

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. HARDULPH'S C.E. (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Breedon-on-the-Hill, Derby

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120119

Headteacher: Mr M Arkle

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker
11897

Dates of inspection: 13th -15th January 2003

Inspection number: 248095

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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 10 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Street Breedon-on-the-Hill Derby
Postcode:	DE73 1AN
Telephone number:	01332 862572
Fax number:	01332 862572
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs R L Hope
Date of previous inspection:	16 th February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11897	C Parker	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Geography History Physical education Special educational needs Educational inclusion	How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14083	A B Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19387	M Powell	Team inspector	English Art and design, Design and technology Music Religious education Foundation Stage curriculum.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	22

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Hardulph's is a primary school for pupils aged from four to ten years. It serves the village of Breedon-on-the-Hill and a number of surrounding hamlets. The school is much smaller than average, with 65 children who are taught in three classes. The children enter in the September of the year they are five and transfer to a middle school at the end of year 5.

The pupils are predominantly of white British heritage and all speak English as their first language. A very small number of children are receiving free school meals. Overall, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average; one child has a statement of special educational needs. The pupils' attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, but overall it is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The very strong caring ethos of the school results in excellent relationships and the very effective personal development of the pupils. They are achieving well and making very good progress because the teaching is very good. Standards in mathematics, reading and speaking and listening are high. The school is very well managed and the headteacher inspires, motivates and influences both staff and pupils. The costs per pupil are very high, but nevertheless the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics, reading and speaking and listening standards are high.
- The pupils are well motivated, achieve well and make very good progress. This is because the teaching is very good and they are set interesting activities and challenging tasks.
- The school's very caring ethos fosters very positive attitudes to learning, excellent behaviour and good relationships.
- The curriculum is very well organised and managed by the subject co-ordinators who work together very effectively.
- The pupils' attainment and progress are carefully assessed and comprehensively recorded.
- The home / school partnership is very strong. The parents are well informed and warmly welcomed into the school. They hold the school in high regard.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership that ensures the schools aims and values are fully reflected in its work.

What could be improved

- The pupils are given too few opportunities to write, for example, in science, history and geography.
- The governors are not making sufficient use of the principles of best value.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in February 1998. Standards have risen and the quality of teaching is now very good. It has addressed the issues from the last inspection very well. The annual priorities for school development are now based on the evaluation of previous plans and the governing body is monitoring the budget effectively. The outdoor area adjacent to the reception classroom is now used very effectively to extend learning activities. The school has broadened the range of opportunities for the pupils to write, but still more could be done to use and extend their writing across the curriculum.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	A	B
writing	A	A	C	E
mathematics	A	A	A	B

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

The children in the reception class are doing very well. Most should attain the goals set for the end of the foundation stage and a good proportion should exceed them. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are high. The results of the 2002 national tests, at the end of year 2, show that standards are well above average in reading and mathematics, but only average in writing. The results compare favourably with similar schools except in writing where they are, in this instance, well below average. In years 3, 4 and 5 the pupils continue to do very well in mathematics and reading. However, some pupils still do not write with the fluency that might be expected.

In all other subjects of the curriculum, standards are above average. The pupils are achieving well because the teachers interest and motivate them, consequently they learn very effectively. They are set appropriate individual targets. Those pupils with special educational needs are making good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning; they concentrate in lessons and persevere when they encounter problems.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies and when moving around the school is consistently excellent. They are particularly courteous and listen carefully to what others have to say.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent; the pupils work very well together and value each other's contributions.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average. There is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 5
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 teaching is very good and results in the pupils learning very effectively. In the reception class, the teacher makes very effective use of structured play to help the children to develop the skills they need. In years 1 to 5 the teaching of mathematics and reading is particularly strong and results in high standards. The teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, set interesting activities and challenging tasks that are carefully modified for different ages and abilities that motivate all of the pupils to do their best. They use a very good variety of resources that are appropriate for different needs, ask searching questions of the pupils and always value the answers offered. In years 3 to 5, the lessons have a pace, vitality and enthusiasm that moves learning along rapidly. The teachers and teaching assistant give very good support to the pupils with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. The wider curriculum is carefully planned and presented.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school supports the pupils with special needs very well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The personal development of the pupils is very effectively fostered in all aspects of school life. The teachers create an atmosphere in which the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of many activities.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very effective care that enhances the personal and academic development of all its pupils.

The home / school partnership is very good indeed. The parents value the work of the teachers, the leadership of the headteacher and the very caring ethos of the school. They are warmly welcomed by the school.

The curriculum is very well planned. Information and communication technology is playing an increasing role in the curriculum and numeracy skills are well developed in a range of contexts. However, the pupils do not have as many opportunities to write as freely as they should in a number of subjects, for example, science, history and geography.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads by setting an excellent example. He has a very clear vision for the school that is fully supported by the teachers. The whole staff works together to manage the curriculum very effectively and is constantly seeking to bring about improvements.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are kept well informed through detailed reports from the headteacher. They also make frequent visits to the school to find out for themselves how things are going.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and co-ordinators undertake a comprehensive analysis of the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	The school's resources are very well managed and carefully allocated.

There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll. The headteacher's joint responsibility as warden of the community centre is extremely demanding. Nevertheless, he combines the roles very effectively to the benefit of both the school and the community. The accommodation is good and is fully utilised. The school has a very good range of learning resources that are well organised and used effectively.

Many aspects of the best value principles are implicit in the work of the governors, such as, competitive tendering, analysis of results and consultation with parents. Nevertheless, they are not evaluating the impact of key spending decisions on either the provision made for the pupils or the attainment and progress of the pupils.

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 caring ethos of the school. • The good progress made by the pupils. • The leadership and commitment of the headteacher and staff. • The range of opportunities provided for the pupils • The good behaviour and relationships. • The strong community links. 	

The views expressed by the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who returned questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive. They clearly hold the school in high regard.

The inspectors agree with the many positive comments made by the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The children in the reception class are doing very well. Most are on course to attain the goals set for the end of the foundation stage and a good proportion should exceed them. Over the last few years, the results of national tests at the end of year 2 have consistently been well above average overall. They show that high standards are being maintained. The results are now higher than at the time of the last inspection. In 2002, in reading and mathematics the results were well above the national average and above the average for similar school because a high proportion of the pupils attained the higher levels. In writing, however, the results were average and well below those of similar schools. An analysis of the last three years' test results by gender shows that boys exceed the average by slightly more than girls, but there is considerable variation from year to year. This is almost inevitable within such small cohorts.
2. An analysis of the test results of pupils in year 5 shows that they continue to do very well in mathematics and reading. Their progress in writing also continues, but it is not as rapid as in other subjects. The school uses its very good relationship with the receiving high (middle) school to continue to monitor the pupils' progress by analyzing the results they attain at the end of year 6. The teachers are also able to discuss any possible areas for improvement with their counterparts at the middle school at meetings of the local schools.
3. The inspection evidence confirms that standards throughout the school in mathematics, reading and speaking and listening are well above average and that the pupils are doing very well and making very good progress. In writing, however, the older pupils do not write with sufficient fluency and do not reach the standards that might be expected. **This is an area for further improvement.**
4. There is a very strong commitment to continuing improvement within the school. The pupils are set individual targets that are either at or above the expected level as appropriate. Thorough analysis of the test results is helping to keep the school's results well ahead of the national trend, particularly in mathematics. This analysis of results has also led to a considerable focus on improving the pupils' writing. In 2002, the results of the writing tests dipped in the year 2, but this was because of the make up of a small cohort and not a failure in the school's strategy for improvement. The school is well aware that more work is needed to raise the pupils' writing to the highest standard, but is very prepared to continue to seek improvements.
5. In science, the teacher assessments indicate that all pupils in year 2 attained the expected level and a quarter reached the higher level in 2002. The inspection evidence confirms that standards are above average by the end of year 2 and that this strong position is built on effectively in years 3, 4 and 5. As a result, the pupils are achieving very well and many are ahead of the level expected for their age.
6. In all other subjects of the curriculum standards are above average. The pupils are achieving well because the teachers interest and motivate them, and consequently they learn very effectively. The pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because of the good support they receive that allows them to play a full part in lessons. The pupils with the potential for higher attainment are provided with a very good level of challenge and do very well in most areas of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. The vast majority of the pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. They arrive promptly each morning and are keen to start the day's activities. They quickly settle down in registrations, assemblies and lessons. Children of all ages consistently demonstrate very positive attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic, motivated and eager to learn. The pupils are attentive to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and opinions. The attendance rate at the school is well above the national average. There is no recorded unauthorised absence. All parents agree that their children like school.
8. Throughout the school, standards of behaviour are excellent. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The children move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and their conduct in the classrooms, at breaks and at lunchtime is consistently of the highest order. There were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual pupils. Consequently, the pupils work and play in an environment where there is no disruption to learning. This has a very positive effect on the standards achieved. There have been no exclusions in recent years. The vast majority of parents agree that the children's behaviour in the school is good.
9. The relationships in the school are excellent. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults and also to one another. They are polite and well mannered. Children of all ages work very well together in the classrooms and play happily together in the playgrounds. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. The pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all activities. All pupils' contributions to the lessons are fully valued. The children consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies, they are respectful of the occasion, willingly join in hymn singing and bow their heads reverently during prayers.
10. The pupils' personal development is very good. They are learning a very good range of social skills that is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. In the classrooms, they willingly take responsibility for their own work, and in lessons many were observed working independently. The older pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities, for example, organising the music during assemblies. The children go on a wide range of educational visits and various visitors add to the considerable wealth of activities that enhance the curriculum. The school supports local and national charities and the pupils are learning to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves. Most parents agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
11. The pupils' positive attitudes, their excellent behaviour and the very high attendance rate are major strengths of the school. They have a beneficial influence on their academic achievements and personal development.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The teaching is very good. The school benefits considerably from an experienced, knowledgeable and committed teaching staff who are well supported by effective classroom assistants. A strong sense of teamwork is encouraged by the headteacher, who sets an excellent example.

13. In the reception class, the teaching is very effective. The teacher and her assistant generate a very calm and caring atmosphere in which the children settle quickly into school life and develop the confidence to tackle the tasks they are set. The adults know the children very well because they observe them carefully. This enables them to plan a very good range of appropriate activities designed to ensure that the children enjoy their learning. Structured play is used very effectively to develop the children's social and learning skills. The children with special educational needs are fully included in all activities, and where necessary additional adult support enables all of the pupils to participate, for example, in physical development activities.
14. The teacher makes full use of the most recent guidelines for the foundation stage curriculum to plan stimulating activities in all areas of learning. For example, the children progress from counting in tens to counting in twos. They regularly and quite confidently use computer programs for a range of activities including writing, mathematics and drawing.
15. In years 1 to 5, both of the teachers prepare thoroughly for every lesson. They set out very clearly what it is they want the pupils to learn and modify the tasks for the different groups within the class. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported and those with the potential for higher attainment are appropriately challenged. Good classroom organisation and management of the pupils are very strong features of both classes. Any hint of misbehaviour or lack of application is quickly tackled and the pupils directed to the task in hand, thereby ensuring that they concentrate and learn very effectively.
16. The teachers have good subject knowledge which they use to good effect. In years 1 and 2, the teacher is particularly successful in developing the pupils' basic skills, which are then built on effectively in years 3, 4 and 5. The teachers also motivate the pupils by making lessons interesting and exciting. For example, when the older pupils were undertaking a science investigation, they had access to a very good range of organised resources for their purposeful tasks. The introduction generated a level of interest that was sustained throughout the lesson. All of the lessons have good pace and engage the pupils. This is particularly the case in years 3, 4 and 5 where one task rapidly follows another so that no time is wasted. Consequently, the pupils learn a lot. This is most evident in mathematics where the teaching is excellent and the pupils sustain concentration, persevere and willingly evaluate their own learning at the end of the lesson.
17. The homework system is well organised and the parents are aware of what is expected of their children. The homework tasks relate well to the work of the classroom. The pupils in years 1 and 2, for example, were asked to research the age of their homes and to note the building materials used. This information contributed to lively discussion and the construction of a time line to reinforce the concept of the past. The pupils' attitudes to homework are best illustrated through their response to a 'voluntary' homework challenge set over the Christmas holiday. They responded very positively and many pupils used a range of information sources to put together a booklet as part of their history study of ancient Greece.

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

18. The school provides all of its pupils with a curriculum that is well organised and managed. It fully meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum for the foundation stage is very well planned and provides a range of challenging and interesting activities for the youngest children.

Improvements since the last inspection include a more effective use of the outdoor area adjacent to the reception classroom to extend the learning activities. Opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are clearly identified and represent a strong strand within the classroom activities. For example, texts from a range of cultures are used to promote language development in literacy lessons. Similarly, the music that introduces collective worship is drawn from many cultures.

19. The school has successfully introduced strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers are engaged in an on-going process of evaluation that enables them to identify the fact that the standards of pupils' writing need to be kept constantly under review. There are now consistent formats for planning the curriculum that result in long, medium and short-term plans containing very clear objectives for each lesson in every subject. These plans are all of good quality. The teachers have successfully incorporated national guidance into the planning of all the foundation subjects. A shared commitment to equal opportunities is well reflected in the short term plans to ensure that a variety of needs are met. For example, strategies have been introduced to improve the spelling of a group of lower attaining pupils in years 3, 4 and 5.
20. The aspects of the curriculum that cover personal development and health education are very good. The pupils' self esteem is consistently promoted through praise and through more formal merit systems. Work in science underpins the pupils' understanding of various aspects of a healthy lifestyle and lessons in physical education, as well as after school clubs, promote the importance of exercise. The extracurricular clubs together with opportunities provided through the very strong links with the community considerably enhance the daily curriculum provision. For example, an art club was well attended by older pupils who responded very positively when introduced to the work of a 16th century artist. They had the opportunity to attempt to imitate his style of painting. The school has very strong links with local churches and celebrates some of its festivals with local residents. Local people contribute well to the various environmental collections that the school undertakes.
21. Links with other local schools are very good. The older pupils, for instance, are currently engaged in preparing for a collaborative drama production based on Ancient Greece, which is being studied by the partnership of schools. They enthusiastically support inter-school sporting activities. Former pupils now return to the school to attend a homework club. The arrangements for the pupils transferring to the next phase of education at the end of year 5 are very thorough and help to ensure a smooth start in the new schools.
22. The school has a very strong ethos that is reflected in the very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils are encouraged to respond sympathetically to others and to appreciate that in various parts of the world children often face great difficulties. The themes planned for collective worship successfully foster strong values and promote an awareness of a 'higher being'. The acts of worship include well-planned opportunities for reflection. The pupils are introduced to a range of art and are taught how to search for meaning behind the different themes, for example, those depicted by Monet.
23. The caring atmosphere and very good relationships provide a firm foundation for the pupils' social development. Many visits and interaction with a range of visitors further broaden the pupils' social skills. The pupils have a very well developed sense of morality. Appropriate behaviour is so very well promoted that the pupils acquire a clearly defined sense of the difference between right and wrong. The teachers set a very good example and thoroughly support the pupils developing social skills and impart a clear sense of how their actions impact upon others.

24. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. The pupils respond with interest to learning about their own culture, for example, the Christian festivals. The classrooms and corridors reveal a range of interesting work about other countries as well as artwork from other cultures. For example, the art club has produced a display of well executed papier-mache elephants, decorated in Hindu style and complete with bejewelled saddle cloths. With the help of a parent, the pupils have been able to try on saris, and when studying Hinduism in religious education the older pupils visited a mandir. Before the visit they had the opportunity to speculate about the aspects that they might find unfamiliar. The study of ancient cultures features prominently in history lessons, but the pupils in key stage 1 are also developing a strong sense of their local area as they study the ages and materials of local houses.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. The school is very effective in the way it promotes and monitors the pupils' academic performance and their personal development. The assessment and recording procedures are very comprehensive and ensure that the pupils' progress is tracked regularly through a range of tests and focused observations of the pupils while they work. Detailed records of the pupils' progress are passed on from one teacher to the next and ensure a smooth transition from class to class. The teachers also compile comprehensive portfolios of work in a range of subjects. They use these well to check that the quality of work meets the relevant national criteria. The information gained influences how the curriculum is planned and is also used to set targets for improvement for both individual pupils and for particular groups. For instance, careful analysis of the spelling tests demonstrated that the school needed to modify the way spelling was taught. This has had a very positive effect on the pupils' attainment in spelling.
26. Baseline assessments provide a useful picture of what the children can do when they enter the reception class. The activities are then carefully chosen to match the children's present attainment and ensure that they make consistently good progress. The school provides strong support for the pupils with special educational needs and helps them to achieve the targets set out in their individual education plans. The learning support assistants also provide invaluable support for these children to ensure that they are fully included in every aspect of classroom life.
27. The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils. There are clearly laid down procedures for the staff to follow. The procedures for child protection are securely established and fully understood by all staff. The governing body and the headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously and all the required health and safety inspections, including very detailed and meticulously recorded risk assessments, are systematically carried out and formally recorded.
28. The pupils are encouraged to care for each other and do so because relationships are very good. The school promotes a very high standard of discipline and good behaviour. The pupils are courteous and thoughtful towards each other. They have been involved in drawing up class and school rules. They behave very well inside and outside the classroom.
29. The procedures for recording and monitoring absence are very good. The registers are completed accurately, reasons for non-attendance are recorded consistently, and absences rigorously followed up. Attendance levels are very high because the pupils feel valued and enjoy going to school. This has a very positive influence on the standards the pupils attain.

30. The school provides very effective care for its pupils. The headteacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides excellent leadership in this aspect. All members of staff are caring, dedicated and totally committed to the welfare of the children in their charge. All pupils are treated as individuals and given the help and support that they need. The parents greatly appreciate this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

31. The home / school relationships are very good, and the school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of the parents. Most of them are fully involved in their children's work in school and at home; for example, they fully support the children in their homework tasks, including their reading. The home / school diaries provide an effective way in which parents can be involved in their children's learning. The parents understand the homework arrangements and appreciate the opportunity to see the homework once it has been marked. There is an active Parents, Friends and Teachers Association (PFTA) that raises funds for the school. Most parents expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school.
32. Communication between the school and home is very good. The school sends out regular newsletters and frequent individual letters about specific events and activities. It publishes an attractive, comprehensive and informative prospectus. The governors hold an annual meeting with the parents and publish a useful annual report. The parents receive an informative annual progress report that clearly indicates what the pupils can do, the progress they are making and the targets for improvement. They then have the opportunity to discuss their children's work and progress with the teachers and to be involved in setting subsequent targets. The headteacher and his staff are very welcoming and approachable. They make themselves readily available to parents at the start and end of each day. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to speak informally to their child's class teacher.
33. Overall, the school has very effective links with parents. This high level of parental involvement has a positive effect on the children's academic achievement and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

34. The headteacher provides excellent leadership that ensures the school's aims and values are fully reflected in its work. He has established a very clear vision for the school which values and includes every pupil. The whole staff work together to manage the curriculum very effectively and are constantly seeking to bring about improvements. Plans for continuing improvement are linked to performance management. All development activities are monitored and the teachers utilise their evaluations in the next stage of improvement planning. This is evident in the school's ongoing work to improve standards in writing and in its efforts to make more effective use of the final part of each lesson.
35. The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are kept well informed through detailed reports from the headteacher. Their dual role as governors of the community centre gives them not only a wider responsibility, but also greater involvement in the school and community. The governors also make frequent visits to the school to find out for themselves how things are going. Recently they have focussed on the extent to which information and communication technology is being used across the curriculum. They are aware of the school's performance because the headteacher and co-ordinators undertake comprehensive analysis of the results of national and school tests. These analyses are used in the school development and improvement

planning. There is also regular monitoring of teaching which involves all of the teaching staff observing and commenting on each other's practice. This is very effective within the constructive climate of mutual respect that exists between the teachers and the headteacher.

36. The school's resources are very well managed and carefully allocated. The finance committee of the governing body monitors spending. Many aspects of the best value principles are implicit in the work of the governors, such as, competitive tendering, analysis of results and consultation with parents. However, the governors are not yet evaluating the impact of key spending decisions on either the provision made for the pupils or their attainment and progress. They should now make more explicit use of the best value principles in their decision-making processes. **This is an area for improvement.**
37. There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll. The headteacher's joint responsibility as warden of the community centre is extremely demanding. Nevertheless, he combines the roles very effectively to the benefit of the school and the community. The accommodation is good and fully utilised. The school has a very good range of learning resources that are well organised and used effectively. The recent purchase of a number of laptop computers has significantly improved the school's resources for information and communication technology.
38. The school is situated in attractive grounds, comprising hard surface play areas, a large grass sports field and an adventure playground. They provide very good facilities for the pupils and the local community. The teaching accommodation is well maintained and the teachers display the pupils' work effectively to produce a stimulating and attractive learning environment. There are sufficient classrooms for the number of pupils, and they are large enough for all aspects of the curriculum to be presented effectively. The hall is of adequate size for whole school assemblies, physical education lessons and dining. It is enhanced by a useful stage that doubles as a spacious library area. There are adequate storage facilities for learning resources. The school has poor access for disabled people, both indoors and outdoors, and no special toilet facilities for this group. However, the problems of access arise from the fact that the school is built on the side of a hill.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. The governors, headteacher and teachers should maintain their high level of commitment to ongoing school improvement. They should now ensure that
- (1) the pupils have more opportunities to write freely in a range of subjects, for example, history, geography and science, as part of the overall strategy to improve standards in writing
 - (2) they make more use of best value principles when taking decisions on the use of their financial resources and in evaluating the effect of those decisions on the subsequent quality of the provision.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	13	3				
Percentage	16	68	16				

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	65
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	4	8	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (78)	92 (89)	92 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	92 (89)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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	59		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	3		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background	2		
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded	1		

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 – Y5

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1
Average class size	21.7

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	97.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002
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	£
Total income	210 107
Total expenditure	218 397
Expenditure per pupil	3 545
Balance brought forward from previous year	23 216
Balance carried forward to next year	14 927

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	57
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	30	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	30	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	30	0	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	55	39	0	3	3
The teaching is good.	64	27	0	3	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	45	0	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	21	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	0	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	27	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	15	3	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	33	3	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	48	9	3	0

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

40. The children enter school in the September of the year in which they are five. There are currently 16 children in the reception class. They have a wide range of ability, but the baseline assessment indicates that their attainment on entry was average overall. A good proportion of the children have well developed speaking and listening skills and demonstrate good social development at an early stage, and others are developing in these areas as a result of the adults' skilled approaches. The children are making very good progress in all areas of learning, and most are on course to reach the early learning goals at the end of the foundation stage. Many are likely to exceed them. This is because the teaching is very effective. The adults observe the children very carefully and then plan a wide range of appropriate activities that are designed to ensure that they enjoy their learning. Consequently, the children are doing very well. The good teaching seen at the time of the last inspection has now improved further and is very good overall.

Personal and social development

41. The adults provide a calm and consistent role model so that the children develop confidence, self-esteem and the social skills required to work co-operatively with others. The children look forward to their activities and settle very quickly when they enter the classroom because the routines are well established. At an early stage, they learn the importance of listening to each other and of taking turns to voice their thoughts, for example, in response to the stories they hear.
42. Most of the children approach a range of activities with confidence. When offered choices, they lose no time in selecting a role-play activity, construction play, painting or other activities that are regularly on offer. They know what is expected of them, for example, when they paint. Independently, they fetch aprons and know where to place materials and equipment when they have finished. The photographic evidence shows that they move confidently between the indoor and outdoor areas when the weather allows. This is clearly evident when the sand and water trays or the small world equipment are located on the paved area just outside the classroom. They also help each other when they play on the recently refurbished outdoor play equipment.

Communication, language and literature

43. Many of the children speak clearly and confidently by the time they leave the foundation stage. One child, on being asked a question about Cuddly Dudley, said clearly "He wanted to get away because he was fed up with being cuddled". Another good example was seen when the teacher asked the children in turn to extract an object from a feely bag, decide if it started with the sound "sh" or "s" and then talk about the object. For some children, this activity was quite demanding but it was conducted in a way that developed the children's confidence to speak in front of all the others. The teacher ensured that all the children took turns to speak. The children's language skills are also purposefully developed through the activities in the role-play corner. The adults skilfully move the children on from solitary play to situations in which they need to speak to each other in various contexts.
44. The children are introduced to a very good range of nursery rhymes and well known stories. The teacher's very good narrative skills captivate the children who then love to join in. This is

particularly valuable for the children whose speaking skills are not as well developed as those of some others.

45. At times, the children engage in more formal activities, such as practising letter shapes. Most have an appropriate pencil grip, but a few are still holding their pencils in a way that makes it difficult to achieve good, consistent shapes. Most can now write their own name in well-shaped letters but a few are still at the stage where they form approximations of various letters and are not yet able to orientate them correctly. However, the adults provide very valuable help and guidance so that the children's skills improve. The individual support the children receive and the variety of well-timed activities ensure that the children's learning is enjoyable and their progress is very good.

Mathematical development

46. The teachers plan the mathematics activities very skilfully to ensure that the children's numeracy skills are developed as widely as possible. In one lesson, for instance, the children readily recognised numbers as they moved around the hall, stopping at various identified, numbered carpet squares. They can count as well as recognise the names of various numerals. In role-play, they use numbers and coins as they write out and pay bills at the café. The adults are skilful at developing the children's awareness of shape in artwork and in the classroom environment generally. The children have made collages from different shapes that they know. By the time they reach the end of the reception class, most children recognise a range of 2D and 3D shapes. They can identify repeating patterns and can reproduce them in their painting and colouring activities. They use puppets and "small world" materials to position objects and describe where they are in relation to each other. By the end of the foundation stage, a good proportion of the children exceed the early learning goals.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

47. The children receive a very good range of experiences to broaden their understanding of the world. The photographic evidence and the work seen during the inspection indicates that information and communication technology is widely used for a range of purposes, for example, to reinforce number work. The work in science provides opportunities for the children to experience how magnets work and how various objects move on different surfaces. They learn about the parts of their bodies and their senses. Many play experiences allow the children to apply their understanding, for example, as they use lenses to look at various objects and when they take care of the baby dolls in the role-play area. They have hung streamers and wind chimes and watched how shadows form. They select materials to make models and experiment with different ways of fixing them using glue, paper clips and sellotape.
48. The children are very receptive when taken outside to look at their school environment, noting various sounds and smells and recognising seasonal changes. They have developed a good level of understanding of hot and cold weather and the way different animals, such as monkeys and polar bears, adapt to their particular climate. They have also investigated some of the properties of water and recognised that some objects sink while others float and that dry sand and wet sand behave differently. Overall, many children fully meet the targets identified for them in this area of learning.

Physical development

49. Many of the children are developing above average levels of physical co-ordination. They climb, run and jump with confidence and generally revel in the challenges posed by the outdoor equipment. They move rhythmically to taped music and can control body shapes well. The photographic evidence shows children moving in a circle in a very harmonious, co-ordinated way. The adults have a good sense of safety and are vigilant so that the children learn to extend their skills without harm either to themselves or to others.
50. During art and design activities, many show good control when cutting card and can produce quite small shapes with a commendable degree of dexterity. By the time they move to year 1, many exceed the early learning goals in this area.

Creative development

51. The children enjoy a good range of musical activities. They have access to an exciting array of musical instruments that allow them to make and recognise sounds. They sing with enthusiasm and join in energetically with the older pupils during collective worship. They enjoy selecting, cutting and sticking materials for collage work. They paint confidently and many exercise their imagination well, for example, when selecting colours to enhance their drawings. Creative role-play is a regular feature of the children's experiences. They show a great interest in dressing up and respond very well to the way the adults prompt them to think imaginatively. This was in evidence as a group of children played at being the baker and the customers at a baker's shop.

ENGLISH

52. Standards in English are above average by the end of year 2 and by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of year 5. Taken overall standards have improved since the last inspection. Throughout the school, standards in reading and speaking and listening are high, but some pupils do not write with the fluency that might be expected. The pupils' spelling is gaining in strength because the teachers have reviewed their approach to teaching of this skill and have refined the support provided for different groups of pupils. This is the result of a careful analysis of attainment in spelling. A number of strategies have been introduced to improve the pupils' writing, but the pupils still need more regular opportunities to write in various contexts, for example, science, history and geography, in order to gain greater fluency.
53. From the children's earliest days in the reception class, the teachers create opportunities for them to talk with each other and with adults. There are also very good strategies for enhancing the children's listening skills. Both of these aspects of the work continue into years 1 and 2. During a history lesson about homes, for instance, many pupils provided extended responses to the teacher's questioning based on researches they had carried out for homework. During a soup-making activity as part of a science lesson, the pupils chatted to each other about the process and later excitedly discussed how the cooked product smelt and tasted. The teaching assistants work very effectively to ensure that the lower attaining pupils engage in dialogue to develop the content and clarity of their talk.
54. In the oldest class, the pupils are very accustomed to having their opinions canvassed and readily engage in paired and group discussions. They did very well during a drama lesson where they were grouped to discuss how they were going to act out aspects of the story of Daedalus and Icarus. Relationships in the class are so positive that the pupils very freely express their opinions about text. Great care is taken to ensure that both boys and girls have equal opportunities to speak during these discussion sessions.

55. The pupils well exceed the expected standard in their reading. The teachers provide a good, varied range of reading opportunities, some silent, some in groups and often to an audience as part of literacy lessons. Many children, therefore, read confidently and audibly. The adults provide very good role models for expressive reading and consistently encourage the pupils to use their knowledge of how to break down words into their component parts in order to tackle unfamiliar complex words. The pupils are encouraged to read a good range of books that challenge them to develop their taste. Many of the older pupils are familiar with the works of current popular authors. The younger children have a good recall of stories that they have read and can talk about the roles of some of the characters. The home-school link book encourages the parents to hear their children read and to write occasional comments.
56. The teaching of writing is thorough and systematic. The need for accuracy in areas such as spelling, punctuation and sentence construction is well emphasised. The older pupils know how to improve the interest of their writing by the addition of adjectives, adverbs, similes and metaphors. The range of topics for writing provides variety and allows the pupils to develop an understanding of different styles. However, the tasks are often very tightly structured and rarely give the pupils the opportunity to write freely and at length. Consequently, the flow of their writing is somewhat constrained and often inhibited. The pupils, and particularly those with the potential for higher attainment, need time to write more extensively and develop a greater fluency in their work. The school is very aware of this issue and is in the process of implementing an action plan to raise standards in writing further. The quality of the pupils' handwriting is average, but the good work in years 1 and 2 is now being extended in the upper class so that the pupils learn to join their letters. This thrust has not yet had sufficient impact on the handwriting of some of the oldest pupils.
57. Overall, the school has an effective strategy for promoting literacy skills. The planning is very meticulous and each lesson has very clear objectives that are made clear to the pupils. There is generally a good balance of activities, but writing skills need more time to be fully developed. Equally, the application of writing in other areas of learning could well be increased. The levels that pupils reach at various points of the school year are carefully tracked and the information is used to plan subsequent work appropriate to the stage each child has reached.

MATHEMATICS

58. Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection. An analysis of national tests results at the end of year 2 shows that standards are now consistently well above average. The proportion of pupils working at higher levels is very high. This is a direct result of comprehensive planning, very good teaching and the challenging tasks set for the pupils. The results of optional tests show that standards are similarly high by the end of year 5. The inspection of the pupils' work and observation of lessons support the view that the pupils are making very good progress and achieving very well.
59. The pupils are keen to learn, respond well in lessons and generally enjoy mathematics. They are achieving very well because of the very good teaching. A scrutiny of the pupils' work shows they do a lot of work in all areas of the mathematics curriculum, have good all round knowledge and are developing a broad range of skills. In all lessons, they continue to behave very well, are very well motivated and work hard. They persevere when the work is challenging and respond well to praise. The pupils listen well to the teacher, and the older pupils join in constructively with group or class discussions with the constant encouragement of their teacher.

60. The teaching of mathematics is very good overall and in years 3, 4 and 5 it is excellent. In many lessons, the classroom assistants work effectively with small groups of children to extend their learning. They give particularly good support to the pupils with special educational needs to ensure they take a full part in the lessons and consequently they make good progress. The teachers plan the lessons extremely thoroughly in line with the national numeracy strategy, and are very clear about what they want the pupils to learn in each lesson. They write the objective for the lesson on the board to ensure that the pupils know what is expected of them. The mental starter sessions are well used to revise and consolidate learning and challenge the pupils to apply what they already know. This was the case when the older pupils were set target totals that they had to 'hit' with a limited range of numbers.
61. All activities are conducted briskly and in some lessons, for example in year 3, 4 and 5, the pace is very rapid indeed and accelerates the pupils' learning. In all classes, this good pace is maintained throughout the lesson. This was the case in year 1 and 2 when the pupils were developing their understanding of place value through a range of tasks that were carefully modified for the different groups within the class. The teacher's questioning of the pupils to encourage them to explain their findings was a particularly strong feature of the lesson. In years 3, 4 and 5 the lessons are very well structured and the activities are carefully modified to provide the right amount of challenge for the different age and ability groups within the class. In one lesson, the teacher set a range of demanding, but well-matched tasks to increase the pupils' understanding of rounding in tens, hundreds and thousands. In this lesson, the higher attaining pupils were particularly well challenged by a series of problems and they responded very well to the task set for them.
62. The mathematics co-ordinator has recently focussed his efforts on improving the effectiveness of the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons. This has clearly been successful because they are generally used to very good effect to assess the extent of the pupils learning and prepare them for the next stage. This was well illustrated in year 1 and 2 when the teacher assessed the extent of the pupils' understanding of place value. In years 3,4 and 5 the pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning at the end of a lesson.
63. The management of the mathematics curriculum is very good and it fully reflects the national numeracy strategy. It is highly organised and benefits considerably from the headteacher's leadership but also from the teamwork of the whole staff. Together they have a strong commitment to the continuing improvement and maintenance of the present high standards.

SCIENCE

64. Standards in science are above average both at the end of year 2 and year 5. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The science curriculum is well planned so that the pupils cover all aspects of the programme of study. In years 1 and 2, links are also made with other subjects so that, for example, work about vegetables in their study of plants is connected to a design and technology activity in which the children make soup.
65. The pupils are achieving well and make good progress. The recorded work of pupils in years 1 and 2 shows that they can use pictures, words and diagrams to record their observations. They are able to construct a simple circuit and show a growing ability to describe and record what they see. Pupils of all abilities are doing well and all are on course to reach at least the expected level by the end of year 2. The more able pupils should attain the higher level by that stage. In the one lesson seen in years 1 and 2 the pupils were learning about plants and the more able pupils were able to talk, for example, about how plants give out oxygen. They were all able to

group plants into root vegetables, leaf vegetables and flowers. In this lesson, the teaching was good because it was well structured, built effectively on previous learning and involved the pupils in interesting tasks.

66. In years 3, 4 and 5 the pupils continue to achieve very well. They demonstrate a good knowledge of life process, for example, by identifying links within food chains and in the classification of organisms. Pupils of all abilities can identify electrical conductors and insulators, create circuits and observe the effects of adding additional batteries and bulbs. In the lesson observed, the teaching was very good. Thorough planning and meticulous preparation of resources allowed the teacher to introduce the lesson in a manner that motivated the pupils and raised pertinent questions before they embarked on an investigation to find how much force was needed to pull an object over different surfaces. All of the older pupils were able to carry out a fair test and record their findings with reasonable accuracy. All of the pupils made good gains in their learning and the tasks were modified for the different groups within the class, but some of the older pupils could have been given greater independence in recording their work. Scrutiny of the pupils completed science work from the previous term also suggests that they could be allowed to write freely and to determine their own procedures, including the use of information and communication technology, for recording their results and drawing conclusions. Such opportunities would extend the very effective learning that takes place in the lessons.
67. The school has comprehensive records of the pupils' attainment and analyses the results of year 2 tests. The teachers use the good links that exist with the middle school to follow the pupils' progress through to the year 6 tests. The results are used to ensure that the pupils are making the gains they should through years 3, 4 and 5. This and other strong links with a number of schools in the area provide support and professional development opportunities for the co-ordinator.

ART AND DESIGN AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

68. Two lessons in design and technology and an art club for older pupils were scheduled during the inspection. However, the work on display, photographic records and work in sketchbooks from all classes provide convincing evidence of the range and quality of the work produced. Since the last inspection, standards have improved. This is because very good use is made of national guidance and the policies are well thought out and cover important areas, such as assessment.
69. The pupils work in a variety of media. In key stage 1, they are able to select materials for fabric collage and know how to apply them in different ways. For instance, they have cut paper patterns for Joseph's multi-colour coat. They mix colours effectively and know how to make them either thicker or thinner. Good teaching has encouraged them to observe carefully, for example, when drawing natural objects or when asked to produce a self-portrait. During a lesson that combined work in science and design and technology, most children were adept at cutting with knives as they prepared vegetables to make soup. The photographic evidence shows the pupils adroitly fixing together a variety of components to make a vehicle suitable for transporting a small toy. A computer program was used imaginatively to design Christmas cards. The pupils have carefully selected and cut out shapes from holiday brochures to create effective figures, such as witches and giants.
70. The good progress made in key stage 1 continues into year 3 and beyond. The pupils' drawing and painting skills and techniques improve. They increasingly use their sketchbooks to try out various shapes and textures. Their drawings are of good quality and include pencil sketches of Victorian artefacts that have been closely observed and reproduced. The pupils have regular

opportunities to work in clay and to appreciate the work of craftspeople. The history topic on ancient Greece is providing appropriate opportunities for painting, collage work, papier mache and clay. During lessons in design and technology, the pupils are successfully learning how different mechanisms can produce a variety of movements. Good discussion led to well planned and executed use of pivots to represent fish leaping in and out of water, goalkeepers stretching to save a shot and boats bobbing on cardboard waves. The pupils also developed their understanding of the term 'prototype'.

71. One of the good features of the teaching is the preliminary discussion that stimulates the pupils thinking and encourages them to trial, evaluate and then refine their designs. The concluding sections of lessons provide a very good forum for pupils to be critical of their work and to articulate what they think the next stage might be. In some cases, they were moving on to determine how they would produce synchronised pivots. The pupils respond very well to the teaching. The adults provide a very good level of support, which ensures that pupils of all abilities experience success and approach the design tasks with confidence. The resources are of good quality and easily accessible so that no lesson time is lost. The pupils are assessed as they work, and summative assessments handed on from class to class provide a useful resume of what they achieve over a year.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

72. Standards in history and geography are above average. Although it was only possible to observe one history lesson it is clear from the pupils' work, the school's record of their attainment and from talking to the children that their knowledge and skills either match or exceed those expected for their age. Overall, the position has improved since the last inspection.
73. From the start of year 1 it is clear that the pupils are developing an investigative approach to geography. They have carried out an enquiry to answer the question, 'Is our school on a busy road?' and written to the council about making the village safer as a result. These skills are built upon and developed very well as they get older. In years 3, 4 and 5 the pupils increasingly gained an understanding of how people can protect their environment through the work they have done on river pollution, the rainforests and the possibilities of recycling household rubbish. The attainment records of the oldest pupils' show that they are acquiring a broad range of skills and the teacher's plans indicate that these are developed through an appropriate range of topics.
74. Similarly in history, a well-planned curriculum is the well spring of the good levels of attainment and the very good progress that the pupils achieve. The children in years 1 and 2 have recently compared their toys with those in the past. They have used the reminiscences of their parents and grandparents as a basis for this work. The older pupils develop their ability to compare 'then and now' by making detailed notes about what life was like in a Victorian school compared to school life today. In addition, they have found out about the very different lives of the rich and poor and influence of key figures such as Dr. Barnado.
75. The pupils enjoy history because the teaching in years 3, 4 and 5 is very lively and lessons have variety and a rapid pace. In one excellent lesson seeking to answer the question 'Who were the ancient Greeks?', the teacher used his very good knowledge to help the pupils to understand the difference between life in Athens and Sparta. The teacher and the teaching assistant played the roles of an Athenian and a Spartan before the pupils were challenged to identify the differences through very effective questioning and interesting activities. The pupils made significant gains in their learning in this lesson which demonstrates why they are achieving very well.

76. The pupils' enthusiasm for history is shown in the number who responded to a voluntary homework task set for the Christmas holidays. Many used a variety of sources including the Internet to find out about the Olympic Games, the goddess Demeter and Alexander the Great.
77. There is one area of weakness in these subjects. The pupils record their work in a variety of ways, but they have too few opportunities to write freely, particularly in years 3, 4 and 5.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

78. Standards in information and communication technology have been maintained since the previous inspection and remain above average. The pupils are very confident and approach the tasks they are given with an eager enthusiasm. The school is currently working to extend the uses of information technology across the curriculum. The inspection evidence indicates an increasing successful use of the IT facilities to support learning in other subjects, though there is still scope for further application and integration. The quality and range of the equipment has improved significantly of late. The pupils now have access to a number of laptop computers that are linked by a wireless network to supplement the desktop computers that are always accessible.
79. In years 1 and 2, the pupils use 'painting' software to help them to create and record images of different types of houses and homes as part of their work in geography. Their work shows good use of colour and shape to depict, for example, a block of flats and a stately home. The teacher also sets them tasks to support their learning in mathematics, for example, when ordering numbers. The older pupils have developed a good range of skills and understanding of many the standard facilities of a word processor. In one lesson observed, the teacher made good use of newspaper articles to begin to explore how information is communicated to a readership and how the headline is designed to 'catch the eye'. When the pupils were then set the task of presenting text in an eye catching, way, they used colour, font size, underlining and bullet points. However, some pupils lost the impact of a striking heading by using Wordart and getting a little carried away! This created an opportunity for good discussion that was used well.
80. The school has implemented a good record keeping system, which shows that the year 5 pupils are either working at or exceeding the level expected for their ages. The teachers are very aware of the need to extend further the use of information and communication technology. The governors have visited the school to find out for themselves how it is used in lessons and wish to support the teachers in making full use of the resources they have available.

MUSIC

81. No music lessons were taught during the period of the inspection and there were no recordings upon which to base secure judgements of overall standards. However, the singing heard during the daily periods of collective worship was consistently of an above average standard. The level of participation of boys and girls, younger and older pupils, was high. Their diction was clear and the hymns were sung tunefully and expressively. The school participates enthusiastically in local arts events because it values the musical and dramatic enrichment that they provide
82. An examination of the planning for music lessons shows that the pupils in both key stages receive a broad and balanced programme that includes singing, performing on percussion instruments and listening to a variety of music from different times and cultures. The younger pupils demonstrated their enjoyment of music through their body movements when listening to a

tape. From the singing in assemblies, it is clear that elements of pitch and dynamics have been consistently taught. The older pupils also expressed their pleasure at making music together.

83. The planning for music is very soundly based on national guidelines. Until comparatively recently, the pupils have benefited from having a teacher with specialist music skills. There is a good variety of resources for use in music lessons. The staff team works well together to support one another and ensure that the aims of the music policy are reflected in practice.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

84. No dance, gymnastic or athletic activities took place on the days of the inspection. It is, therefore, not possible either to reach an overall judgement about the standards the pupils' attain or to determine the extent of improvement since the last inspection.
85. Discussion with the pupils shows that they enjoy and benefit from physical education lessons and the opportunities they get outside lessons, for example, football coaching. This is supported by the records of the pupils' attainment which show that many of the year 5 pupils have already acquired some of the skills expected by the end of year 6. The year 5 pupils also report that they are able to swim much further than the 25m required by the end of year 6. They clearly relish the weekly swimming lessons. The records of their attainment and progress confirm this and show that that are most pupils are able to swim in excess of the required distance. Furthermore, they also chart the progress made by pupils who have overcome earlier difficulties and can now swim twenty five metres using a front crawl stroke.
86. Through good evaluation, supported by the local education authority, the school recognised the weaknesses in its provision for athletic activity and is currently engaged in improving the provision as a priority within the school development and improvement plan.
87. The school has good resources and use of the good community facilities that include playing fields and a hard, fenced and floodlit play area. The school hall is of adequate size but part of it is partitioned for a classroom and there are storage difficulties.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

88. One lesson in religious education was observed in years 3, 4 and 5. None were seen in years 1 and 2, but the cross-curricular planning shows that in addition to discrete lessons in religious education, many aspects are taught within other curriculum areas. For example, stories from the Bible and from non-Christian traditions are used to promote moral education and provide a stimulus for developing the pupils' literacy skills. The bible story of Joseph's multi-coloured coat inspired a design activity in which the pupils were asked to reflect on the style and the use of colour.
89. The work seen in the one lesson, together with that recorded in the pupils' books and on display about the school is above average in standard. This improvement since the last inspection is the result of a very well planned scheme of work based on national guidelines and drawing extensively on the locally agreed syllabus. The teachers have organised a good variety of activities to engage the pupils' interest and to promote their knowledge and understanding. Throughout the teaching, a strong commitment to promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very much in evidence. This is very successful because the relationships in the classes are very positive. When the pupils in years 3, 4 and 5 were asked to reflect on situations

that had disturbed their peace, they responded frankly and sensitively. This reflects the way they have been encouraged to listen to and to value each others' views.

90. The pupils' knowledge of Christianity and other major faiths, such as Hinduism and Judaism, has developed well. The younger pupils recognise that the Bible is a special book for Christians and that Jewish people revere the Torah. They have enjoyed stories, such as that of Judah the Maccabee, and understand the significance of the Menorah and the purpose of Hanukkah. The older pupils have been able to reflect quite deeply on the role played by the shepherds and the wise men at the time of Jesus' birth. By the time they leave year 5, they have a good repertoire of stories from the Bible and can recognise some of the religious practices of a number of world faiths. This helps them not only to appreciate some of the similarities and differences between various religions, but also to recognise the way religion shapes the life of believers.
91. The teaching is very thoroughly planned. Interesting resources, such as pictures, videos and artefacts, are used to stimulate the pupils' thinking and to encourage them to ask questions. This is a strong tradition in all classes. From the evidence of the one lesson seen, this approach ensures that the pupils are actively engaged in thinking about the significance of the various topics.
92. The teachers have begun to assess the pupils' work according to agreed criteria. This is beginning to have a positive effect on the way subsequent work is planned. Well presented displays around the school reflect the importance of this subject within the overall curriculum.