

INSPECTION REPORT

St Nicholas C.E. Primary School
Blackpool

LEA area: Blackpool

Unique Reference Number: 119594

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Dawes

Reporting inspector: Mr Mike Barrand
17322

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 February 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 703816

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

Type of control: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: School Road

Blackpool

Lancashire

FY4 5DS

Telephone number: 01253 761416

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Canon Ann Wood

Date of previous inspection: 21 – 25 March 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Barrand, RgI	Science Design and technology Physical education	Attainment and progress Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Teaching
Mr W Walker, Lay Inspector	Equal opportunities	Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs M Farman	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Art Music	Leadership and management Efficiency of the school
Mrs B Roberts	Under-fives English Geography History	Curriculum and assessment Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

Where the school has weaknesses

How the school has improved since the last inspection

Standards in subjects

Quality of teaching

Other aspects of the school

The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1-2

Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

3-24

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

25-32

Attendance

33-35

Quality of education provided

Teaching

36-41

The curriculum and assessment

42-51

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52-58

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

59-66

Partnership with parents and the community

67-72

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

73-81

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

82-92

The efficiency of the school

93-97

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five **98-105**

English, mathematics, science and information technology **106-150**

Other subjects or courses **151-185**

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence **186**

Data and indicators

MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

The school has high standards overall in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2;
Pupils have very good attitudes towards school. They behave very well, supported by very good procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour;
Pupils have very good relationships, particularly with each other;
The school has a good level of all-round competence in teaching, with a particular strength in the teaching of children under five in the reception class;
The school has very good procedures for assessing the attainment of children under five;
The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development.

Where the school has weaknesses

The school does not have sufficiently-high standards at Key Stage 1 in reading, or in using and applying mathematics;
Some teachers do not consistently plan lessons with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn and which pupils they want to learn it;
The school does not monitor precisely the work of those pupils identified as potentially high attainers or that of pupils with learning difficulties;
The senior management team does not work fully and coherently in a climate of unity, support and common purpose;
The school does not monitor vigorously the personal development of pupils in order for them to have greater responsibility for their learning, their school and the achievement of its aims.

What the school does well outweighs its weaknesses. However, the weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan that the school will send to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. It is appropriately placed to make further improvements. The leadership of the school has been strengthened and is having a positive effect on the quality of learning. The school has reviewed the curriculum. There are clear guidelines for teachers, which enable them to plan work carefully and thoroughly across the curriculum. Co-ordinators monitor planning on a structured basis. The school has a programme of regular reviews for curriculum policies and schemes of work. Work in all curriculum areas is assessed. The school has a well-developed system for identifying the specific problems of children with special educational needs and for giving them support. The headteacher monitors work in the classroom, and the governing body has an effective curriculum committee. The necessary repairs have been carried out to the hazardous classroom floor. A store cupboard has been built at one end of the hall to house equipment and dining furniture.

There are some areas in which improvement is less marked. The staff do not yet work completely effectively as a team, although some barriers have been removed and some bridges built. The school does not use assessment information fully to inform curriculum planning for groups and individuals, although valuable work has been done in this area. The monitoring procedures and the planning of pupils' work are not totally successful. Much work has been done to improve the ethos of care within the school. However, this is not evident in all classes, particularly in those where there is a lack of rapport between teacher and pupils.

In addition to these aspects from its last inspection the school has made other improvements to its provision. The governors are more involved in the day-to-day life and running of the school, taking an active part in the school's life, both academic and social.

Standards in subjects

Key Stage 1	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Performance in		
Reading	D	C
Writing	B	A
Mathematics	D	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Key Stage 2	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools
Performance in		
English	A	A*
Mathematics	A	A
Science	B	A
All subjects	A	A*

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Children's overall attainment on entry is below what is expected of children under five years of age. The above table shows the standards achieved by all seven- and eleven-year-olds in the school who took the National Curriculum tests in 1998.

At the end of Key Stage 1, on the basis of the national tests/tasks for reading and for mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2¹ or above was close to the national average, and the percentage of

¹ ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally-expected levels. It is a national expectation that all pupils should reach Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who reach Level 5 are therefore attaining above the nationally expected level for their age.

pupils reaching Level 3 was well below the national average. In writing, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was above the national average, and the percentage reaching Level 3 or above was below the national average.

At the end of Key Stage 2, on the basis of the national test (1998) tests in English and mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was well above the national average, as was the percentage in both subjects of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. In science, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was above the national average, with the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above at well above the national average.

The inspection evidence confirms a broadly similar position for this academic year. At the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils in English, mathematics and science attain overall standards in line with what are expected nationally. However, a significant number of pupils, mostly boys, do not achieve expected levels in reading and a number of pupils exceed nationally-expected levels in their writing. Several pupils with high prior attainment in English and mathematics do not do as well as they should because of a lack of challenge and variety in the activities set for them. In mathematics, standards in the use and application of mathematics are unsatisfactory. Standards in science are at expected national levels for the majority of pupils, although a significant minority do not achieve these levels at the end of the key stage. At the end of Key Stage 2, the clear majority of pupils achieve standards in English and mathematics which exceed expected levels, and a significant number of pupils attain standards which are in line with national expectations. In mathematics, standards are particularly good in data-handling, but standards in the use and application of mathematics, especially for the more able pupils, are somewhat lower generally. Standards in science are in line with expected national levels.

Any significant differences between the results of the national tests and the inspection findings are attributable to the nature of the particular group of pupils taking the tests in any one year. Although the school has a high percentage of pupils who are travellers' children, a good number remain in the school for a substantial period of time. The provision is good and there is no evidence to suggest that the attainment levels of these children are unduly affecting overall standards.

Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In the foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils at the end of both key stages attain standards appropriate to their age, although a number in design and technology, physical education and art perform at higher than expected levels.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	very good	satisfactory	good
Mathematics	very good	satisfactory	good
Science	not applicable	satisfactory	good
Information technology	not applicable	Insufficient evidence to make a judgement	
Other subjects	not applicable	satisfactory	good

Overall, the quality of teaching is good in the majority of lessons. Teaching is very good in approximately 24 per cent of lessons. It is good in 33 per cent and satisfactory in 43 per cent of lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching of children under five in the reception class is very good. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good in ten per

cent of lessons and satisfactory in the remaining 90 per cent of lessons seen. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is very good in 19 per cent of lessons. It is good in 48 per cent and satisfactory in 33 per cent of lessons. Some of the best lessons were at Key Stage 2, in the literacy sessions, in physical education and in design and technology

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They enjoy school and are keen to participate in school activities. Pupils behave very well overall. They are very sensible in the classrooms and lunch times. Pupils look after their school, its resources and its environment well. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils grow as individuals, developing confidence, independence and responsibility as they progress through the school.
Attendance	Pupils arrive in good time, enabling a prompt start to be made to lessons. Although the rate of attendance is a little below the national average, allowing for the make-up of the school population it is satisfactory and procedures are good.
Ethos*	The school has a commitment to high standards and encourages pupils to work with a clear sense of purpose. Pupils have very good attitudes to work and relate very well to each other.
Leadership and management	The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose for the school. This is shared by an able chair of governors, effectively supported by the governing body.
Curriculum	The school has worked hard to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and has succeeded. Assessment procedures are developing positively, but the use of day-to-day assessment is inconsistent.
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare	The school provides satisfactory personal support and guidance for pupils. Good procedures are in place to monitor academic progress, but procedures for monitoring personal development are less satisfactory. The policy to promote good behaviour is very successful. Child-protection procedures comply with legal requirements. Governors, staff and pupils show awareness of health and safety issues. The school caters effectively for the well-being of pupils.
Partnership with parents and the community	Parents are well informed about the school. They provide valuable support to their children's work at home. All classes benefit from some parental help in the classrooms. The work of the school is enriched by its good links with the church, but the school makes insufficient use of resources in the community and environment.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Overall provision is good. However, whilst the provision for moral development is good and the social development provision has significant strengths, there is scope for further development within the provision for the spiritual and cultural aspects of the school.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Provision is good. Experienced teachers and qualified support staff make an important contribution to the progress of pupils. Good use is made within the combination of the old and new accommodation, and its maintenance is commendable. Learning resources are adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. There has been fresh input into various subject areas, but recent audits indicate that areas such as the under-fives, reception and some core areas require additional resources.
Value for money	The school has good financial planning. It makes satisfactory use of staff

	and good use of resources and accommodation. The school has satisfactory financial control and school administration, with good procedures. Overall the school gives sound value for money.
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*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
parents find the school staff approachable; the school encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school; the school handles complaints well; the children produce a good standard of work and like school; the school encourages children to become involved in more than their daily lessons; the school engenders positive values, and attitudes and standards of behaviour are good.	a small minority do not feel well informed about what is taught in school and about their children's progress; a few parents are unhappy with the homework provision.

The inspection findings agree with the positive comments made by parents. There was no evidence to substantiate the very few areas of concern.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve the quality of education provided the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

1. raise standards in reading for boys at Key Stage 1 and in the use and application of mathematics for all pupils at both key stages, but particularly at Key Stage 1:

- (i) by improving the quality of teaching of reading generally, and specifically through the use of consistent and developed strategies;
 - (ii) by creating further structured opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematics in everyday life, particularly through practical investigative activities;
- (paragraphs: 4, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16, 22, 23, 39, 106, 111, 113, 117, 127)

2. *develop the senior management team to ensure that by leadership example:*

- (i) *all staff with responsibilities in all areas of school life exercise these fully and coherently in a climate of unity, support and common purpose;*
 - (ii) *the team promotes positive interaction consistently between pupils and staff in all lessons and routinely between all members of staff;*
- (paragraphs: 38, 53, 60, 73, 78, 122, 136, 185)

improve the quality of teaching and learning:

- (i) by ensuring that all teachers consistently plan lessons with a clear focus on what they want pupils to learn and which pupils they want to learn it;
 - (ii) by ensuring that all teachers make better use of assessment information in their daily planning to meet more precisely the needs of all pupils;
 - (iii) by monitoring more precisely:
 - (a) the work of those pupils identified as potentially high attainers so that they consistently and systematically have work of appropriate challenge;
 - (b) the activities of those pupils with learning difficulties so that they have work designed to produce a rapid rate of progress;
- (paragraphs: 7, 11, 21, 37, 38, 48, 50, 51, 62, 81, 129, 134, 135, 138, 141, 142, 178, 183, 185)

4. monitor more vigorously the personal development of pupils in order for them to have a greater share in responsibility for their learning, their school and the achievement of its aims.

(paragraphs: 31, 39, 135, 142, 143, 181, 184)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important but related areas should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

improve work on physical processes in science;

(paragraphs: 137, 138)

increase planned opportunities for speaking and listening at Key Stage 1;

(paragraph: 111)

improve standards in handwriting and presentation at Key Stage 1;

(paragraphs: 13, 114, 118)

improve further the provision for information and communication technology and library resources for infant pupils;

(paragraph: 92)

increase the consistency and effectiveness of marking;

(paragraph: 39)

improve opportunities for spiritual development in class assemblies;

(paragraph: 53)

take steps to link spiritual development more firmly with religious education;

(paragraph: 58)

develop further community links;

(paragraphs: 70, 71)

extend level of extra-curricular activities;

(paragraph: 95)

review the cost in relation to the efficiency of the provision for administrative support;

(paragraph: 95)

create quiet areas in the playgrounds.

(paragraph: 87)

Introduction

The school is a well-run and orderly community with the potential to become a very good school. A committed headteacher and an able chair of governors, supported by an effective governing body, lead the school in a clear way. The school has several strong features, in particular its pupils, who have positive attitudes, behave very well and form very good relationships with one another. The school also benefits from high standards in English and mathematics at Key Stage 2 as well as a good percentage of effective teaching. The principle areas for development are to raise standards in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Although the school successfully meets most of its aims, it does not fully achieve one of its important ones, namely 'to establish an environment within which teaching and support staff, governors, advisory colleagues, parents and friends work together...'

Characteristics of the school

The school is in a semi-rural area on the edge of Blackpool and was part of the Stanley ward in April 1991, when the most recent Census of Population took place. The number on roll in January 1998 shows that the school is about the same as other schools of the same type (214 pupils, compared with the average size nationally of 242 pupils). Numbers are rising steadily. The majority of pupils live within or just outside the immediate area of the school in a mixture of housing types. The local community has been relatively stable over the years, but has begun to break down due to the closure of small market-garden firms. The level of employment is declining. Most parents find work now in the nearby small industrial, retail outlets and the neighbouring towns. The school and the church have become a more important focus for the community. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (23.8 per cent) is reducing and is now broadly average compared with national figures. There are currently no pupils speaking English as an additional language. Pupils arrive at school with levels of attainment generally just below what are expected of children rising five. The percentage of pupils identified as having special education needs (29.4 per cent) is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special education needs (1.4 per cent) is broadly in line with the national average. There are 28 pupils registered as travelling children. The school admits children as rising five in the reception class and there are currently 26 children in the school who are under five. The school aims include fostering a caring environment in which children develop Christian values. The school also seeks to provide an appropriate curriculum that enables all children to achieve fully their academic, physical, emotional, cultural, social, moral and spiritual potential. The school has already identified priorities and targets, a few of which have been met in part or entirely, for the year 1998/9 and these include: the successful implementation and support of the National Literacy Strategy; improvements to the quality of provision for early years, leading to raised standards; and the production of an action plan to develop information and communication technology.

Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	19	15	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	14	17	16
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	25	30	29
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	76(43)	91(84)	88(46)
	National	80(80)	81(80)	85(84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	16	18	15
	Girls	11	15	12
	Total	27	33	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82(81)	100(73)	82(89)
	National	81(80)	85(84)	86(85)

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2³

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	21	4	25

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	19	19	18
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	21	21	20
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	84(54)	84(62)	80(58)
	National	65(63)	58(62)	69(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	n/a	n/a	n/a
	National	n/a	n/a	n/a

³ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

	1997/98	%
Authorised Absence	School	7.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	24
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

All children are assessed on entry to the reception class and their overall attainment is below what is expected nationally of children rising five years of age, particularly in their literacy, numeracy and speaking skills. However, all make good progress by the time they are five, and they are on target to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes⁴ by the time they enter the National Curriculum. At the age of five, the attainment of most pupils is below nationally-expected levels.

At the end of Key Stage 1, on the basis of the national tests/tasks for reading and for mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was close to the national average, and the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 was well below the national average. In writing, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 was above the national average, and the percentage reaching Level 3 or above was below the national average. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the figures show that the performance of pupils in reading and mathematics is close to the national average, and their performance in writing is above the national average. In mathematics, the level of achievement of boys and girls is similar. In reading, the girls perform significantly better than the boys, the boys achieving standards below national averages. In writing the girls also perform much better than the boys.

At the end of Key Stage 2, on the basis of the national test (1998) tests in English and mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was well above the national average, as were the percentages in both subjects of pupils reaching Level 5 or above. In science, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or above was above the national average, with the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5 or above at well above the national average. Taking the three years 1996 to 1998 together, the figures show that the performance of pupils in English is well above the national average. Their performance in mathematics is above the national average and their performance in science is close to the national average. Boys and girls achieve comparable standards in English and science, but the girls perform better than the boys in mathematics.

At the end of Key Stage 1, in 1998, there was some improvement again in standards in writing and this has been sustained over time. In reading, improvement is rather more patchy, but is generally evident. Whilst the 1998 figures showed improvement in mathematics over the previous year, this is more to do with the comparative abilities of the pupils in 1997, and attainment overall is inconsistent. The abilities of the particular group of pupils taking the national tests and tasks influence considerably the changes in standards over time, but variability in the quality of teaching and levels of focus in aspects of the curriculum affect both the improvement or the lack of it. At the end of Key Stage 2, with the exception of standards in 1997, attainment is consistently high. This is a result of good-quality teaching and a relevant curriculum.

The inspection evidence confirms a similar position for this academic year. At the end of Key Stage 1 the majority

⁴ ON DESIRABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) formerly SCAA (school Curriculum and Assessment Authority) has produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Education'. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development, and personal and social development.

of pupils in English, mathematics and science attain standards in line with what are expected nationally. However, a significant number of pupils, mostly boys, do not achieve expected levels in reading and a number of pupils exceed nationally-expected levels in their writing. Standards in the use and applying of mathematics are below national expectations. Several pupils with high prior attainment in English and mathematics do not do as well as they should because of a lack of challenge and variety in the activities set for them. Standards in science are at expected national levels for the majority of pupils, although a significant minority do not achieve these levels at the end of the key stage.

At the end of Key Stage 2 a significant number of pupils, with a particular emphasis on attainment in literacy, achieve standards in English which are in line with national expectations, and the clear majority of pupils exceed these levels. In mathematics, many pupils' standards are above national expectations in most elements of mathematics, particularly in data handling. Nevertheless, standards in the use and application of mathematics, especially for the more able pupils, are somewhat lower generally. The inspection findings show that standards in mathematics overall for the majority of pupils exceed expected levels, and for a significant minority they are in line with what is expected. Standards in science are in line with expected national levels, with a satisfactory focus on practical investigative work, although the quality of this work is inconsistent. Any significant differences between the results of the national tests and the inspection findings are attributable to the nature of the particular group of pupils taking the tests in any one year.

Although the school has a comparatively high number of pupils with special educational needs and a significant percentage of traveller children, the provision for these pupils is good and there is no evidence to suggest that this affects overall standards unduly.

Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. In the foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, pupils attain standards appropriate to their age, although a number in design and technology, physical education and art perform at higher than expected levels. Standards in religious education are reported separately.

The school has set suitable long-term attainment targets and has agreed these with the local education authority. Several pupils of higher and lower ability still do not attain at appropriate levels. A contributory factor to this is the inadequate use of information from assessments, in that teachers do not consistently prepare work of suitable challenge for groups of pupils of differing abilities.

Throughout the school, pupils use their developing literacy and numeracy skills effectively to support learning in other subjects, for example in history, science and religious education.

Attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations in the aspects of speaking, listening, reading and writing, although most of the boys do not reach satisfactory standards in reading. Pupils listen with concentration. They read aloud with confidence and expression when working on stories containing direct speech. They show an increasing understanding of book knowledge by the end of the key stage, as they share texts with their teachers. Their guided reading in literacy sessions shows pupils reading simple sentences with satisfactory accuracy and a clear observation of simple punctuation. However, when reading individually only the higher attainers are confident in their reading and the average and low attainers do not always attain as well as expected in accuracy or fluency for their age and ability. Pupils write clearly in sentences and show good observation of punctuation such as capital letters and full stops. However, the range of writing experiences is not wide. Pupils' standards of handwriting and spelling are broadly in line with national expectations, but there are weaknesses. The handwriting of some pupils is inconsistent in shape and size, and their script is immature.

At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above national expectations in all aspects of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils listen for increasing lengths of time and give reasoned answers where opportunities are given. The majority of pupils read accurately and fluently when provided with appropriate books. Most pupils communicate their ideas in writing well, paying good attention to sentence construction and punctuation. Their technical skills show up particularly well in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. This development of writing skills across the curriculum leads to good attainment when pupils write for a range of purposes. Presentation and spelling are generally good across the key stage.

At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in mathematics overall for the majority of pupils are in line with national expectations. The number achieving these levels is still just below the national average, but there is some improvement. Pupils' work in number is in line with national expectations. Their work in shape, space and measurement is broadly in line with expectations, but their work in using and applying mathematics is below national expectations. The more able pupils still underachieve and pupils do not satisfactorily use their mathematical skills across the curriculum. The level of attainment rises in Year 3 and develops through Key Stage 2 to Year 6.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards in mathematics overall are above the national average for all attainment targets, with the exception of their ability to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum and to everyday life, where standards are in line with national expectations. Some more able pupils under-achieve when using and applying mathematics. The school recognises this deficiency and is taking steps to remedy the situation. In number, by the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have well-developed numeracy skills and most use these effectively across the curriculum.

In science at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sound understanding of scientific facts about life processes and living things and carry out interesting investigations.

In science, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts and carry out effectively investigative processes. Many pupils make good use of information to predict outcomes and draw conclusions. Most pupils have well-developed skills in presenting and interpreting data in a variety of ways.

In the reception class, children under five make good progress in all areas of learning and in their personal and social development. Pupils, including traveller children, make satisfactory progress overall at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, progress for all pupils in all subjects is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, progress for all pupils, including that for those with special educational needs against targets in their individual education plans, is good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in all other subjects. Traveller children make good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in all other subjects.

Most pupils practise and develop their knowledge, skills and understanding satisfactorily. There are some early indications that new initiatives, such as the National Literacy Strategy and, more recently, the focus on numeracy, are increasing the rate of progress in English and mathematics as well as in other subjects of the National Curriculum. Most pupils show levels of attainment in all year groups that are commensurate with making at least satisfactory progress from their starting point in the school. The pupils with high and low prior attainment make mostly satisfactory progress and a small number of more able pupils make good progress.

The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that all staff are fully aware of the procedures for identifying

pupils with special educational needs. The children under five identified as having special educational needs make good progress. At both key stages, pupils' progress is charted through their individual education plans and the annual reviews. The monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs in relation to the support they receive is under-developed. The school has had a long-term involvement with traveller families and integration is good, but a specific analysis has yet to be carried out in terms of attainment. There are a variety of levels of ability within the traveller group and the evidence suggests that their progress is at least satisfactory and in some cases good, particularly at Key Stage 2, for those pupils without support.

At the last inspection the school had to maintain the current standards of work and improve the work further throughout the school in technology and art, and in mathematics and geography at Key Stage 1. Within the constraints of current national initiatives, there are adequate improvements in standards in art and geography. Information and communication technology continues to develop satisfactorily. Although some improvements in mathematics are clear at Key Stage 1, there is still some way to go before standards overall are consistently at least in line with national averages.

Nevertheless, the school has somewhat improved standards overall since the last inspection through enhanced curriculum provision and some improvement in the quality of teaching. However, there is still work to be done, particularly in reading at Key Stage 1 and mathematics, before standards overall are consistently at acceptable levels. The school is reasonably well placed to do this. At the end of Key Stage 1, the performance of all pupils taking the 1998 tests in reading and mathematics was below average in comparison with that of pupils in all schools, but was close to the national average in comparison with that of pupils in schools with similar backgrounds. Performance in the 1998 writing tests was above the national average in comparison with that of pupils in all schools and was well above in comparison with that of pupils in similar schools.

At the end of Key Stage 2, in similar comparisons, pupils' performance in the 1998 English and mathematics tests was well above that of pupils in all schools. In science, the performance was above. In comparison with that of pupils in schools with similar backgrounds, performance in English was very high, and in mathematics and science it was above the national average.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

Children under five years of age respond very well to school. They feel safe and secure in the reception class and settle happily to the activities there. The children are confident, interested and involved. They listen well and join in lessons enthusiastically. They concentrate for reasonable lengths of time and enjoy their work. They know what is expected of them and are willing to learn.

Pupils at both key stages have generally good attitudes to school. They respond well to what the school has to offer and enjoy school. Pupils are keen to participate in school activities and eager to contribute and learn. They have good motivation and commitment. In most classes pupils concentrate well and listen attentively. They show high levels of interest in their work. They settle well to tasks and activities and are absorbed and involved. They try to complete work carefully within the time limit set, responding well to tasks and instructions.

In the literacy lessons, pupils show commitment to learning and are interested in books and words. They like writing and enjoy the challenge, pace and variety in these lessons. The vast majority of pupils work well in small groups and constructively on their own, but have few opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning through independent research and initiative.

More able pupils show a very good sense of perseverance and patience in their work, working purposefully with pride in their achievement and a desire to improve. They work quickly and efficiently, although on

many occasions, particularly at Key Stage 1, the work lacks sufficient challenge for them. Some pupils with low prior attainment at both key stages do not consistently have work designed to produce a rapid rate of progress. Most pupils make a good effort to present work neatly and do so with evident success.

Children under five years of age behave well when moving around the school and in whole-school assemblies. At both key stages, pupils behave very well overall. They are very sensible in the classrooms and act well outside. Lunch times and outside play times are relaxed, orderly and positive social occasions. In some classes, noise levels are too high, but this is usually to do with involvement and excitement in their work or with the way of working of particular teachers. Pupils show respect for their teachers and each other. They are polite to visitors and take pleasure in their own successes and those of others. They share equipment and ideas, and co-operative successfully on group tasks. On the few occasions when they have to work collaboratively as part of a group they make good contributions. Pupils look after their school, its resources and its environment well. The very good behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school.

No bullying was in evidence and there have been no exclusions in the current academic year or in the previous one. Most parents feel that the behaviour of children is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They are not afraid to own up when they make mistakes and to learn from them. Pupils are pleasant and lively. They show confidence when asked by their teachers to do anything, such as giving demonstrations in physical education lessons.

The personal development of pupils, including children under five, is good. Most children under five are sociable with each other and share equipment and games successfully. They help each other and enjoy celebrating their own and other children's successes. At both key stages there are very good relationships between pupils. Relationship between pupils and adults are generally good, but in some contexts lack spontaneity and warmth. Pupils grow as individuals, developing confidence and independence as they progress through the school. They have adequate knowledge and awareness of other cultures, values and beliefs. Pupils generally are honest, trustworthy and helpful.

Pupils respond well to the opportunities to meet and share with members of the local community. Young and older pupils in each key stage play happily together. Pupils respect each other's worth. They also work together positively and productively in an generally good atmosphere for learning. They support and help each other, valuing each other's efforts, and sharing problems and opinions. Pupils show sympathy, care and understanding of the needs of others and a respect for property. As far as they are allowed, pupils take good advantage of opportunities to assume responsibility and show initiative.

Attendance

Attendance at the school is satisfactory. The 1997/98 figures showed that the attendance rate was slightly below the national average and that the rate of unauthorised absence was well below the national average. However, the current levels reflect creditably on the efforts of the school to encourage regular attendance, notably through the "Full Marks Club", where pupils receive acknowledgement for, among other items, good attendance and punctuality. The school has recently implemented further initiatives to facilitate a detailed analysis of absence patterns. This enables the school to identify the causes of absence and to introduce further strategies for improvement.

Some families have taken holidays during term time. This adversely affects the education both of their children and of others, as teachers have to divert time from the class to compensate those who have missed lessons.

Pupils enjoy school and nearly all of them arrive in good time, enabling a prompt start to the day and to lessons.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

Overall, the quality of teaching is good in the majority of lessons. Teaching is very good in approximately 24 per cent of lessons. It is good in 23 per cent and satisfactory in 43 per cent of lessons. There was no overall unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection, although in several lessons there were clearly unsatisfactory elements. The quality of teaching of children under five in the reception class is very good. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good in ten per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the remaining 90 per cent of lessons seen. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is very good in 19 per cent of lessons. It is good in 48 per cent and satisfactory in 33 per cent of lessons. Some of the best lessons were at Key Stage 2, in the literacy sessions, in physical education, in design and technology and in art. The teaching of activities in English, mathematics, science and information technology for children under five was also particularly effective.

The quality of teaching in the school is particularly effective in lessons where teachers show secure subject knowledge. Most teachers have high expectations of performance and standards, but some do not consistently set work to match these expectations. This leads to insufficient preparation of work to suit the needs of pupils of differing attainment, with the subsequent lack of challenge for the more able and imprecision in the work for pupils with low attainment, including those pupils with special educational needs. However, the majority of teachers plan clearly and in detail, particularly in the medium term. Most teachers have good, confident questioning skills, which ascertain what pupils know and then take their learning forward. The management of pupils overall is of a high standard and this leads in the majority of classes to positive relationships and good discipline. Teachers generally make good use of time and resources and most, but not all, keep to prepared time limits for tasks.

A common problem in the school is the unstructured and at times inadequate use of the valuable assessment information to support the planning of lessons on a daily basis. As noted in the last inspection and still evident in some classes, there is a detachment in the interaction between pupils and some teachers, which prevents rapid progress. It is also clear to some pupils and to visitors to the school that not all teachers work together routinely in a mutually supportive way. This occasionally affects the otherwise productive atmosphere for learning in the school and in some cases detracts from the central position of pupils in the teaching and learning process. Most teachers give good support to their pupils, but not all teachers manage to create a shared learning atmosphere in their classes.

Teachers place a high priority on the teaching of literacy, but the teaching of reading at Key Stage 1 is not as good as it should be, with inconsistent strategies, little effective progression and underused assessment information. However, the overall teaching of literacy skills is at least satisfactory in all lessons, and with better-quality teaching at Key Stage 2. The emphasis on group work and the teachers' focus are beginning to encourage effective independent learning, but there is a long way to go in this. Whilst the teaching of number is satisfactory and improving overall, it is also better at Key Stage 2. The teaching of the use and application of mathematics is underdeveloped throughout the school, but particularly at Key Stage 1. The quality of marking is satisfactory at both key stages, although not all teachers regularly use marking to tell pupils how to improve their work.

The teaching of traveller children is satisfactory and mainly relates to literacy skills. Pupils either follow programmes which seek to correct reading difficulties or one specifically structured for young children who can 'recover' their reading problems within a specific period of time. The staff from the traveller education service teaching staff are trained to operate the latter programme. Experienced members of staff who have long-term experience with traveller children and their families contribute to the former group. With the exception of this form of support the pupils follow the same curriculum as all pupils in the school and are assessed on a day-to-day basis in the same way.

The very best lessons were in the teaching of children under five in the reception class and of older pupils at Key Stage 2 in Years 5 and 6. In these lessons, teachers show a very good understanding of the needs of all pupils. They plan carefully and thoroughly with class organisation and management based on good information about pupils' prior attainment. Teachers have clearly-defined learning targets for pupils and meet these consistently. They make high but realistic demands on their pupils through well-matched activities. There is high-quality interaction leading to high-quality learning and participation. In these lessons, teachers use a variety of strategies and approaches to make learning exciting and interesting, and through which pupils accept a fair measure of responsibility in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding. Taken together, these factors contribute to a very positive and sensitive learning atmosphere of calm, purposeful concentration in lessons in which the time flies by for pupils and teachers. Of particular note was an information technology and science lesson for children under five in which they were totally absorbed, experimenting with mouse control and colour mixing on the computer, with another group following a recipe, measuring and mixing ingredients to make dough. In a design and technology lesson in Year 5, pupils made an imaginative animals-and-plants structure for a wall display about a "Journey to the Centre of the Earth". The range of activities, methods, media and well-planned ideas was exemplary, as was the teacher's control and organisation of resources, including several adults! A cumulative well-prepared gymnastics lesson for pupils in Year 6 was so positive, structured and integrated that the lesson had a strong spiritual dimension, with pupils caring for, supporting and appreciating each other's efforts in an entirely acceptable way.

The curriculum and assessment

The curriculum provided is satisfactory. Staff have worked hard to improve the curriculum so that it has breadth and balance and provides a range of worthwhile experiences for all pupils. The school has had a curriculum audit to provide a plan for future action.

The curriculum for pupils under five is thoroughly planned and provides a range of experiences that focus on desirable learning outcomes for them and continues in reception to prepare them for statutory education at the age of five. It is taught effectively through a balance of direct teaching for specific skills and a good range of structured and free play activities. Good continuous assessment procedures ensure that all children under five visit all areas of desirable learning outcomes and that progress is identified. The clear and detailed planning has a positive impact on children's progress.

The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is having a systematic influence on English provision and a positive effect across the curriculum. Preparation for the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy next year has already begun. Present planning ensures coverage of all programmes of study within the National Curriculum and those linked with the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is a planned schedule for curriculum reviews of all policies and schemes of work.

The school is addressing sex education and drugs awareness and is about to review the provision in the light

of some parents' concern. Plans to involve the school nurse and a survey of parental views indicate that there is positive commitment to appropriate provision.

The school makes satisfactory provision for the next stage of pupils' education. It prepares pupils adequately for transfer through visits to secondary schools and access to other school brochures and publications, and by inviting visitors from the schools which pupils may choose. The school makes good arrangements for liaison and visits for pupils with special educational needs.

All pupils, including those registered as having special educational needs and those who are travellers, have equal access to the curriculum. Statements of special educational need fully meet the requirement of the Code of Practice⁵. Access to the reading recovery programmes is available to traveller children where attendance is assured. All curriculum statements include references to the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator works closely with all staff in preparing individual education plans and in ensuring that all staff are fully aware of the Code of Practice. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are good and the targets set for these pupils are appropriate.

A curriculum audit has taken place since the last inspection and most policies and schemes of work, particularly for core subjects, are firmly in place. Those which are not are under revision or are in draft form for governor approval. There is an appropriate whole-school plan which the schemes support. Teachers have a consistent system for medium-term planning. This clearly outlines objectives, which serve the weekly delivery of the curriculum. The evaluative aspect of short-term planning assists teachers' understanding of the progress of learning, but there are inconsistencies and deficiencies in the detail of the day-to-day structure of some teachers' lessons, which adversely affects subsequent planning.

There is adequate, if limited, provision for extra-curricular activities. There are sporting activities such as football and netball and the school is very successful when competing locally. The school runs extra activities such as the choir, chess, recorders, craft and a French club, but provision for the arts is not wide. Whilst the school holds performances, such as for the Christmas play, drama does not have a high profile in the school. The school has had visitors for 'Book Week' and history activities, which had successful outcomes. There is valued provision for peripatetic teaching of music. However, visits for pupils to enrich their curriculum do not feature significantly in curriculum planning.

The procedures for and use of assessment are satisfactory overall, but there are elements of day-to-day assessment that are unsatisfactory. The collating of assessed work has continued positively since the last inspection and is at its best in the assessment of attainment of children under five, where it is good. The practice of continuous assessment in the reception class is also good and the use of support staff in this is very effective. The policy for assessment is under review. In practice, formal assessment begins in the early years and continues to provide information on reading, spelling ability and mathematics, using standardised tests. The school uses the information to identify low and higher attainers and those pupils with special educational needs, and to support target setting, but this is not always followed through in teachers' planning. The information also gives the school an indication of where best to use support for pupils. An analysis of the attainment of pupils from travelling families has yet to be carried out.

Teachers record the test results of their pupils and group them accordingly. However, on a day-to-day level they

⁵ ON SEN CODE OF PRACTICE

Code of Practice – this 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 1993 Education Act.

do not assess the performance of individual pupils sufficiently to provide information that will assist planning. This is most evident in the reading development of pupils at Key Stage 1, where the staff cannot track weaknesses in individual reading behaviour through recording systems. Day-to-day assessment is informal and inconsistent overall. The marking of pupils' work has improved since teachers co-operated in establishing a common marking policy.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all pupils is good overall.

The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. The headteacher creates a calm, reflective atmosphere in whole-school assemblies, and staff and pupils respond well to presentations by visitors and the Canon. Pupils listen attentively, sing tunefully and participate with enthusiasm when listening for 'different voices' and being led to guess the value of the contents of a package from its wrapping. Pupils reflect quietly on the significance of Lent and what it may mean to them. However, some class assemblies lack the warmth required to generate an appropriate atmosphere for collective worship. Some teachers do set the scene for reflection, enhancing it with appropriate texts, music and prayer, and creating a suitable atmosphere, but others plan more for the acquisition of Bible knowledge than for an understanding of the message contained within the stories they read. Spirituality across the curriculum emerges more where there is active participation by pupils. In physical education, where pupils demonstrate their skills, other pupils show a high level of appreciation. Similarly, there are moments of interest and enjoyment when pupils explore the traditional barrel-top wagon brought into school by a traveller, particularly on the part of those pupils who are reading 'Kizzy' as part of their literacy work. However, the disposition of some teachers occasionally discourages the development of joy in and enthusiasm for discovery and learning, and the level of teacher and pupil interaction is low.

The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and respond successfully to the questions asked about good and bad behaviour. Their work in religious education often relates to moral issues and helps them to understand the values expected of them. Teachers make a good contribution to this by displaying charts of school rules and by having high expectations of behaviour. The 'Full Marks Club' supports and celebrates good behaviour, as do the merit awards which pupils receive. Pupils show respect for each other and other people's property. Where cloakroom space is cramped, pupils are aware of each other and generally respect the property of others. Where corridors are narrow, pupils are aware of others who use the same pathways, and move about the school in a calm and orderly manner.

The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Pupils co-operate well with each other in class. They willingly share ideas, take turns and co-operate when playing games. They work well together in pairs when locating information from textbooks. Pupils organise themselves well for sharing texts in literacy sessions where space is limited, and they support fellow pupils with reading difficulties or special educational needs. In the playground pupils play well together, respecting the space which younger children will use and helping where required. Whilst often boisterous in the playground, pupils make the most of the limited playground facilities in lively friendship groups. However, they join their class groups in a controlled and disciplined manner when required. At lunchtime they talk easily together and benefit from the small social groups in the dining hall, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere at these times. Good displays, based upon an awareness of others and their feelings, reinforce pupils' understanding of good social behaviour.

The school makes satisfactory provisions for pupils' cultural development. Pupils have a well-established sense of their own culture and traditions, particularly where these connect with the Christian faith. The school makes good use of its connections with the travelling community. Pupils enjoy resources which support their cultural development. They have good opportunities to develop their knowledge of other faiths

through the work they do in religious education. Displays such as that on Hinduism are bright and celebratory. However, opportunities to develop an appreciation of the multicultural diversity of the wider community are limited by the lack of outside visits. The school looks forward to improving this aspect initially by increasing the number of visits to the school by representatives of other faiths and cultures, as well by raising the profile of cultural interests such as music and art. The school already has links with a school with a different school culture. Nevertheless, pupils are not currently well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

Staff comment favourably on the quality of integration of the traveller pupils in the school and the positive dimension the pupils bring to the appreciation of cultural diversity of all members of the school community. Staff understand and respect aspects of moral development which relate to family life. They see a group of pupils who care for each other, but are not totally exclusive in their relationships with other pupils. Traveller parents are keen to send their children to a Christian school. Whilst there are aspects of sex and drugs education which pose problems of acceptance, traveller parents of pupils at the school are happy with the provision for their children.

The policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is under review. Presently, the co-ordination of religious education does not link it sufficiently with pupils' spiritual development.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

The school provides a satisfactory level of support and guidance. For children under five, the provision is very good. The policy document for children under five is helpful, not only to school visitors, but also to parents. It gives useful guidance on what is to be taught and what parents can do to assist their children when they start school. The reception teacher has worked hard to establish good working relationships with parents since working in reception from September. Parents know from a weekly letter what their children will encounter in school and they know which topic may need specific resources. A survey circulated to parents this term provided valuable information to support this area and this has developed home/school relationships further. Reading records shared between parents and school also provide valuable information on reading development for the children under five.

Throughout the school informal contact between pupils and teachers is usually warm and friendly. In some classes, however, the "distant relationships" identified in the previous inspection report are still in evidence. Teachers are courteous and polite towards their pupils, but dialogue sometimes lacks the friendly interaction which helps build confidence and enables pupils to cope with everyday problems. For example, some teachers do not take advantage of the opportunities to give pastoral support during daily routines, such as registration or class assemblies. Members of staff generally provide good role models, but on occasions the lack of rapport between some staff is noticeable to pupils, visitors and other staff.

There is good liaison with support agencies for traveller children. Those who qualify for support receive it twice weekly to bridge gaps in their learning which their life style may cause. The service has identified currently a small number of pupils as suitable for the reading recovery programme. However, their progress is unsatisfactory and it is likely that they will require further special educational needs intervention. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Parents are fully involved in any discussions about their children's needs and well-being. This has improved since the last inspection and has a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress.

Much effort is put into monitoring pupils' academic progress, personal development and behaviour. Nevertheless, the school does not have a systematic approach to monitoring pupils' personal development as they proceed through the school, particularly in their qualities of independence. Teachers know their pupils

well, but often do not use this knowledge effectively to challenge the more able or to improve the rate of progress for pupils with special educational needs. Several teachers do not use the detailed records of attainment consistently to support their planning.

The school fully meets the requirements for recording and reporting attendance, and properly investigates any unauthorised absence. The school has recently introduced procedures designed to improve attendance by encouraging pupils and by careful monitoring of attendance patterns.

The positive behaviour policy is very clear, well accepted and consistently implemented. The school has succeeded in creating a climate of good behaviour in which pupils feel secure, contribute to the sense of order by negotiating class rules and show no concerns about bullying or oppressive conduct.

Child protection procedures comply fully with statutory requirements. Members of staff are aware of their responsibilities, and the sensitive guidance contained in the pamphlet written for voluntary helpers in school reflects good practice. There is provision within the sex education policy to raise awareness amongst pupils of the dangers of abuse, but the staff as a whole have had insufficient advice on making use of the curriculum to build preventive approaches to child protection.

The school shows a proper awareness of its responsibilities in relation to health and safety. There is a clear written policy that identifies the duties of designated members of staff. The school carries out regular risk assessments and submits reports to the full governing body. Routine safe practices are well co-ordinated and implemented by the caretaker, who is very alert to the responsibilities in this regard. Arrangements for administering first aid and dealing with accidents and emergencies are good. No matters of concern were brought to the attention of the governing body during the inspection.

Partnership with parents and the community

The school is working hard to implement its aim to build a partnership with the home, the church and the community. Parents have expressed strong support for the school. Links with the church are positive and constructive. However, the school makes only limited use of resources in the community and the environment.

Newsletters, meetings, the ready availability of teachers and the formal reports on pupils all help to provide parents with a good level of information about the school and about pupils' work and progress. Most parents are very anxious to support their children's work. They have shown this by the high attendance at the meeting to discuss the National Literacy Strategy. They co-operate well with the school's homework policy and are enthusiastic to learn about information technology. An unusually high number of parents and other members of the community provide valued assistance in the classroom and this help is effective, particularly at Key Stage 2. The school co-ordinates this support well and most teachers build it into their lesson planning. The parents, teachers and friends association very actively involves other members of the school community in raising funds to extend the school's resources and in helping to build the partnership to which the school is committed. The school prospectus and a notice on the school notice board ensure that parents know who is the person responsible for special educational needs.

The school is fortunate to have the very practical support of the parish priest, who is a frequent visitor. The Canon takes a leading part in many school activities, including assemblies, religious education and services for the school community to celebrate the great Christian festivals and other significant events in the life of the school.

Other community links are less well developed. Although the arrival of a traditional, horse-drawn gypsy caravan

generated much interest during the inspection, there have been few visiting speakers or performers until comparatively recently, to enrich the educational provision of the school. Nevertheless, the school has had some particularly-valuable curricular-linked visits, notably the science-based visits to a nuclear fuel plant, to an electricity provider and to a local high school. For younger pupils, a visit to a garden centre benefited them greatly. Pupils at Key Stage 1 also visited the local zoo. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 had visits to an historic house to do with their studies. The school is well aware that the provision of out-of-school visits is an area for development and has recently discussed the topic during a training day.

Good social and pastoral links with several high schools help to smooth the transfer process and allay fears which pupils may have. However, there are still no substantive curricular links. The local education authority is currently seeking to improve this situation.

There is good liaison between the school and traveller families, which is organised through the effective combination of support teachers and an education welfare officer. Parents value the education and support that are given by the school. For example, a parent made enquiries on how to become a parent educator and received good-quality advice from the co-ordinator of the school on the role of school links between support staff and traveller parents.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

The headteacher has a clear vision and sense of purpose for the school, which the able chair of governors shares. The governing body provides effective support. The members of the senior management team do not always individually participate in or promote this view. In the comparatively short time since her appointment, the current headteacher is implementing important and meaningful initiatives. Examples of these are in the areas of curriculum and staffing. There is, however, much work to do, particularly in creating a mutual sense of purpose within the senior management team and in the wider staff context. It is essential that all members of staff work towards the same ends and support each other. Of particular note are the positive working relationship between the headteacher and the chair of governors.

The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements and provides good support for the school in its work. There are good links between individual governors, the classes in the school and the curriculum. Governors show their support by their willingness to visit school to work with pupils, to accompany school visits and to attend courses; for example, training for special educational needs. These activities give the governors first-hand information about the quality of education and promote a positive learning environment. Following comment in the previous inspection report, the governors have taken steps to improve the management of the school. The leadership of the school is stronger through the recent appointment of the current headteacher and the comparatively new chair of governors. The governing body has committees for finance, buildings, curriculum, public relations and staffing. These committees work effectively for the good of the school.

The headteacher monitors teaching in all classrooms on a regular and structured basis. The management role of the key-stage co-ordinators is good. They regularly monitor and evaluate the standard of pupils' work. Subject co-ordinators support and evaluate their curriculum areas. The monitoring of curriculum development is in its early stages. The governing body uses these results to target future performance and identify priorities.

Following comment in the previous inspection report, the school has put in place a register of pupils with special educational needs. The governing body, in co-operation with the headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator, has an effective policy which complies with the Code of Practice for special educational needs, and a clear view of the provision. The school fully implements the Code of Practice and pupils on the register have individual education plans. The new system for support from the local education authority for pupils with special educational needs provides a more effective service than at the time of the previous inspection and the school's working relationship with the local education authority is good. A named governor plays an active role in supporting these pupils. The school meets statutory requirements in respect of pupils with special educational needs. The provision for traveller education is good.

The school has useful aims, values and policies. The school meets some of these aims consistently, but there are clear limitations in some areas. This is particularly noticeable in the aims concerned with a team approach that gives a sense of purpose. Parents clearly support the aims and values of the school.

The school development plan is good. It successfully integrates staff and curriculum development with available finances and is a useful working document. The school plans to a five-year forecast. The headteacher identifies priorities in consultation with staff and the chair of governors. The members of the senior management team have clearly-defined roles. There is, however, a need for them to extend and develop their expertise in order to achieve, by example, a unity of purpose in carrying out the aims of the school. The headteacher and governing body closely monitor and evaluate the progress the school makes towards the targets in the school development plan.

The management of support for travelling children is satisfactory. The staff from the traveller education service liaise appropriately with staff in the school, and their input and experience are valued. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has overall management of the support and has attended appropriate courses to extend awareness of the needs of travelling pupils. There are several pupils on the special educational needs register at various stages and with a variety of needs. Staff identify travelling children with learning needs in the same way as other pupils and place them on the register appropriately.

The school does not have a policy for equal opportunities, but the provision is implicit in all curriculum policies, and the school is sensitive to the need to provide equal opportunities for all pupils. In order to ensure this, the school has reviewed a number of its procedures. For example, genders are now mixed in registers, the selection of monitors reflects the gender mix in the class, and books are selected to avoid the furtherance of stereotypes. Monitoring of pupils' attainment by gender and background has recently started and the school takes full account of the data published by the Department for Education and Employment.

However, the school has not fully resolved the concerns expressed in the previous inspection report about equal access to the curriculum for less able pupils. The headteacher is aware of the problem and considers that it may be necessary to change procedures so that support is provided in class. The school is therefore taking steps to do this and is beginning to monitor the effectiveness of the work of support staff. It will also be important to ensure that more able pupils have access to a more challenging curriculum than is currently the case. To ensure equal opportunities for employees the governors have adopted the Diocesan Policy on the subject.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The overall provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. The school has a sufficient number of qualified and well-experienced teachers to match the demands of the curriculum, including those for pupils with special educational needs, for children under five and for traveller children.

It makes good use of the expertise of the staff, all of whom have a relevant curriculum responsibility. Under

the direction of the new headteacher, members of staff develop curriculum management at a variety of levels and with commitment. Subject co-ordinators have effective amounts of non-contact time to enable them to work alongside and contribute to the professional development of their colleagues, following criticism in the previous inspection report that the short periods of time provided were not used constructively. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have secure backgrounds in assessment. Classroom assistants provide effective support. The level of support is above average for a school of this size, but it reflects concerns expressed in the previous report. Several support staff have further qualifications in this area. All the staff members are now well integrated into the school, and the teachers value highly their work and experience. The majority of the staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and teaching and support staff work well together, planning through liaison and joint meetings. Parents and other adults who volunteer to work in the classroom also make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The staff brief them well and they liaise closely with the class teachers.

All staff benefit from a coherent staff-development programme. Training needs are clearly prioritised and courses allocated in accordance with the current needs of the school. Procedures for teacher appraisal are good, with the re-establishment of the scheme for staff appraisal, and the outcomes are used systematically to determine staff development needs. The school has helpful procedures for staff new to the school. It makes advisory documents readily available and the younger members of staff have mentors appointed to give very constructive support.

Several staff have taken advantage of training opportunities to support the management of their subject responsibilities and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Welfare assistants work co-operatively with the headteacher in maintaining the positive behaviour policy. Several of them have received suitable training in the positive discipline procedures. The school encourages them to evaluate their strategies at regular, well-informed meetings with the headteacher. These staff work well together in the dining room and the playground.

The school has good accommodation for the effective delivery of the curriculum, benefiting in several areas from recent refurbishment. The building combines the best of the old and the new, and teachers make good use of the space they have. Space is restricted in some instances where older pupils need a shared area, but generally teachers make good use of the accommodation they have, generally creating colourful and lively learning environments. The displays are informative and often interactive and show imagination in bringing curriculum areas such as history and geography to life.

There are two linked playgrounds, a secure outdoor area for the early years and a playing field. The playing field continues to present difficulties in terms of drainage and does not allow full access for pupil use. However, there are plans to drain the field in the near future. The garden at the front of the school is under development. The hard-surface play area does have seating for pupils, but there are few quiet areas for pupils who may prefer to spend playtime less boisterously than other pupils. The school has plans to extend the accommodation to increase the number of classrooms and further improve the area for outdoor activities for the children under five.

The library is presently in the first stages of re-development and the school is planning a system of linked computers to be housed there. The endeavours of a competent, committed caretaker and cleaning staff maintain the accommodation very well and this significantly contributes to the positive learning environment in the accommodation overall.

A reception teacher, a nursery nurse and a support assistant staff reception. The co-ordination for the early years is thorough and the co-ordinator has made good use of the training undertaken. Much has been done

to improve and refurbish the reception area for the children under five, with the support of the headteacher and the initiative of the reception teacher. The school has improved and updated its resources for the children under five and in reception. However, there still remains a need to consider the improvement of resources for outdoor play, such as large mobile toys, and also a review of the outdoor area which, whilst secure, restricts play, having steps on two sides and little cover.

The school has adequate resources overall to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Where resources were at an unsatisfactory level the school has made considerable efforts to improve them. Artefacts for subjects such as history are increasing, particularly those connected with post-1930s investigations. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are readily available. There is an annual review of resources, and extra money is available if a specific pupil needs further resources.

The staff in their curriculum audit have identified those curriculum areas where there is still room for improvement, such as for children under five and in information and communication technology. There is limited provision for visits to enrich the curriculum.

There are adequate texts in the infant library, which is well placed for access by pupils. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to sit and read a book at playtime. Further resources and seating would enhance the provision. There are adequate, but not yet completed, resources in the junior library for present use. Refurbishment of the library, with computer links, is in hand. The school has improved its facilities for information and communication technology, but these are not currently at a suitable standard to allow consistent provision in this aspect of the curriculum.

The efficiency of the school

Following the findings of the previous inspection the school now has effective long-term financial planning. The financial management structures are efficient and the budget control is very effective. Plans go forward to the educational year beginning 2001. The quality of the financial planning gives good support to educational developments. The school is carrying a surplus higher than that recommended by the Audit Commission. However, the school has plans to spend this surplus in the current year on staffing and accommodation. The school has clear plans for future educational developments as well as developments for the building. The governors make careful estimates of possible income and expenditure for five years forward. The school makes good use of funds and uses its grants to support staff development effectively. It buys into the local education authority agreement to provide useful in-service training opportunities

There is clear and suitable funding for pupils with special educational needs. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs, other than those with a statement, are in line with recommendations. Funds allocated to statemented pupils support their classroom learning well. The governing body's annual report to parents gives a clear statement about the provision, about the progress pupils on the special educational needs register make and about the expenditure of available funds. The school manages the support from outside agencies well. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 have a parallel literacy hour planned in conjunction with their class teacher. Funding for the support for traveller children is based on the static or mobile nature of the families. It is determined by the traveller education service, which the school values for the quality of its teaching support and ongoing commitment to the pupils at the school.

There is room for further consideration of the use of teaching staff to make the most of their talents and skills. The school deploys support staff sensibly and this contributes effectively to the attainment and progress of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those in the reception class. The use of learning resources and the available accommodation is good. The school has efficient procedures for the administration of finances on a daily basis. However, the level of secretarial and administrative support is higher than normal for schools of a comparative size. A recent increase had the objective of freeing

teachers from unnecessary administrative burdens. To justify the expenditure it is necessary to ensure that all routine tasks, including those associated with the new attendance policy, become the responsibility of the school office. The cost per pupil is broadly in line with the national average.

The school has fully implemented the recommendations of the audit report of November 1998. The governing body has clear procedures for the spending of budget funds.

Taking account of pupils' attainment on entry, their satisfactory progress overall, their very good attitudes, the amount of good teaching, the good management of accommodation and resources, and the purposeful leadership, the overall judgement is that the school gives sound value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

Although attainment at entry for children under five is below expected national levels, the provision is good. The children make good progress and are well on track to achieve the desirable learning outcomes for entry to compulsory education by the time they are five. The provision for the children under five is a strength of the school.

Personal and social development

The personal and social development of children who are under five is very good. They are within a caring and secure learning environment in reception. They have very positive attitudes to learning. Children are interested in and inquisitive about their work. The majority of children ably and willingly work independently, but are secure in the knowledge that support is available for them. Their behaviour is very good. Children are courteous and polite to each other. Where individuals do not behave well they are willing to 'say sorry', without prompting. The children are aware of what is right and wrong within the boundaries of their environment and co-operate well with their teachers. When required they sit in large groups for long periods, remaining interested in the activity. Children know the standard of behaviour expected of them. They respond positively, particularly when moving to group work or working in pairs and become quickly engrossed in their work.

Language and literacy

On entry to the school, attainment of children under five in language and literacy is below that expected nationally. A few pupils have immature speech with under-developed communication skills. However, children soon express themselves clearly and are well understood. They listen quietly for longer periods to stories such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They express wonder at seeing the beanstalk grow in the classroom as the story progresses. The children begin to make connections between the pictures and words they see in the stories read by their teacher. By listening more carefully, they understand how a book is put together to make a story and many understand such terms as 'title' and 'author', which they see on the front cover. Those approaching five years of age talk about the books they try to read. Children in reception enjoy taking their books home to read, their favourite book often being the one they are reading at the moment. The provision for the development of writing is good. Children are confident when using pencils and crayons. They recognise their name, and colour in parts of an assessment chart which shows what they can do. Several children make marks that are recognisable as their name. Most over-write successfully and track patterns and routes with confidence. Others become confident in understanding that print and the marks they make have some meaning. In reception, most children copy correctly and successfully. They write their name and link sounds accurately to the letters they copy.

Mathematics

On entry to the school, children's numeracy skills are below those expected nationally, but progress is good. In early mathematics, children in the reception class use mathematical language such as 'big' and 'bigger than', and recognise the changing size of the bean and the beanstalk. They explore patterns, recognising patterns in alternating colours. Some children progress to making regular patterns with different number combinations. Most children in the reception class are confident with numbers up to five and several count beyond. They have a sound knowledge of shapes such as circles, squares, rectangles and triangles. When

following a recipe, they weigh and measure ingredients with help. They match a variety of objects successfully and play matching games with some ease. When playing with sand and water, they recognise the number of children who should take part. Discussions with children reveal that many know their colours and some correct others when errors are made.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Children build on their knowledge and understanding of the world through their exploration of plant and animal growth. They examine and sort seeds, observing their growth in different conditions. In water play they explore floating and sinking. They start to appreciate the results of plant and animal growth through tasting fruit and cooking eggs. They discuss and evaluate the change in the ingredients when cooked. Children talk about their homes and where they live. They recognise that the families they meet in stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk have a different life style to their own. They talk about events that are important to them such as birthdays and Christmas. They enjoy talking about their favourite television programmes.

Physical development

There were limited opportunities to see pupils in lessons planned for physical development. However, detailed planning shows that pupils do have opportunities for gymnastics, games and dance. Observation of children in reception shows that most move with control and co-ordination, and those with special educational needs show good progress in this area. At play they have an increasing awareness of space and of others and when required they stand in line and give way to others following in a different direction. Their control when entering for assembly is good and they sit for relatively long periods appropriately. When using tools such as scissors, pencils and crayons children are careful and confident, and observe safety rules, as appropriate. They have good mouse control when working on the computer and know how to change colours, print and switch on the printer.

Creative development

Children experience a range of creative activities. They paint imaginatively, using colour mixing to make different shades of green as a preparation for their work on plants and the work of different artists. They improve their drawing skills when drawing pictures that follow on from their stories and diaries. The children have planned opportunities to work with a variety of resources, such as charcoal and clay, using natural and man-made materials. Children also work competently with 'paint' programmes on the computer. There were limited opportunities to observe music, but planning shows that children have well-structured lessons that encourage them to experiment with musical instruments. They explore sounds and signals to improvise the process of eggs hatching and learn to follow simple directions.

Teaching overall is very good and the contribution from trained, support staff is very effective in establishing learning for children under five. The teaching successfully balances direct teaching for specific skills with a good range of structured and free-play activities. The staff use good, continuous assessment procedures to ensure that all children visit the areas of the desirable learning outcomes and to identify their progress. The clear and detailed planning has a positive impact on children's learning.

English, mathematics, science and information technology

English

In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1998, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels of attainment in reading was close to the national averages. The percentage reaching above national expectations was below national averages. In writing, the percentage of pupils reaching expected levels of attainment was above national averages and the percentage reaching above expected levels was below the national average. Attainment in the school over time shows that reading is close to the national average and writing is above the national average. In comparison with national averages, the performance over time of boys in reading is below the national average, but it is close to national averages in writing. The performance of girls for their age group is above the national average in reading and in writing. In comparison with that in similar schools, pupils' performance in reading tests was close to the national average, and in writing tests their performance was well above the national average for schools with pupils' of similar backgrounds.

In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1998 the percentage of pupils achieving expected levels or above in English was well above the national average. Performance over time shows that standards achieved by boys and girls are well above the national average for their age group. When compared with that in similar schools, pupils' performance in the English tests is very good.

The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy maintains attainment levels in line with expectations, and progress is good across the school. Pupils acquire good skills in the use of language and begin to understand the structure of different forms of poetry. Sharing books with their teachers develops pupils' powers of expression when reading aloud, and the questioning during shared text time extends the listening and reading skills of all pupils. Pupils understand that interesting choices of vocabulary, the use of punctuation and the way books are illustrated help them to understand the story content. In exploring the different forms of poetry such as limericks, they understand the need for rhyme and rhythm. They write book reviews and keep a diary with confidence.

The influence of the Literacy Strategy is felt across the curriculum in a variety of ways. In history pupils have opportunities for extended writing through preparing simple biographies of famous people and making their own book of Greek myths. Planned intentions include writing letters to Rome, giving advice to the emperor and looking at ways of writing copy for a Roman newspaper. Pupils exercise their technical language skills in science. Letter writing features in religious education, as well as note taking and making prayers. In geography, pupils' skills in punctuation show up well, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils write clear and well-structured factual accounts when carrying out geographical research.

Teachers manage the framework successfully, with the exception of some instances where the recommended use of time is extended or not used productively. The shared working between pupils and teachers encourages pupils to look more closely at their writing and use resources such as dictionaries to improve their understanding of the vocabulary they meet. The plenary session is used well to assess understanding and learning.

Attainment overall in English at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations in speaking, listening, reading and writing, although the boys' standards in reading are not.

Pupils listen with concentration. They read aloud with confidence and expression when working on stories containing direct speech. Pupils talk easily about the approach they will take towards activities, but are less confident when discussing their preferences in reading. Opportunities for speaking and listening skills such as drama are not extensive, but responses in question-and-answer sessions are clear and positive. Although

the planned opportunities for increasing pupils' skills in speaking and listening are limited, discussions with pupils reveal that they do not lack confidence in talking to visitors or expressing opinions on the work they do in school.

Pupils at Key Stage 1 show an increasing understanding of books by the end of the key stage as they share texts with their teachers. They are confident with terms such as 'title', 'author', and 'illustrator', but less so with terms such as 'fiction' or 'non-fiction'. In guided reading in literacy sessions pupils read simple sentences with satisfactory accuracy and a clear observation of simple punctuation. Where appropriate, they use their phonic and word-building skills to advantage. However, when reading individually, only the higher attainers are confident in their reading, and the average and less able pupils, particularly the boys, do not always attain as well as expected in accuracy or fluency for their age and ability. The interest in reading amongst these groups is not high.

At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils write clearly in sentences and show good attention to capital letters and full stops. They work satisfactorily with direct speech and make good choices to bring interest to their writing. The majority of children read back with ease the stories they write. However, the range of writing experiences is not wide. At the end of the key stage, pupils' standards of handwriting and spelling are broadly in line with national expectations, but do have weaknesses. The handwriting of some pupils is inconsistent in shape and size, and their script is immature. Weakness in spelling abilities is not confined to less able pupils.

At the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above national expectations in all aspects of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Pupils listen for increasing lengths of time and give reasoned answers where opportunities are given. When working on poetry they speak clearly in chorus and suggest ideas for improving their performance. Pupils discuss and explain clearly how parts are determined. They hear the rhythm specific to such poetry forms as limericks and complete them, maintaining rhyme and rhythm.

At the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils read accurately and fluently when their chosen books are appropriate to their ability. Their book vocabulary has increased and they use terms such as 'author', 'contents', 'index' and 'glossary' confidently. Most older pupils are secure in their understanding of the differences between fiction and non-fiction, but others in the early years of Key Stage 2 are not quite so sure. However, they do not lose confidence when faced with more complex words and have good word-attack skills. At the end of the key stage, most are independent readers and they introduce in an interesting and informative manner the context of what they have read. They read beyond the literal on an individual basis, but some are not quite as able in class comprehension. However, the majority of pupils approach comprehension satisfactorily. Pupils use dictionaries confidently, but the use of thesauri is limited.

At the end of Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils communicate their ideas in writing well, paying good attention to sentence construction and punctuation. They have well-established drafting skills, as these are exercised in the literacy sessions. Pupils pay good attention to the grammatical aspect they study when completing written work. At the end of the key stage, their technical skills show up particularly well in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. This exercising of writing skills across the curriculum leads to good attainment when pupils write for a range of purposes. Pupils write letters, poems and different forms of book reviews of good quality. Their narrative writing shows the influence of good experiences during 'Book Week' and of a visit from a poet. Handwriting is joined and fluent and shows an emerging style. Presentation is good by the end of the key stage, but not as well developed in the earlier years of the key stage. Spelling is generally good across the key stage and pupils pay attention to the

practices which they are taught.

At the end of Key Stage 1, progress for all pupils is satisfactory, including those with special educational needs and traveller children. Most pupils are gaining confidence in their oral language. Pupils at Key Stage 1 consolidate their speaking and listening skills during the literacy session, when listening carefully to stories and answering questions appropriately. They show increasing knowledge when speaking about books. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop their levels of accuracy and steadily build on their levels of fluency. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in the skills of sentence construction and story writing. Their written work shows that they have well-established simple punctuation skills for the emergence of coherent writing. Handwriting shows increasing development of fluency and legibility overall, even though there are some weaknesses.

At the end of Key Stage 2, progress is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children. The targets set for pupils are closely related to the English curriculum and are well matched to the needs of the pupils. Pupils listen with concentration and show improved quality in choral speaking. Progress in reading is good, with the exception of that of a few younger readers who show hesitancy in their reading. Pupils increase their reading skills by making reasoned choices of the books they read. They make good progress in the drafting and redrafting of their written work and the regular use of good technical skills, and their presentation skills develop well.

Pupils' attitudes to learning at both key stages are good in all aspects other than reading at Key Stage 1, where they are satisfactory. The youngest pupils' response to learning is very good at Key Stage 1. Most pupils listen carefully to the stories they hear. They are keen and enthusiastic, and move quickly and quietly to group work. They concentrate on their written work well and have a sense of purpose in the work they do. However, at the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils are less enthusiastic about their individual reading and have less confidence in their own performance than would be expected. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 2 are keen to answer questions and co-operate well with their teachers. They have good motivation and respond well to class teachers' humour. They enjoy reading and retelling the stories they read. Pupils who receive support equally show confidence in reading aloud and are keen to improve their skills. Pupils' enthusiasm for their work shows in the presentation of their written work on display. The interesting displays connected with 'Kizzy' and travelling life and the work done on evacuation during the Second World War show lively responses to imaginative teaching.

The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and, at Key Stage 2, it is good. There are aspects of good practice across most classes within literacy lessons where good subject knowledge, effective planning and good questioning skills lead to good outcomes. Pace in lessons is often brisk, and plenary sessions are productive for teachers and pupils. The management of pupils is good and has a significant impact on the behaviour of the pupils. Teachers prepare their resources well, making good visual aids for pupils at Key Stage 1 and interesting worksheets with informative glossaries to assist pupils' learning at Key Stage 2. Teachers use their support staff well. Where support staff work closely alongside the teacher, class organisation is very good and assessment is continuous and productive. Where support staff are linked to specific pupils' needs, support staff work effectively with teachers. Evaluation of pupils' work is shared appropriately to inform planning. However, whilst teachers' rapport with pupils is good, in most but not all lessons, at Key Stage 2, and humour is used to engage and encourage pupils, there is a lack of connection between teachers and pupils in several areas of Key Stage 1. This inhibits pupils' progress towards higher standards. The lively interaction between teachers and pupils in reception and at Key Stage 2 is not as evident at Key Stage 1 and therefore learning outcomes are not as successful. Not all teachers hold reading interviews or conferences with individual pupils to inform them of any weaknesses in reading skills or to support teachers' assessment procedures.

The English curriculum is planned appropriately to link with the National Literacy Strategy. The policy is to be reviewed in the summer term. Assessment is satisfactory overall, with the exception of diagnostic assessment for individual readers. Whilst formal assessment and reading coverage are in place, teachers pay insufficient attention to reading development at Key Stage 1. A marked input of books supports the literacy sessions. There is room, particularly at Key Stage 1, for an increased input of library resources and the delivery of enhanced library skills to pupils. Pupils mainly use information technology skills to word process their work. Pupils display their work in a variety of fonts and this area develops well within the English curriculum. Drama is an area of development for the school and presently occurs mainly within the role-playing or improvisation in activities to do with work in subjects.

Mathematics

In the national tests (1998) at the end of Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the national expected level or above (88 per cent) was close to the national average. The percentage (6 per cent) of pupils reaching levels above those expected nationally was well below the national average. For all pupils in the school taking the tests and tasks, standards were below the national average in comparison with those in all schools and were in line with the national average in comparison with those of pupils in similar schools.

At the end of Key Stage 2, in the national tests and tasks, the percentage (84 per cent) of pupils reaching the expected national level or above was well above the national average, as was the percentage (28 per cent) reaching levels above those expected nationally. Pupils' performance was also well above the national average for all schools and above average for pupils in similar schools.

The pupils' attainment in the standard assessment tasks (SATs) in 1998 shows an improvement in the results at both key stages from the results in 1997. This improvement is greater at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. The inspection findings confirm the results of the tasks and tests. Standards in mathematics are satisfactory overall, but with particular strengths in number and good standards for a clear majority of pupils in data handling at the end of Key Stage 2.

Improvement in mathematics since the last inspection is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards overall for the majority of pupils are in line with national expectations. The number achieving these levels is still just below the national average, but there is some improvement. Pupils' work in number is in line with national expectations. Their work in shape, space and measurement is broadly in line, but their work in using and applying mathematics is below national expectations. The more able pupils still underachieve and pupils do not systematically use their mathematical skills across the curriculum. The level of attainment rises in Year 3 and develops through Key Stage 2 to Year 6.

In number, by the age of eleven, the majority of pupils have well-developed numeracy skills and they use these across the curriculum. They are confident in dealing with numbers up to 1,000 and above, and place numbers accurately in sequence. Pupils know and use number facts, such as times tables, in their written and mental work. They use a range of computation methods to work out mathematical problems and explain their reasoning logically. Pupils use correct mathematical terms when explaining their work; for example, "denominator", and measure accurately. Their ability to estimate measurement is under-developed. Pupils explain the meaning of charts and graphs, but some have difficulty in making predictions from their findings.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards overall are at least above the national average for all attainment targets, with the exception of their ability to use and apply mathematics across the curriculum and in everyday life, where standards are in line with national expectations. Standards in number are well above

the national average. Some more able pupils under-achieve when using and applying mathematics. The school recognises this deficiency and is taking steps to remedy the situation.

At Key Stage 1, the younger infant pupils add and subtract numbers to 20, and recognise patterns, simple relationships and sequences. They understand the language related to these operations. The older infants use mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to solve problems with whole numbers. They identify two-dimensional shapes and use an accurate mathematical vocabulary. For example, they know that a circle has one continuous side called a circumference. The more able pupils give reasons for their findings. An example of this is when pupils fold circles to find a right angle. One pupil said, "That's not a triangle because it's only got two straight sides".

At Key Stage 2, the younger pupils use a variety of methods and language when carrying out addition and subtraction operations. They use their knowledge of the times tables to solve written and mental problems. In Year 4, pupils are confident in their use and application of handling data. They collect and represent data in graph form. The more able pupils extract information from the graphs and answer questions about their findings. Pupils in Year 5 understand that a fraction is part of a whole and relate multiplication accurately to fractions. The more able pupils understand simple equivalence and use an accurate technical vocabulary; for example, "denominator" and "numerator". Pupils in Year 6 search for and obtain information when trying to solve problems and when collecting data. At the end of the key stage pupils have particularly effective data-handling skills. They use this knowledge in other areas of the curriculum; for example, in science and history. Pupils use an accurate mathematical vocabulary when discussing their work and show a mature level of reasoning. They understand and use decimals, percentages and fractions accurately. They use their knowledge well to solve mathematical problems. Pupils check their results more than once, using inverse operations as well as calculators and are confident in their approach to mathematical reasoning.

Throughout the school, pupils have a good knowledge of shape and space. They know how to measure time and gain a sense of the passage of time through sequencing the days of the week. The pupils recognise and understand the need for a standard measurement of time. The school promotes well the skills and understanding of the measurement of length, mass and capacity, and pupils apply these skills in work such as design and technology at Key Stage 2. Pupils have a good knowledge of data handling and are confident in analysing the results of their findings.

There is a marked improvement in pupils' progress since the last inspection. By the age of eleven, pupils have well-developed skills in numeracy. They know and use number facts, such as times tables, in their written and mental work. Pupils use a range of suitable computation methods to work out mathematical problems. They show a mature level of reasoning when they explain their findings.

Progress throughout the school is satisfactory overall, with some good progress in all aspects of mathematics at Key Stage 2. Any limited progress observed reflects the quality of teaching and an under-estimation of pupils' potential. There is some slowing in the rate of progress at Key Stage 1, but the pace quickens as pupils move towards the end of Key Stage 2. The pupils of below-average ability and those with special educational needs have effective help from support assistants. They receive appropriate individual help, which enables them to make satisfactory progress against the specific targets set for them. The rate of progress is not as rapid as it might be, because of inconsistent monitoring. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Traveller children make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.

Pupils' work in mathematics shows good levels of concentration and perseverance. They have positive attitudes to their work and want to do well. Most pupils are keen to join in discussions. They respond well and enthusiastically when they receive encouragement to develop their investigative and thinking skills through challenging and thought-provoking questions. A small minority of pupils behave inappropriately during lessons. This is rare, but

where it occurs pupils do too little work and this affects progress. The positive approach to learning enables pupils to develop the ability to work independently when exploring ideas at Key Stage 2, but this aspect is under-developed at both key stages. Their overall behaviour is good. Pupils handle resources sensibly. In the majority of lessons there is a productive working atmosphere.

The quality of teaching overall is at least satisfactory. Approximately 67 per cent of the teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. The majority plan their work carefully and use a variety of methods and strategies, and lessons move swiftly. Teachers make use of many formal and informal opportunities for pupils to practise their number skills; for example, counting and subtracting during registration and in action rhymes and songs. In the most effective lessons teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. These lessons have a good structure, and pupils make the progress and achievements expected of them by teachers. In these good lessons, the criteria for work are clear, teachers challenge and explore thinking by the skilful use of questions and they plan work on the basis of prior attainment. Work is suitable for pupils' abilities and there is systematic, regular and thorough practising of number. This enables pupils' use of number facts and patterns to become automatic. Teachers use a correct technical vocabulary to advance pupils' knowledge and they base new work on what pupils already understand. Lessons are less productive when some teachers have a lack of rapport with their pupils and the teaching of the subject becomes merely functional and lacking in enthusiasm.

Science

In the national assessments (1998) at the end of Key Stage 1, the teachers' assessments, compared with the national picture, showed that the percentage of pupils achieving the national expected level and above in science overall was average in experimental and investigative work. It was very high in learning about life and living processes and about materials and the properties. Standards were below average in work on physical processes. The percentage of pupils achieving standards above expectations was somewhat lower overall in similar comparisons. In the national tests and tasks (1998) at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage (80 per cent) of pupils reaching the nationally-expected level was above the national average. The percentage (28 per cent) of pupils attaining standards above the nationally-expected level was well above the national average.

The inspection findings broadly reflect this picture where, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach standards generally in line with the national averages, with a significant minority not reaching expected levels in some areas, particularly in the understanding of physical processes. It is clear that a number of pupils with high prior attainment and some of low ability do not achieve as well as they might at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils reach the expected national standard, and a significant minority exceed it. More able pupils generally but inconsistently fulfil their potential, particularly in practical investigative work, in which there is room for even more development.

At Key Stage 1, younger pupils know that seeds come from plants and that seeds grow into plants. They follow, successfully and practically, the process from exploring seed heads to planting and watching them grow. Pupils in Year 1 plant bulbs and know the conditions required for them to grow. They keep accurate weather diaries and understand about the seasons. They develop the process of observation and recording through activities such as drawing pictures of themselves, collecting facts about themselves, looking at the reasons for wearing different types of clothes, taking measurements such as hand span and length of foot and comparing different faces and ages. They name and label accurately the different parts of birds, such as a pigeon. At the end of the key stage, a small majority of pupils understand the reasons for and how to operate a fair test. For example, they conduct a useful experiment on different-shaped objects to decide which slide and which stick. Most pupils investigate materials well to list their properties and compare information. In one experiment pupils successfully measured different pieces of fabrics and then stretched them to measure the different ways in which certain fabrics responded. They accurately record their information in tables and compare results. The more able pupils predict what they expect to happen. Most pupils subsequently discussed how different materials perform in the manufacture of garments for specific purposes, such as clothing for gymnastics. At the end of Key Stage 1, a majority of pupils develop a sound understanding of

scientific facts about life processes and living things, and carry out simple investigations. Several understand the investigative approach to science. All pupils follow instruction well, both from the teacher and on worksheets. Most pupils understand and use simple scientific terminology.

At Key Stage 2, older pupils investigate magnets. They know the function of the "keeper" and understand how a magnet can be used to magnetise, for example, a paper clip. The more able pupils understand polarity and know that different magnets have different strengths, dependent on type and usage. They successfully work out processes for investigation. They devise and conduct a fair test. All pupils know how to assemble the appropriate resources for their investigations, working out what they will need and in what order. At the end of the key stage, pupils know there are life processes, including growth, nutrition and reproduction, common to species, particularly plants. They discuss these in accurate detail. They know that plants do not move as animals do and that plants reproduce in order to survive. They know and name the different parts of plants, using appropriate technical language. The more able use the correct chemical terminology for substances such as iron and use formulae when discussing the way a leaf uses water and a plant gives off carbon dioxide. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge of scientific facts, such as the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They carry out effectively investigative processes; for example, into the different characteristics of materials and mixing substances. Many pupils make good use of information to predict outcomes and draw conclusions, and most have well-developed skills in presenting and interpreting data in a variety of ways. A significant minority have an easy command of scientific terms, such as 'sublimation', 'evaporation' and 'condensation', as in their work on substances. They practise some of the skills used in science, such as data handling and logical writing, across the curriculum and, similarly, they bring in skills from other areas, particularly from literacy and number sessions, into their work in science.

Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, make satisfactory progress at both key stages. A number of pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2. The better rate of progress at Key Stage 2 is a result of a greater proportion of good-quality teaching. At both key stages, pupils acquire new knowledge at an appropriate rate and, for example, practise the basic scientific skills of observing, recording, commentating and concluding. The rate of new learning increases at Key Stage 2. A few pupils that are more able do not progress at a rate suitable to their abilities because some teachers do not consistently set them challenging tasks to carry out. Some pupils of low attainment do not make sufficiently rapid progress because of inadequate monitoring of their attainment.

Pupils' attitudes are generally good, particularly in practical work, which they obviously enjoy. The very young infant pupils are very orderly, calm and well focused on the teacher. They understand and react immediately to any directive. Pupils are interested and inquisitive. They remain on task for the allotted time, have very good relationships and are courteous and polite to each other. They are happy to work in pairs and in small groups, and talk well about what they are doing. Pupils show evident enjoyment. A few older pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 lack self-discipline, talking without much understanding. However, this is often to do with the quality of the tasks they are set. Junior pupils are very interested, although at times excitable. They are very eager in their lessons. Practical lessons are lively if at times somewhat hectic, but good-quality teaching ensures positive outcomes. Pupils co-operate well with each other, sharing ideas and equipment. They are very well organised and confident. They take a pride in their work, take other views on board, ask good questions and give good answers. The high-attaining pupils talk eagerly about the possibility of more independent learning through research activities, given the opportunity and the resources.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, teachers plan their lessons carefully, particularly the practical sessions, but are sufficiently confident to adjust what they are doing to suit the circumstances at the time. They make the work interesting and involve all their pupils. Most have good skills of explaining the content of the lessons and of demonstrating what they expect their pupils to do and to achieve. In these lessons teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to make their lessons interesting and relevant. In less-effective lessons, the amount of practical work carried out by pupils is limited and not all teachers make the best use of available resources. Some teachers do not clearly indicate what they want the pupils to learn in their lessons and how they are to assess how well they have learned it. In several lessons teachers do not plan in sufficient detail work to challenge

the more able pupils or to sustain the rate of learning for low attainers.

Information and communication technology

There was very little direct teaching of information and communication technology during the inspection week. Judgements, therefore, are based on teachers' planning, a scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils and staff.

Standards of attainment are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Information and communication technology is a developing subject in the school. The school is making good use of its new computer systems. Some older pupils achieve standards above those expected nationally in, for example, data handling. The school is developing a dedicated information-technology area.

At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, show confidence in carrying out basic control operations, such as using the keyboard and mouse. They use the mouse carefully to draw, select the paintbrush to fill in and know how to change colour. Pupils use block graphs to present collected data. They save their work with assistance and print it independently.

At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use the computer appropriately for direct word-processing and for data handling. Pupils save and print their work successfully, without assistance from the teacher. They know how to 'log-on', 'open', and 'name' a file. Pupils use an accurate technical vocabulary, such as 'click', 'drag', 'font' and 'highlight'. They use the database well to enter and sort answers onto the computer. Pupils know how to access the database and interpret their findings. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, understand the basic methods of controlling and using information and communication technology equipment. The use of information technology makes a positive contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils enter their written work directly onto the computer to draft and re-draft. They write out clear instructions for using a computer. Pupils present findings on the computer in graph form, and collate and analyse their findings effectively.

Progress is satisfactory overall and is good in relation to pupils' prior attainment. Word-processing, and control and data-handling skills develop well across Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in developing their skills and control. This is evident from their increased ability to use word-processing and data-handling skills. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their abilities, as do children of traveller families.

Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and positive towards their work in information technology. They talk enthusiastically about the subject.

It is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching, as no direct teaching was seen during the week of the inspection. The teacher input was mostly of a supportive, interventionist nature. Teachers' planning indicates that each pupil receives equal access to the curriculum that the school provides for information technology. The teachers keep satisfactory records of pupils' achievements in the subject.

Other subjects or courses

Art

The school continues to develop and improve the pupils' work in art. Pupils of all ages and abilities have opportunities to express themselves through a wide range and variety of media. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils work with a satisfactory level of competence and independence. Work in art makes a positive contribution to school life in that the displays of pupils' work create a bright and welcoming school.

At Key Stage 1, pupils' standards in art are in line with those for pupils of a similar age. They are confident in their use of art materials and enjoy the subject. From Year 1 pupils have opportunities to appraise and improve their work. They use a range of media and materials confidently and experiment with colour to achieve different shades and tones. Pupils look closely at the work of other artists; for example, Claude Monet's 'Water Lilies'. They discuss the effect that the use of paint creates, and experiment with sponges and paint to find out how to create different effects.

At Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of the properties of a range of materials. They effectively link their knowledge of art with work in design and technology. For example, in Year 6, pupils design and make three-dimensional snakes, using wire and art straws. They use materials confidently and to good effect, observing pictures and artefacts closely. Pupils use their observational skills well and give increasing attention to detail and accuracy. An example of this is their ability to select textiles to create two- and three-dimensional wall hangings and cushions. By the time they enter Year 6, pupils have well-developed observation skills. Their confidence in translating sketches onto larger pieces of paper is good. The majority of pupils have a well-developed ability to create pictures and artefacts.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills in art. Some pupils make good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils use and apply their knowledge of techniques, such as using pencil, pastels and fine brush work, to good effect. They make good progress in developing their understanding of the properties of a variety of materials and textiles. Pupils use their knowledge to produce attractive illustrations and posters that support their work in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and traveller children make satisfactory progress.

Pupils show interest in the activities and find their work in art stimulating. As a result, they become enthusiastic, active and productive. Behaviour is good and sometimes it is very good. Pupils co-operate well together. They work collaboratively when required. All pupils take considerable pride in their own work. They show interest in and respect for the work of others. Pupils enjoy talking about the practical activities. They have the opportunity, at Key Stage 2, to take responsibility and show initiative in developing and using their own ideas within the subject.

The quality of teaching in art is good overall. Some teaching at Key Stage 2 is very good. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. They are confident in their teaching. Planning is thorough with clear statements of what teachers want pupils to learn and expectations of how well they will learn it. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement. They make effective use of questions and discussion to move pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding forward. There is an appropriate balance between direct factual teaching and opportunities for pupils to discuss and express their own ideas and opinions.

Design and technology

Most pupils achieve standards commensurate with their age at both key stages. At Key Stage 2, a significant minority of pupils achieve levels above national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, make at least satisfactory progress, and a number of older pupils make good progress towards the end of Key Stage 2.

Overall, the pupils carry out a variety of tasks each term, some linked to a particular topic studied. There is a balanced approach. Pupils use a range of materials. They enjoy their projects and explore new ideas through them. Pupils show a satisfactory knowledge of materials, components, controls and structures. They develop, through their practical tasks, appropriate skills, techniques and knowledge, particularly related to tools and materials. They have good attitudes towards health and safety and many have suitable knowledge of construction kits, textiles and food. Most pupils take good advantage of the opportunities to experience designing, making and modifying. The more able discuss their work effectively. All pupils use a range of skills from other areas of the curriculum.

At Key Stage 1, pupils show satisfactory skills in cutting, measuring and marking. They join materials with needle and thread. For example, they know that a permanent join in fabric is a seam. Pupils at the end of the key stage explore and develop successfully a repeating pattern such as those found in fabrics. They choose two designs of up to three colours, and create an accurate pattern, printing carefully, using commercial stamps. Most select appropriate tools and methods and use them appropriately, completing their work satisfactorily. The more able discuss their work and make suggestions on how to take it forward. They successfully evaluate their products and a few make amendments based upon their discussions. For example, pupils design and make useful calendars with woven ribbon. Other pupils use cogwheel construction kits linked to their work in science and make strengthening devices for holding weights. They understand and make templates. Work is often geared to particular Christian festivals.

At Key Stage 2, pupils discuss their projects in some detail, and prepare and use quite accurate design processes. They select and employ materials and tools appropriate to the task. They work well from their designs to produce an initial product. Whilst they show some skills at evaluation, with subsequent amendments and adjustments to produce and present a finished product, this aspect is underdeveloped, primarily as a result of the constraints of time. Pupils make effective Egyptian-style jewellery, linked to their work in history, out of miscellaneous materials. They print 't-shirts with fabric and pen dyes to recreate Egyptian styles. In their study of the Romans, they understand and describe a mosaic tile. They start the process of designing and making one, by drawing a clear basic pattern. Most pupils realise that a design must have sufficient detail to be used as a working plan at any time. Only the more able, however, think ahead to any difficulties they might encounter in making something. Pupils in the middle of the key stage make imaginative designs for a particular letter for a page in an alphabet book.

Some of the best work is in Years 5 and 6, where pupils design with crosses and a colour scheme a cross-stitched book-mark and make the product well. They learn some of the skills of decoupage and quilting. In Year 5, pupils are currently engrossed in a topic that links music and science through 'A Journey to the Centre of the Earth'. In groups they dye fabrics in earth strata and sew them to give a quilting effect, they research, design and make creatures and objects with fabrics of their choice, , they learn the techniques of French knitting and incorporate the features in the designed creatures, they use an assortment of wood, iron mesh, iron and beads to design and make their creatures. The standard of this work is very good overall. At the end of the key stage, pupils design and make a cushion to show a picture of their choice, using effective sewing, fixing and handling skills. They design and make, measuring and cutting wood accurately, a mobile and a cross-stitch pattern for a teddy bear. Pupils also use construction kits to make, as a collaborative group, a bridge structure. They fold and bend art straws to make an artefact, demonstrating suitable skills

in using these materials. Pupils use design books as a matter of course. They label their designs and fill in evaluation sheets accurately. More able pupils at the end of the key stage write out accurate making instructions, and discuss and evaluate their work in progress. A few make accurate comparisons between the developing product and the initial design, and make appropriate amendments accordingly. All pupils pay attention to quality of finish and detail. Some pupils have design skills above what are expected for their age.

Pupils clearly respond well to the practical aspects at both key stages. They listen carefully and move to tasks quickly and quietly. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to experiment. They co-operate well and explain eagerly what they are doing. Pupils show interest and knowledge. They behave well and politely. Pupils ask purposeful questions. They work well on individual tasks and in small groups, sharing ideas and resources. Most work carefully, taking pride in their work. They handle tools and materials carefully, safely and properly. Pupils concentrate well and persevere with tasks. Most practical sessions are sociable and productive learning sessions. There is some evidence of pupils taking responsibility for their own learning and doing more than simply carrying out instructions and repeating the teachers' demonstrations.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, the teachers have very good subject knowledge. In practical work, they set a wide variety of interesting, purposeful and well-prepared tasks. They are very supportive of pupils, and work in a relaxed but positive way, showing humour and generating excitement about the subject. In these lessons, teachers make very good use of time and resources, including support staff, managing their classes very well. They have high expectations and make good use of ongoing assessment.

Geography

There were only limited opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection. However, discussions with teachers and pupils, and a scrutiny of work indicate that there is satisfactory provision for the subject, despite some reduction of time allocated to teaching because of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy.

Pupils at both key stages reach the standards appropriate to their age, and the standards of several pupils at Key Stage 2 exceed these levels. At Key Stage 1, pupils study the school locality, focusing on the weather and people who help us. Younger children enjoy a visit from 'Postman Pat' and learn how he works. They follow simple trails through walks in the school grounds and lay the base for early mapping skills. At Key Stage 2, pupils extend their geographical learning on the environment through their studies of contrasting localities and the location of major rivers in the United Kingdom. Pupils describe a range of features relating to their own locality and compare them with life of children in Chembakolli, a village in India. At the end of Key Stage 2, when seeking the source of rivers, pupils locate the main British rivers and the areas through which they run. Pupils use atlases efficiently and an appropriate index when geographical questions arise.

Pupils, including traveller children, make satisfactory progress at both key stages, and some pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Younger pupils maintain established knowledge of their locality and consolidate new learning when drawing simple plans of their area. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show an increasing development of their knowledge of the physical features of their environment and aspects of geographical features such as volcanoes. Their work shows well-established progress in mapping skills.

Pupils' have good attitudes to learning across the school. The standard of presentation is particularly good at Key Stage 2, where pupils write consistently well on all aspects presented. They use the skills they have learnt in the literacy sessions to produce clear and careful work. They are enthusiastic when searching texts for similarities and differences. Pupils collaborate well when researching in an atlas for the completion of their worksheet.

Observation of teaching took place only in Key Stage 2, where it is good. Scrutiny of work and planning shows the quality of teaching as satisfactory overall. Although the policy and scheme of work are to be reviewed in the autumn term, a draft schedule shows teachers clearly what geographical skills to teach. Teachers' daily planning is clear and the organisation for the delivery of the subject is effective. The management of pupils is good and pupils with special educational needs benefit from the individual discussions they have with their teacher and support staff on geographical topics. Displays are stimulating, with clear layouts, encouraging good work from pupils. Resources are adequate for delivery of the subject, but opportunities for fieldwork and visits are limited

History

No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1, but discussions with teachers and pupils, and a scrutiny of pupils' activities and teachers' planning, show attainment as satisfactory for the age of the pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils also attain standards appropriate to their age. At both key stages, progress is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and traveller children. All pupils have equal access to the subject.

Pupils at Key Stage 1, begin their study of history by sequencing events in their school life. They continue their understanding of the old and new by looking at objects of varying ages. At the end of the key stage, pupils understand the differences between life now and in the past. Informative displays increase their knowledge of changes over time.

At Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of history develop further through their work on 'Invaders and Settlers', and a visitor in the guise of a Roman soldier brings this to life. Pupils understand more clearly how the Romans were successful, by seeing the armour they wore and the supplies a soldier carried with him. They begin to understand the characteristics of the different cultures of the time and how one overcame the other through careful strategies and discipline. At the end of the key stage, pupils have a secure sense of chronology and, for example, appreciate the differences between their lives and those of Victorian school children. They understand that aspects of the Second World War had effects on the daily lives of children and created significant changes in family life at that period of time.

Pupils are active in discussions when, for instance, a video presentation on Victorian education stimulates their interest. They show good attitudes to learning when talking to each other about the life of a Roman soldier and handling the artefacts available. The presentation of their work is variable and is best where teacher expectations are high. The influence of the National Literacy Strategy is seen towards the end of Key Stage 2 in pupils' stories written about Greek mythology and in the quality of their descriptions.

Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Displays at Key Stage 2 show a commitment to maintaining a firm profile for history. The quality of three-dimensional work on the Second World War is good and the time line which encompasses the Victorian period is inventive and well-presented, bringing historical events into high focus. Similarly, at Key Stage 2, secure subject knowledge and high expectations ensure good outcomes in pupils' writing, although not all work within the key stage is of the same standard. Teachers' plan clearly and prepare activities well. In most lessons, the pace is brisk and teachers probe pupils' knowledge well with appropriate questioning techniques. Class organisation and

the management of pupils are good. The school monitors the development of the subject, although evaluation of pupils' learning in lessons does not consistently support planning. The teaching and learning increase pupils' understanding of their own culture, but the limited range of visits available, particularly at Key Stage 1, hinders more rapid development.

Music

Music is a developing subject within the school. Pupils demonstrate a high level of interest in their music making. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy using the school's good range of instruments from a variety of countries and cultures. Planning is good and covers all elements of the National Curriculum. It indicates the provision of a balanced range of activities, which includes listening to, appraising, performing and composing music throughout the school year for all classes. It also provides effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress in performing and composing, and in their knowledge and understanding of music.

At Key Stage 1, pupils achieve standards similar to those expected for pupils of their age. They have an appropriate level of skill in playing musical instruments. They compose and copy rhythms accurately and listen carefully to each other's compositions. Pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically in lessons and assemblies.

At Key Stage 2, pupils achieve standards similar to those expected for pupils of their age. Some pupils achieve standards above this expectation. This is particularly noticeable when pupils play recorders in two-part harmony. Pupils have well-developed singing skills. They pay attention to posture, breathing, diction, dynamics and phrasing and have good control of their voices. Pupils' composing skills are satisfactory. They devise their own scores to create appropriate sound pictures and effects, and perform to each other with confidence. They compose their music to a planned theme; for example, they link their work in science with music to make a whole-class 'space' composition. Pupils select and arrange instruments confidently to achieve their desired effect.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their musical knowledge and skills. This begins at Key Stage 1 and, through Key Stage 2, a significant minority make good progress. Pupils work hard to improve their skills of composition and, as they move through Key Stage 2, they greatly increase their ability to produce a wide range of scores. The school has a variety of recorded tapes and videos that clearly demonstrate the progress pupils make through the school. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and traveller children, have opportunities to consolidate their skills and understanding of music and make satisfactory progress.

Pupils generally respond well to music throughout the school. They respond very well at Key Stage 2. Some pupils at Key Stage 1 lose interest and become restless while they wait to play an instrument. All pupils show respect for the efforts of others. Pupils co-operate well together in performances and work collaboratively when required. They behave well in lessons and clearly enjoy making and performing music.

The quality of teaching is good overall. Most teachers have secure subject knowledge and are confident in their teaching. Where the teaching is good, more noticeably at Key Stage 2, lesson planning is thorough, tasks are suitable to meet pupils' abilities, and enthusiasm is transmitted from teacher to pupils. The organisation of the class leads to a sense of purpose on the part of the pupils and the expectation of work and behaviour is high.

Physical education

Most pupils attain standards appropriate to their age at both key stages. Some pupils' achievements at

Key Stage 2 exceed national expectations. There were lessons in gymnastics, games skills and dance.

At Key Stage 1, pupils know the value of warm-up and cool-down exercises and have good breathing techniques in their exercises. They travel well around the hall, finding suitable pathways, avoiding others, stopping, and starting under control. They change direction effectively and show a variety of pace. Pupils put together well a sequence of starting, travelling, and stopping with a variety of levels, directions and speeds. They handle small apparatus such as mats well, safely and co-operatively. Their work shows imagination but little thought or structure. Pupils are happy to demonstrate and do so with confidence. They are less effective when commenting on their own and others' performances.

At Key Stage 2, pupils warm up and cool down systematically and effectively. Younger pupils in the key stage throw balls accurately from a variety of heights. All catch a softball with two hands securely. About half the pupils at this age catch a similar ball one-handed and a small number of more able pupils have sufficient skill, accuracy and agility to throw a ball, turn round and catch it. In country dancing, pupils in the middle of the key stage understand the basic steps and routines in a traditional dance. They execute them carefully and well. They know terms such as 'swing', 'promenade', and 'set', and carry out the sequences to match. Pupils have a good sense of timing and rhythm and keep formations well. They listen carefully to the music and instructions from the teacher and follow them well. At the end of the key stage, pupils carry out effective introductory exercise sessions. They travel across the floor of the hall imaginatively, using two hands and two feet together with good balance, and using different levels. They run and jump safely from different heights with a lot of energy. Pupils develop good sequences of movements with controlled 'flight'. They use apparatus safely and well to gain height, jump, land and roll under control. Pupils that are more able move to and from apparatus with good sequences of travelling, jumping and rolling. All pupils have good starting and finishing positions in their gymnastic work. Pupils participate in swimming lessons in Years 3 to 6 and, by the end of the series, most pupils achieve certification that they can swim 25 metres unaided in the pool.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in both key stages as they hone and practise their skills. Progress is satisfactory over time and in specific lessons for most pupils. Several pupils make good progress at the end of Key Stage 2, with interesting and effective teaching. Progress is also particularly rapid in dance lessons, where pupils acquire new learning at a good rate. Some pupils at Key Stage 1 do not make sufficient progress, largely as a result of undue amounts of inactivity in some lessons. Pupils show that they have made satisfactory progress over time in the polish, control, skill and finish they bring to their activities and performances. Progress is more rapid when pupils break down skills into component parts before practising and then reassembling the full action. They take constructive advice and develop techniques and skills accordingly in a range of movements. Most pupils work successfully individually, in pairs and in small groups. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in physical education lessons, as do traveller children.

Pupils' response is mostly good. Pupils respond better at Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils enjoy their lessons, and behaviour is usually very good. Most concentrate well and work hard to carry out the tasks set them and to improve performance. They have good self-discipline and, particularly at Key Stage 2, high work rates. Pupils have confidence and listen carefully to their teachers. They are very sensitive to the needs of others. In many lessons pupils have good, well-thought-out ideas, putting them into practice effectively, for example, in gymnastic sequences. They have very few opportunities to show real independence and initiative in lessons, but when they do the outcomes are very good. Relationships in class between pupils are caring and positive. Relationships between pupils and teachers are often rather formal. Very occasionally, the caring and supportive quality of teaching and learning is such that a lesson makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development, in addition to the customary support for their social development through collaborative group work. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the extra-curricular sports activities, such as football and netball, with regular matches against local schools.

Insufficient teaching was seen at Key Stage 1 to make a firm overall judgement, but what little was observed was of satisfactory quality, with adequate planning and appropriate, if rather rigid, class management. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good, with effective preparation of lessons and generally high expectations of pupils. Teachers have sound revision and explanation techniques. They use questioning successfully to find out what pupils have learned so that they take the lessons forward. Teachers have effective class control and management skills and most lessons have satisfactory pace and good organisation, in a secure and safe atmosphere. The majority of teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, but do not always work out in lessons clearly and specifically exactly what they want their pupils to learn and how they are to learn it. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, clear and achieved learning targets, firm but fair discipline and a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in their classes, with plenty of involvement and activity for pupils.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

This inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors, including a lay inspector, and took place over a period of four days in the week beginning 22 March 1999. The main evidence considered by the inspection team for the report was gathered from:

42 lessons or parts of lessons covering the children under the age of five in reception class and all classes at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 , including pupils identified as having special educational needs and traveller children;

aspects of acts of worship and a range of other activities;

listening to three pupils read from Year 2 and Year 6 classes, and to a number from other classes throughout the school, and checking the pre-reading and reading skills of the children under the age of five in the reception class;

the literacy and numeracy sessions for all classes;

a range of previous and current samples of pupils' work from each year group;

discussions with pupils about their work;

discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors, parents and the link teacher with the secondary school;

a scrutiny of a full range of documentation, including the school development plan, policy documents, schemes of work and other associated school documentation;

an examination of attendance records, budget statements, teachers' planning, records of pupils' attainments and reports to parents;

a meeting held by the registered inspector and attended by nine parents shortly before the inspection.

The team also considered the responses that parents made in 81 questionnaires.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

September 1998	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	226	4	75	44

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

8.70

Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

26:1

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:

10

Total aggregate hours worked each week:

125.2

Average class size:

32:1

Financial data

Financial year:

1997/98

	£
Total Income	297841
Total Expenditure	301757
Expenditure per pupil	1347.13
Balance brought forward from previous year	43982
Balance carried forward to next year	40066

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

226

Number of questionnaires returned:

81

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	44	53	1	1	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	52	44	2	0	1
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	51	21	2	1
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	36	52	5	7	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	31	52	7	9	1
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	40	53	5	1	1
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	37	57	5	1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	49	4	7	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	48	47	4	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	42	51	5	1	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	63	31	2	1	2

Other issues raised by parents

The meeting with the parents before the inspection and the subsequent informal interviews during the inspection confirmed the information in the above table. There were no other issues raised.