiently evaluative or constructive in order for pupils to know what it is they must do to improve.
87. The co-ordination of the subject is very good. There are very good strategies in place to monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. There are very good assessment procedures in place to track the progress and attainment of individual pupils and these are used well by teachers to group pupils by ability, set group and individual targets and inform future planning. Planning in the subject is good and the school successfully follows the National Numeracy Strategy. The setting arrangements in Year 6, and the appropriate match of work to pupils' abilities across all year groups, ensures that all groups of pupils are well catered for, particularly those pupils with special educational needs who receive very good support from the learning support workers.

SCIENCE

88. The current standard of work of eleven-year-old pupils is well above average and for seven-year-olds it is above average. More than nine out of ten pupils are on course to attain or exceed the expected national level by the end of the school year and this is significantly higher than that found in all schools nationally. More than six out of ten are within reach of the level and this is also well above the national average for Year 6. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection. Nine out of ten Year 2 pupils are on course to attain or exceed the expected national level. While this is about the same as that found in all schools nationally, more than four out of ten pupils are likely to reach the next level and this is well above that found in most schools. Standards at the age of seven have been maintained since the last inspection. Current standards represent an overall improvement since the previous inspection and are the result of very good subject management and high quality teaching emanating from the enthusiasm and good subject knowledge of the staff. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. There is a difference in the performance of boys and girls; the school is aware of this, has analysed the results and is taking steps to redress the balance.
89. The current standard of work in Year 6 is similar to that in the 2002 national tests. These showed that more than nine out of ten pupils attained the national level or above and more than six out of ten attained the next level. The results show that at the age of eleven years the standards are above the national average for pupils reaching the expected and well above the national average for those reaching the next level. The average number of points scored in the 2002 tests was well above the national average for all schools and the results show a significant increase in the rate of overall improvement since 1998. For pupils in Year 2, the present standard of work is broadly consistent with the 2002 teacher assessments. These assessments showed that more than nine out of ten pupils attained the national level and of these four out of ten reached the next level. These results are above the national average for pupils aged seven years reaching the expected level and well above the national average for those reaching the next level.
90. Progress by the age of seven years is good. In Year 2, pupils undertake good scientific enquiries. For example, they investigate forces by testing the effects of friction created by different surfaces on the distance a model car will travel. Pupils predict, measure, and explain the results, developing their writing skills and linking well with mathematics. They understand the need for healthy meals and can identify a

range of healthy foods. In earlier work, pupils describe the characteristics of different materials and extend their vocabulary using terms such as 'transparent'. They make electrical circuits and they then use these to light model buildings and vehicles.

91. Progress is also very good by the age of eleven years. Year 6 pupils with average attainment have a broad knowledge and understanding of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. They investigate reflections and shadows, make predictions, describe their method and equipment, explain how they will ensure that their test are fair and how they will make sure their results are accurate. They record and present their results as a graph and explain them clearly. In earlier work, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the influences of temperature upon plant growth, carefully controlling other influences, such as the amount of water used, that could affect the result. Pupils in Year 4 can describe and explain the changes that occur when materials are mixed together and the ease with which they can be separated using terms such as 'sieving', 'dissolving' and 'solution'. High attaining pupils in Year 6 frequently undertake work at a higher level. For example, in work on forces they constructed the axes for a line graph to present the results they had systematically recorded during their experiment on the stretching of a rubber band as weights were added. Other pupils showed a good understanding of the results in terms of the pull of gravity. However, there are inconsistencies in the planning of topics, especially with regard to scientific enquiry, in some classes.
92. The overall quality of teaching is very good in both the infant and the junior years. It is never less than satisfactory and some is excellent. Detailed lesson plans are based upon national guidelines and provide secure proposals for the development of each lesson. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and provide them with challenging work, clearly based upon scientific enquiry. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson investigating magnetic materials where the pupils tested the objects and undertook their enquiry with enthusiasm, a high degree of focus and with confidence. Teachers make constant use of discussions, which both reinforce and extend the pupils' learning. For example, in a Year 5 lesson exploring the rate at which pieces of paper of different sizes would dry, the class was involved in detailed and earnest discussions about their work. Many found that their original predictions had been incorrect but the good discussion work enabled them to secure their understanding of the effects of surface area on the rate of evaporation. A high priority is given to encouraging enjoyment of learning. In an excellent Year 6 lesson to consolidate earlier work, the pupils thoroughly enjoyed a variety of small practical tasks and a stimulating television item to review the ideas involved. However, some lesson plans are not explicit about the way work and class organisation will be matched to the needs of pupils with different levels of ability, particularly those with a low level of attainment. All pupils' work is marked but the marking frequently lacks constructive comments.
93. The co-ordinator of the subject is highly effective and enthusiastic. He monitors planning, observes teaching in lessons and monitors pupils' work alongside colleagues. He has initiated a system to assess and record pupils' attainments as they progress through the school. Both the co-ordinator and other teaching staff have attended subject development courses and this learning is being used to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. The subject is programmed to be a focus in the school development plan for the next academic year. Resource provision is satisfactory. The subject is well supported by a linked member of the governing body.

ART AND DESIGN

94. The standards are in line with those expected of pupils when they are seven and eleven years of age and pupils make satisfactory progress. Overall, standards have been maintained at the same level as at the previous inspection but there are examples of work that are above national expectations. Around the school, pupils' carefully mounted and displayed work shows a satisfactory range of two and three-dimensional work. All teachers take great care to create a bright and attractive environment in which all pupils' work is celebrated. In Year 6, pupils are familiar with a satisfactory range of materials, tools and techniques used in art, craft and design. Teachers and support staff give pupils with special educational needs very good support within lessons and they make very good progress. Since the previous inspection teachers have increased their subject knowledge and introduced a scheme of work to make clear the skills they should teach. The co-ordinator has introduced a new assessment scheme though this has not yet been fully implemented.
95. Teachers plan lessons so that pupils can practise and develop their skills as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 1 mix paints for spring flowers showing different shades of yellow. In

Year 3, they use different techniques such as stippling and sponging, and in Year 5 they show that they can mix paints to make a wide range of different tones in one colour. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to explore different ideas and plan their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 draw round leaves on fabric, stick and sew decorations on, before putting them on a fabric background to make a large wall hanging of a tree. When pupils in Year 6 design a hat for a character, they draw detailed designs showing the materials they will use, paint their favourite design and go on to make the finished product.

96. Teachers often plan work that links with other subjects. For example, Year 1 pupils make pictures of an African landscape using pastels, fabrics, and different types of paper linked to a story they have read. Pupils in Year 4 make clay containers based on what they learn about Ancient Egypt, and Year 2 pupils made three-dimensional models when they learn about the local environment in geography. There are some good examples of pupils using their information and communication technology skills to create pictures. For example, pupils in Year 4 create pictures using a computer program to demonstrate the pointillism technique of Seurat. Pupils in Year 3 use the digital photographs they have taken of themselves to develop their skills of painting using different textures and tones. Pupils learn about the work of artists and make their own pictures based on the artist's work. For example, Year 5 pupils learn about Van Gogh and make their own pictures of sunflowers and a bedroom.
97. There were only two art lessons in the school during the inspection so there is not sufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about teaching. However, teaching was very good in the two lessons observed. Teachers are hardworking and enthusiastic and have very good subject knowledge. This enables them to explain the work in a lively and interesting way. They place the right emphasis on the teaching of investigative, designing, making and evaluative skills, and give pupils time to develop these skills over several lessons. For example, pupils are given time to experiment with different painting techniques and tones. Teachers plan work that is just at the right level for the pupils, but challenging enough to make sure they learn and make progress. Teachers are very explicit in the use of key words such as 'composition', 'tone', 'translucency' and techniques', and some pupils also use those terms confidently. Teachers and learning support workers use very good questioning techniques to make sure pupils understand what they are doing, and also to challenge them to think more about their work. These positive features increase the pupils' interest and enjoyment and help them to make progress.
98. Pupils enjoy the subject and behave very well in lessons because they find the work so interesting and challenging. Teachers give pupils very good opportunities to work in groups and pupils have excellent relationships with each other. Pupils help one another, listen to each other's views, are happy to compromise and speak very politely to each other. For example, one pupil asked a friend 'Shall we use stippling for the sky or maybe we should use sponging? What do you think?'
99. There are some changes teachers need to make to raise standards even further. Teachers base their planning on nationally recognised programmes of work but as they do not follow the sequence recommended, they need to make sure that pupils have the appropriate skills to complete the units of work. They need to give pupils more opportunities to find out more about art from their own and other cultures. The newly appointed subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and supports colleagues well. She knows the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She is in a good position to make sure that improvements are carried out to raise standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Standards in Years 2 and 6 meet national expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress and those with special educational needs make very good progress. Since the last inspection there have been good improvements. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and know what pupils have to learn. They give pupils plenty of opportunities to design and make food products. Pupils use a wide range of materials, tools and techniques. Throughout the school, pupils make products that are of the standard expected of pupils of their age, and some of a higher standard.
101. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 design and make products using various materials. For example, pupils in Year 2 draw several designs for T-shirts for their teddy bears and choose the one they like best. They write out the instructions for making it before cutting out the fabric, sewing it together and drawing the design with fabric crayons. When they finish it they evaluate what they have done and say what they found difficult and what they would change. For example, one child wrote that he found it difficult to draw the design because

the fabric was wobbly, and would make it bigger because it was too tight for his teddy. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the importance of safety procedures when they make a fruit drink.

102. Pupils in Year 4 research different types of alarms before designing and making an alarm. They then evaluate their product critically and suggest improvements. They know how to use tools safely. Pupils in Year 6 find out what type of torch their friends would like, before drawing designs, planning their work and making torches. Most of the torches are of the standard expected of Year 6 pupils, though some are of a higher standard. Teachers make good links to other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 use information and communication technology to make posters to advertise the bread they have made, and use graphs to present the information they have found out about different types of bread.
103. There were no lessons in the infant department during the inspection and only two lessons in the junior department so there is not sufficient evidence to make an overall judgment on the quality of teaching. However, teaching was good in the lessons seen. Teachers use questions very well to check what pupils know and to make them think more about their work. For example, a teacher asks 'How would you describe the characteristics of the biscuit?' Pupils use terms such as 'appearance' and 'texture' correctly when they reply. Learning support workers work well with pupils who are baking biscuits and make sure they understand what they are doing, look for the changes that take place in the ingredients and know about the importance of health and safety.
104. Teachers plan interesting work that is just at the right level so pupils are enthusiastic, work hard and behave very well. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about different types of biscuits all pupils are attentive all the time, so the whole class is able to make very good progress in the time available. Pupils enjoy design and technology, work sensibly and safely together, and support one another very well when they work as part of a team. There are some changes teachers need to make to raise standards. Teachers base their planning on nationally recognised programmes of work but as they do not follow the sequence recommended they need to make sure that pupils have the appropriate skills to complete the units of work to the correct standard. There is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils in some of the planning. Teachers should provide more opportunities for pupils to use control mechanisms and develop the use of computers in the subject.
105. The enthusiastic and hard-working coordinator is committed to developing teachers' subject knowledge and to raising standards. She has clear plans for the further development of the subject. These include extending the use of information and communication technology and providing further training for staff.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards are above average in Year 6. The standards in Year 2 are well above average. The standards in Year 6 have been maintained at the level they were at the time of the last inspection, while in Year 2, standards are significantly higher. These standards are the result of good subject leadership, the enthusiasm and good subject knowledge of the teachers and of the way the subject is promoted throughout the school by strategies such as the local and world news boards present in every classroom. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, especially by the effective learning support workers, and make very good progress.
107. Pupils make very good progress in the infant years and good progress in the junior years. In Year 2, pupils explore the local area, observing and identifying places and features that they like and dislike with growing interest and enthusiasm. They then locate the places and features on maps and compare the characteristics of their local area with those in contrasting places such as a Scottish island and a settlement in Mexico. They investigate the safety of the road outside the school and consider some sophisticated possible changes to make it safer.
108. In Year 6, pupils make and use maps of different scales. Higher attaining pupils show a very good understanding of map keys and are articulate in explaining how the keys can help them to interpret maps they have not seen before. In Year 4, they compare their lives with those of people living in a community in Egypt. In Year 6, they also undertake a detailed investigation of Sedbergh in which they describe the surrounding landscapes, analyse land use and categorise work there as 'primary', 'secondary' and 'tertiary', again making comparisons with their own home area. They learn about processes in the natural environment, describing significant features of rivers and of weather patterns around the world. They make decisions about proposed changes to the environment, judging if they will be harmful or beneficial.

However, the study of a community in the developing world lacks depth, particularly in considering the issues faced by the people living there and how these relate to events in the wider world.

109. Teaching overall is very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers prepare detailed plans for their lessons that give good attention to supporting pupils in developing the skills they need to undertake tasks. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and teaching is particularly effective when the work is clearly set out to match the needs of pupils with different levels of ability. For example, in a Year 1 lesson higher attaining pupils were challenged to express their ideas by writing their own sentences but lower attaining pupils were supported to ensure that they understood and could record the basic learning points of their studies. However, some lesson planning does not identify work matched to the different abilities of pupils sufficiently clearly. A high priority is given to motivating pupils by encouraging them to generate their own questions about what they would like to discover from the places studied. In one lesson seen, the teaching was less effective because many of the questions posed were too vague for the pupils to follow up meaningfully. Marking frequently lacks constructive guidance.
110. The co-ordinator of the subject is effective. Her subject knowledge is good and this has been used well to develop the medium term plans for the school. She is active in supporting colleagues through monitoring their needs and helping to develop resources, although time is not presently available to monitor teaching. She does, however, monitor pupils' work and has introduced a system of assessment at the end of each topic. She is developing a European project that will link the school with three schools on the Continent. Resources are generally satisfactory and have recently been enhanced. Those for information and communication technology are also being developed with, for example, a multi-media study unit on mountain environments. Fieldwork is undertaken in nearly all years.

HISTORY

111. Standards are above those typically found in schools nationally at the age of seven and well above those expected at the age of eleven. These standards are an improvement on those found at the time of the last inspection. This improvement is the result of the enthusiastic adoption of national guidelines by the teaching staff, supported by the subject leader who sets high standards for the teaching of the subject and has high expectations of the pupils. The development of research skills is a major strength of the work undertaken, especially through homework. However, the school is aware that this can become burdensome on pupils in some situations and they have recently reviewed their expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
112. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection and additional evidence was collected from the scrutiny of pupils' work and of planning, discussions with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils and a review of displays. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school. In Year 2, pupils have developed a basic understanding of chronology by studying changes through time. They describe house development over the years and make a booklet showing the history of toys. The subject makes good links with literacy by developing their descriptive writing skills. For example, in the work about the Great Fire of London the pupils write accounts of the fire, sequencing events and explaining how the fire spread. Through their exploration of the conditions in the hospitals when Florence Nightingale took charge, they come to recognise why she devoted herself to making the changes she brought about.
113. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of key dates and events in British history such as from Roman times up to and including the Second World War, and the immediate post-war period. Investigative skills are developed well. For example, in Year 6, pupils undertake their own personal research studies and many of them complete work at an above average level. Pupils make use of a wide range of resources and sources of evidence such as a visitor who was an evacuee during the Second World War. Some resources are subjected to detailed examination, as in Year 4 where an artefact relating to their studies of Ancient Egypt is considered in terms of its use, how it survived, its decoration, its value and its possible user. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of the human dimension of the subject through their descriptions of people living in different conditions in Tudor times and by distinguishing between fact and opinion in their work about Doctor Barnardo. Good use is made of information and communication technology both for research and for recording and presenting work.
114. In the one lesson observed the class was visited by a student teacher dressed up as Howard Carter, the discoverer of the tomb of Tutankamen. This strategy was employed after the teacher had reviewed the previous lesson's learning with the class and was highly successful in capturing and holding the attention

of the pupils. It helped to create the feeling amongst the pupils that they were experiencing a real event and that they were able to question this person 'first hand'. This in turn helped the pupils to develop their questioning skills and showed that they had listened carefully to what they had been taught. From the evidence of work seen it is clear that teachers set high standards. However, in some classes there is insufficient matching of tasks to the different levels of pupils' abilities, particularly for lower attaining pupils. The marking of pupils' work shows a lack of comments intended to develop pupils' learning further.

115. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator uses her good subject background to support staff colleagues as required, although there is no time allowance for the post and currently little monitoring of teaching takes place. However, pupils' work is monitored twice a year on a sample basis and good practice is noted and shared amongst the staff. A portfolio of pupils' work assists the monitoring of progression in skills and content. A system for the assessment of pupils' work has recently been introduced but this does not enable teachers to track the progress of individual pupils in sufficient detail. Resources are good and the pupils go on a range of visits to support their studies.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

116. Since the last inspection, standards have risen throughout the school. They are now above those expected by Year 2 and Year 6. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs have a good level of confidence and knowledge in using the equipment, although their responses are limited by their reading and comprehension skills. Excellent use is made of specific software with pupils with severe learning difficulties to enable them to take a full part in lessons and make very good progress in the use of information and communication technology. Throughout the school, teachers use information and communication technology across the curriculum in a very effective way.
117. The improvements in standards made since the last inspection are due to better resources, teachers having better subject knowledge and understanding, and the excellent consultancy and training role of the subject co-ordinator. After dissatisfaction with earlier training, she set out to become a qualified trainer and has produced a range of very useful notes and guidelines for staff, as well as being available to consult over specific issues. Her work has contributed greatly to the high standards achieved throughout the school.
118. In Year 1, pupils use computers to create pictures of houses, using a range of techniques such as clicking and dragging objects. They extend their skills by using art software to create their own houses. They are able to delete their work correctly and move tool bars around the screen. They label their work, and merge the text and picture together. Year 2 pupils use a word processor to a good level. They know how to use the keyboard, especially the shift key, space bar, back space and return keys. They alter the font and change the colour of their work. They program a robot to move in specific directions and have used data handling software to create graphs.
119. In Year 3, pupils are able to combine text and graphics imaginatively as part of their design and technology topic to produce a poster to advertise a biscuit. Using a database, they create a range of graphs showing eye colours, and extend this work through the organisation of data involving two characteristics such as eye colour and height. In Year 4, pupils create artwork in the style of Kandinsky and Seurat. They manipulate pictures well by resizing them and changing their orientation. Many of them know three ways of copying and pasting text. In Year 5, pupils are able to interrogate a database effectively. They understand terms such as 'field' and 'record' and search for responses requiring more than one fact. Most understand and can use mathematical terms such as 'more than' and 'less than' in their searches. In Year 6, pupils are able to create a three or four page multi media presentation using many of the skills they have learned earlier in the school. They make good evaluative comments about web site home pages, and use aspects they like in creating their own. Pupils are able to use the Internet to search for information and confidently move from site to site. They make very good use of computers in completing their homework projects in preparation for secondary school.
120. There are some very able pupils throughout the school. For example, one Year 4 pupil has created his own website. The future improvement of the subject will require more thought to be given in the planning of lessons to these individual pupils' needs so that they can build appropriately on their knowledge and understanding. A very good before-school session is used for pupils from Years 2 to 6 to practise their numeracy skills, with well-structured and effective software. This enables teachers to track the individuals' progress and is very good use of the new technology. A knowledgeable learning support worker supports the teacher during these sessions.
121. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject. They respect and look after the equipment, using it sensibly, and are well behaved both on computers in classrooms and when in the computer suite. A major strength of the subject is the way pupils work together to solve the problems set by teachers, supporting and helping each other effectively.
122. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school. Only one lesson was observed in the infant classes, and this was of excellent quality, resulting in pupils making excellent progress in using the mouse and finding their way round the appropriate software. The lesson was very effectively planned, with appropriate extension activities and the teacher made full and effective use of the interactive whiteboard as part of a numeracy lesson to enhance the learning and practise of mental arithmetic skills. Evidence from displays and pupil's work supports the view that the quality of teaching in the infant classes is good.

123. The quality of teaching is also good throughout the junior classes with some that is very good. Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise still varies but has clearly improved since the last inspection. Lessons have a good pace, and most of them have a very good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to experiment and try out their ideas on the computers.
124. The teachers make very good use of the computer suite and this has proved a good investment. The governors are very aware of the need to plan for updating equipment on a regular basis. The co-ordinator has appropriate plans for the future development of the subject. These include more use of IT in the music curriculum and the continuing development of the recently introduced system for assessing pupils' progress. In addition, better links with parents are under consideration, so they can develop their knowledge and understanding in line with their children. The school has a very good website which provides parents and others with good, up-to-date information about the school and school life, as well as celebrating the achievements of pupils.

MUSIC

125. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Year 2. However, standards in Year 1 are above expectations. In Year 6, standards are well above expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection and standards have risen, particularly by the age of eleven. Standards in teaching have been maintained as specialist teaching continues for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
126. In Year 6, pupils very confidently perform a piece of popular music using vocal soloists, tuned and untuned percussion, clarinets, violins, auto harp, trumpet, key boards and recorders. Overall, their work demonstrates just how knowledgeable pupils have become. Although still in the rehearsal stage, the piece is already good with some tuneful singing, and some very good accompaniment provided by the instruments. Pupils have to count very carefully but all manage to come in at the correct point and to follow the beat. Some pupils read standard notation but many do not; however this does not impair their ability to perform. Pupils in this year group are building on experiences from lower down the school. For example, pupils in Year 5 use the pentatonic scale and some untuned percussion to interpret a brief nonsense poem about a termite.
127. The standard of singing in Years 1 and 2 is good, tuneful and lively, but in Years 3 to 6 it is very good, well in tune with carefully held long notes and clear words. When singing hymns in two parts, the pupils sustain the different parts with confidence and ease. Although no music was observed being taught in Year 2, pupils in those lessons seen in Year 1 were able to clap a simple rhythm, follow the teacher, sustain a beat and use percussion to accompany a song. This is good achievement for such young pupils.
128. Throughout Year 1, pupils make good progress but from Years 3 to 6 pupils make very good progress as they develop the relevant skills to make and appreciate music. Those pupils with special educational needs make similar progress, especially in Years 3 and 4 where they learn to play the recorder within the class.
129. Across the school, pupils enjoy their lessons and respond positively to teachers' questions. They listen carefully and all participate with enthusiasm. The older pupils work very well together in small groups to compose their music and willingly perform in front of their peers. As teachers' expectations are high, and their subject knowledge is very good, enthusiastic pupils are motivated and remain focused on the challenges set.
130. The quality of teaching in Year 1 is good and in Years 3 to 6, where specialist teaching occurs, it is very good. In all lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and interest encourage pupils to achieve well. Very good relationships give pupils the confidence to perform their compositions in front of their peers. In those lessons taught by a specialist teacher, her lively approach and knowledge of the subject inspires pupils to produce some very good music. For example, the music composed by Year 5 pupils was very good and they use a variety of instruments effectively to portray the termite in the poem. Pupils in both Year 6 classes rose to the challenge to perform "The White Cliffs of Dover", a memorable experience. The teacher's knowledge ensures progression in the development of skills. Praise, encouragement and the insistence that the appropriate techniques are used motivate the pupils. Effective use of questions helps pupils to reinforce or extend their learning. Pupils in lower year groups also have positive experiences and teachers' high expectations help to lay a firm foundation for further progress.

131. The music co-ordinator role is shared between two teachers. They work very closely together to ensure the development of skills throughout the school. Despite the fact that the specialist teacher only works part time, she organises and runs a range of extra-curricular activities, very ably assisted by a learning support worker. These include recorders, band and choirs. There are over 100 boys and girls in the main choir, who give up their free time to rehearse after school. Pupils regularly perform in school productions or within the community. Tuition in a range of orchestral instruments is available and those who learn are encouraged to play in the band or use their instruments during class lessons. Visitors who lead workshops enhance pupils' learning and appreciation of music

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Standards are above those expected by Year 2 and well above those expected by Year 6. These good and very good standards are an improvement since the last inspection. This is due to better teaching and provision very focused on developing skills through a wide range of activities. There are no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls, and all have opportunities to take part in all activities. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the effective learning support workers. Sport has a high profile in the school, with the senior management providing very good encouragement; a high proportion of the teachers help in the wide range of extra-curricular activities.
133. Pupils in Year 1 have good skills in sending and receiving a ball. They can control a ball with a bat as they move round the hall and use the bat to stop and send the ball. They are able to move in a confined space without bumping into others, a skill that is well built on throughout the school and made specific in Year 5 through techniques aimed at developing pupils' use of peripheral vision. Year 2 pupils develop their ball skills through throwing and catching practices. They can bounce a ball accurately to each other and are able to take part in challenges such as counting how many completed passes they can manage in a given time.
134. In Year 3, pupils have very good skills in dance. In one excellent lesson, they built a range of imaginative movements into a complete performance representing the Romans landing in Britain. They understand how they can improve their movements through working at different levels and heights. Pupils use their bodies very effectively making sudden twisting and turning movements to illustrate a watchful approach towards possible danger. Year 5 pupils demonstrate good skills in hockey and rugby. When passing and receiving a rugby ball, they show a good understanding of body and hand positions, resulting in accurate passing and catching. They can control a hockey ball well, moving around in a small space while remaining aware of the movements of others. Although no lessons were observed in Years 4 or 6 during the inspection, the standards pupils demonstrate in after-school activities, and the success of the school teams, supports the picture of very good teaching throughout the school.
135. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They take part in activities provided with enthusiasm and enjoyment, safely and sensibly. Their behaviour in lessons and clubs is good. They work well in pairs and small groups, collaborating and co-operating well to complete tasks successfully. Pupils have good opportunities to evaluate their own and others' work, and they do this to a high level. Throughout the school, they understand the need and importance of warming up and down before and after exercise. In most lessons, teachers refer appropriately to their pulse, heart rate and the need to stretch their muscles.
136. The quality of teaching is very good overall. The best teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and understanding, well-planned lessons with a clear progression of activities building pupils' skills to a high level by Year 6. Teachers often plan a very good balance of direct teaching and activity, ensuring that the majority of the lesson gives pupils time to take an active part. Resources are used appropriately and the teachers are very aware of health and safety issues in lessons. In some lessons, the more able and physically mature pupils are not given sufficiently differentiated tasks to extend their skills to a higher level, although they are able to demonstrate their skills through their performance in the given tasks. Teachers need to avoid confusion among pupils by agreeing the signals to be used, especially in the indoor lessons. Learning support workers are used effectively to assess pupils through observations of them performing, which are then noted and shared with the teacher. In the two lessons where the teaching was excellent, in dance and hockey, it was due to the well-planned activities, the pace and balance of activity and direct teaching, and the very good relationships teachers have with the pupils, as well as their very secure subject knowledge and understanding.

137. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. There are a range of clubs giving pupils the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and interests to a high level. The school has teams in a range of sports and takes part successfully in various local tournaments and competitions. The netball team was progressing successfully through a tournament during the period of the inspection. Members of the dance club were performing at a local dance festival, as they do each year, providing them with an excellent opportunity to perform in front of a large audience and to see high quality performances from other schools and organisations. The youngest pupils also have opportunities for some games activities in the summer months. A good proportion of pupils take up the opportunities available through these clubs, and the school makes good use of outside expertise for some coaching to a higher level in sports such as tennis and hockey.
138. The school's link to the local education action zone has enabled staff to support and be supported by other schools, especially a local secondary school. This has enabled a spread of expertise and good practice. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinators have a good idea of what they see the subject needing to continue improving in the future. Pupils with particular talents are also recognised well and supported. For example, after a coaching course in tennis, four pupils took part in more advanced skills coaching as part of a county-wide group.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2. Evidence came from talking to pupils and looking at their work. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above expectations. This picture has been maintained since the last inspection. The youngest pupils know about the Bible and the life of Jesus. They talk knowledgeably about the Christmas story, the three wise men and the escape to Egypt. They show some understanding of Christian worship in a church and Christian living. However, they were very unsure about other faiths, although they could talk about the Jewish 'special book' but could not remember what it was called or the language in which it was written. In Year 3, pupils explore Christianity further, looking at miracles and parables. They discuss what commitment means. In Year 4, the Creation story is studied but an opportunity is missed to compare the Christian version with that of other faiths. However, a detailed study of pilgrimage is undertaken and pupils show an understanding of its importance to other faiths. In Year 5, pupils look more closely at other faiths and what they mean to their followers. By Year 6, pupils write thoughtfully about God: "The amazing God with supernatural powers", and compare what they find amazing, ranging from family and friends to Majorca and its views.
140. Although there is limited written evidence of these pupils studying other faiths, during a lesson based on Judaism they talked about those religions that believed in one God and aspects of Judaism that related to the Passover and Moses. An area for further development is the provision of more opportunities for pupils to write for themselves, expressing opinions and thoughts. In the younger classes, recording is predominately through worksheets. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they develop knowledge and understanding of how important faiths are to their followers.
141. Pupils enjoy learning and respond well to teachers' questions. Because of very good relationships, pupils are prepared to discuss and share their thoughts, knowing they will be valued and respected. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils talked about Easter and what it meant to them while in a Year 6 lesson, pupils happily shared their views about what is special to them. They listen carefully to teachers' questions and are keen to respond. They are well behaved and well focused on the tasks set.
142. No lessons were observed in Years 1 or 2 so no judgements can be made about the quality of teaching. Those observed in Years 3 to 6 were judged either good or very good, with the majority being good. Lessons are well planned with appropriate objectives and a range of experiences, such as video clips, artefacts to study and discussion to increase pupils' understanding. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend or reinforce pupils' learning. They have very good relationships with their classes, which gives pupils confidence to express their thoughts. For example, in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were asked for thoughts for their "mezuzah" they suggested "Your family is always there for you...love your friends... be thankful for what you have".
143. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Planning has recently been reviewed, up-dated and based more closely on the syllabus agreed locally than was the case at the last inspection. Better assessment opportunities are also being developed. An audit of artefacts has been undertaken and provision improved. Wherever possible, pupils of other faiths are encouraged to talk about what and how

they celebrate festivals such as Diwali. Parents also visit classes to share their beliefs. Pupils visit the local church, and occasionally the Cathedral, to learn about Christian worship, but have little opportunity to visit places of worship for other faiths. This is an area for further development. The local vicar and church youth worker often lead assemblies, giving another perspective on Christianity. These visits and visitors enhance the pupils' understanding and appreciation of the importance religion plays in many people's lives.