

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WIRKSWORTH INFANT SCHOOL**

Wirksworth, Matlock

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 112653

Acting Headteacher: Miss S. Gate

Reporting inspector: Brenda Iles  
12000

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2001

Inspection number: 193308

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant school

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 7

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Harrison Drive  
Wirksworth  
Matlock  
Derbyshire  
Postcode: DE4 4GZ

Telephone number: 01629 822496

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J. Mountain

Date of previous inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> March, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12000	Brenda Iles	Registered inspector	Foundation stage Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Art and design Design and technology Music	What should the school do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
22248	Glesni Thomas	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Science Information and communication technology (ICT) Geography History Physical education Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wirksworth Infant School serves the market town of Wirksworth in Derbyshire. Sixty-eight pupils attend the school, aged from four to seven, which means that it is much smaller than most primary schools. A below average number is eligible for free school meals. Two pupils come from backgrounds beyond Europe but no pupils speak English as an additional language. Three per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is well below average, and two pupils have statements, which is above average for a school of this size. Five per cent of pupils joined or left the school at times other than the usual admission and transfer times during the last year, which is below average. Children who have their fifth birthday in the autumn term start school in September. Those with spring and summer birthdays start school in January. All reception-aged pupils are admitted to school on a full time basis in line with the local policy. Seventeen children were in the reception year at the time of the inspection. There is a range of attainment on entry but overall it is similar to that of most children of this age and lower than it was at the time of the last inspection. The majority of pupils live in the surrounding area. Most families live in owner occupied or rented housing and their social circumstances are broadly average. The school has experienced significant difficulty since the last inspection. The retirement of the headteacher and long term absences led to discontinuity in management and teaching over a period of two years. These issues have been resolved. The new acting headteacher has been appointed to manage the proposed amalgamation of the two Wirksworth infant schools.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school, under new leadership, is now well led and managed and results are improving again. The quality of provision is good and similar to that described in the last report. Teaching is good and very good features were observed in all classes. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve standards that are well above average in mathematics and science by the age of seven
- Standards in reading, writing and ICT are above average
- The school is well led and managed and the commitment to improvement is very good
- Teaching is good
- Relationships, attitudes and behaviour are very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of written marking of pupils' work and the use made of the information to set precise learning targets, particularly for lower attaining pupils
- Identifying pupils with special educational needs at an earlier stage
- Timetabling arrangements that do not make the best use of available time to support learning across the foundation subjects
- Pupils' opportunities to learn about the diversity and richness of cultures beyond their immediate community
- Accommodation for the reception class and of the school office.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the school was last inspected in March 1997 it has experienced significant changes in leadership. The interim headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff have made good progress in

identifying the most important areas for improvement and taking appropriate action to move the school forward. Standards remain above those of most seven-year-olds in the basic skills and pupils make good progress. The good quality of teaching has been maintained. Standards for the more able pupils are improving. The school has implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies effectively and adopted the new national guidance for the foundation stage of learning and the curriculum for Years 1 and 2. The school has dealt with the issues raised in the last report appropriately and, in addition, has accurately prioritised more important local issues in order to maintain the quality of education. Progress has been good.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with All schools			Similar schools	<b>Key</b>
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
<b>Reading</b>	A	B	B	B	Well above average A Average B
<b>Writing</b>	A	B	B	A	Above average C Average D
<b>Mathematics</b>	B	C	A	A	Below average E Well below average

Over the last four years standards have been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. More pupils than usual attained the higher levels in these subjects in the 2001 tests. Comparisons of standards from year to year should be treated cautiously because the year groups are small and variations of a small number of pupils with special educational needs or much higher than average ability can make a big difference to the results. There is a minor weakness in reading and writing where the performance of boys is not currently as high as girls. Inspection evidence confirms that the standards attained by seven-year-olds are above average in speaking, reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Attainment in art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, geography, history and religious education is in line with age-related expectations.

In the infants the needs of some lower attaining pupils are not identified at an early enough stage to set specific targets for improvement. By the age of seven pupils' achievements show good improvement when measured against their prior attainment. This is because the quality of teaching is good. The staff have high expectations of pupils and consequently the targets set in the school plan are met.

Children in the foundation stage make good progress. By the end of the reception year their achievements frequently exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In all the other areas of learning they meet the expectations for the age range.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and promote trust, confidence and self-esteem.
Attendance	Attendance is average

The very strong relationships evident between pupils and staff enable pupils to learn in a happy environment where the contributions of everyone are valued. This enables all pupils to experience success in learning. The school expects prompt and regular attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Teaching is of good quality resulting in all pupils making good gains in their learning. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, four in ten were at least very good, a further four in ten were good and the remainder were satisfactory. Very good relationships, management of pupils, effective planning and the ability to capture the children's imagination are particular strengths that support learning well. Teaching assistants have a positive impact on pupils' learning in all classes. The teaching of English and mathematics, including basic literacy and numeracy skills, is good. While teachers provide good feedback to pupils and encourage them to improve their work, written comments could be more helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses in their work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements and follows national and local guidance. However, the timetabling arrangements to deliver the curriculum are not as efficient as they could be.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for statemented pupils is good but the needs of lower attaining pupils are not identified soon enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well cared for. Child protection arrangements are good.

Staff know pupils and their families very well. The school has maintained an effective partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new acting headteacher and senior staff manage the school well. Rapid changes are moving the school forward positively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed to school improvement and offer good support. They take an active role in decision-making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its results and takes appropriate action. It does not use the information to measure value added well enough.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the school's resources

The school is adequately staffed and resourced and uses its limited accommodation well overall. Staffing difficulties have been managed well. There are weaknesses in the accommodation, which affects the reception class, and the placement of the school office. The principles of best value are applied appropriately.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard and they make good progress</li> <li>• They feel comfortable to approach the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• More extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' very positive responses to the school's work. Reports do not provide enough information about children's learning to help parents to understand what their children need to do to improve. For pupils of this age range in a very small school the range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Test results for pupils aged seven in 2001 showed achievements were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. According to statutory teacher assessments standards in science were very high. Trends over time show the school usually performs consistently higher than schools nationally. When results are compared to schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, achievements are well above average in mathematics and writing and above average in reading.
2. The proportions of pupils attaining the higher levels were well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics in the 2001 tests. Teacher assessments in science showed the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level was well above average. Variations in pupils performance in tests from year to year reflect the different proportions of boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs and those who are more able. Within small cohorts such as these each pupil represents over four per cent of the school's marks and this is a significant factor when comparing attainment from year to year. The small sizes of cohorts mean that comparisons should be treated cautiously. However, there has been a thorough analysis of gender differences, which suggests there is a weakness in the performance of boys in reading and writing. Compared to the national picture, fewer boys than usual achieve the average and higher levels. There has been an increase in the proportion of boys who require additional support in these aspects of English. Although the pupils receive appropriate adult support, unless they have statements of special educational need they do not have precise individual targets for learning to enable them to make progress at a faster rate.
3. The school analyses the test results carefully and takes action to address weaknesses, for example, in teaching and learning in mathematics following a dip in the 2000 test results. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has been reviewed, further staff training has been provided and the local authority and the acting headteacher have monitored the quality of teaching. Analysis of the most recent test results in 2001 shows that the action taken has been successful. Sampling of work of pupils in Year 2 shows these higher standards are being maintained. This is because the quality of teaching is good, work is well matched to meet the needs of most pupils and consequently the large majority make good progress in the important areas of literacy and numeracy. The 2001 test results indicate a rise in the proportion of pupils who achieved Level 3. The dip in the number of pupils who gained the expected level 2 reflects the cohort differences. More boys than usual experienced language related problems and there was also a gender imbalance with six fewer boys than girls in the year group. Inspection evidence shows that, in the past, the school has not identified at an early enough stage the needs of lower attaining pupils and too few pupils are placed on the early stages of the special needs register. This is a key issue the school should address and has already been identified by the headteacher.
4. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs are supported well through the targets set in their individual education plans and the valuable help they receive

from teaching assistants. This enables them to play a full role in lessons. Assistants ensure these pupils understand instructions and through sensitive reinforcement and use of praise and encouragement they take part in discussions and complete tasks which are adapted appropriately to meet their needs. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language and the school supports well the very small proportion of pupils who are of non-European heritage.

5. The strategies used to support learning in mathematics are being applied to reading and writing. External advice is being sought to identify ways of encouraging boys to become more eager readers and writers and to ensure that the tasks planned in lessons meet the precise needs of lower attaining pupils who would benefit from early intervention. A number of projects have been introduced successfully. In discussion all pupils now say they enjoy reading and writing but boys state a preference for using computers to record their ideas. At present pupils do not have precise targets for learning to enable them to recognise the steps they must take to make more rapid progress. While teachers provide good oral feedback to pupils and encourage them to improve their work, written comments do not indicate significant achievements and areas for development. The same is true of annual reports. The review of these aspects of assessment and communication with parents are ways in which the school can enhance further the quality of learning and raise standards for this group of pupils. Parents are keen to help their children and say they value the opportunities provided for them to learn about the school's approach to teaching literacy and numeracy. Although many parents expressed the view that their children have too much homework at the meeting held with inspectors, inspection evidence shows that the strong partnership between home and school supports pupils to achieve their best. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning and regularly support reading and spelling homework. They work in partnership with the school enabling pupils to read regularly to an adult in school. This support enhances learning.
6. From the earliest days in the reception class the children enjoy their learning because teachers are imaginative and make early learning activities exciting. The most recent baseline assessment results have been used to identify children who may require additional support. This practice is new and is likely to raise the standards of lower attaining pupils as they move through the school. Children's achievements when they start school reflect a broad range but overall they are similar to those of most four-year-olds. The priorities placed on developing the skills of language and communication, mathematics and social independence are supporting the children to make good progress in these aspects of their learning. They learn to cooperate and share and gradually the children are learning to take turns to speak and to concentrate. They have made good progress in the six weeks they have been at school, they enjoy sharing books, making marks on paper and counting games. Many are likely to exceed the expectations for their age range by the end of the year in these aspects of learning. Physical and creative aspects are developing appropriately as children practise skills such as cutting and manipulating equipment that supports the improvement of their physical dexterity.
7. Because teaching is of good quality most pupils learn at good rates and are appropriately challenged. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise, use subject vocabulary precisely and expect pupils to speak clearly and use these terms in discussions from the earliest stages of their education. The strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively and consequently most pupils attain standards which are at least above average in speaking, listening, reading,

writing, mathematics and science with higher attaining pupils achieving standards which are well above average by the age of seven. Standards overall are similar to those described in the previous report. A weakness lies in the quality of written marking which does not clearly indicate to pupils what they need to do next to improve their work. More use could be made of on going teacher assessment information to set precise targets with the pupils to enhance their knowledge of their learning and progress.

8. Inspection evidence shows that standards also exceed expectations in ICT by the age of seven because the curriculum is well implemented and staff are confident to teach the subject following their training. Standards in art and design, design and technology, music, aspects of physical education, religious education, geography and history meet the age related expectations. Information about the pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects, is included in the subject paragraphs in 'Section D' of the report.
9. The timetabling arrangements create discontinuity for the reception class, which affects their learning. They are based in the school's small hall and, while this is appropriate for most of the time on the day, when the hall is timetabled for physical education the children become unsettled because they have to move out of their base and their familiar routine is disturbed. The timetable arrangements for the infants result in short periods of time being 'left over' at the end of literacy and numeracy lessons and consequently learning opportunities across all subjects are not maximised. Better use could be made of the time to improve opportunities for pupils to build up skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects across the curriculum on a more regular and frequent basis.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and have a positive effect on their learning. Standards have improved from the good levels reported at the time of the previous inspection. Parents agree that their children like coming to school. This is clearly evident in pupils' great keenness to talk about their school and the high level of interest they have in their lessons.
11. In the reception class, children who had been in school for just six weeks were very enthusiastic to talk about their work and offer ideas in lessons. In a numeracy lesson, for example, the high level of enjoyment generated by the teacher and the pupils' keen sense of fun helped them learn very well about shapes. There were a few occasions, for example when the children had to move from their normal base for lessons such as music, when a small number found it hard to concentrate and control their enthusiasm.
12. The very good attitudes continue as the pupils progress through the school. They are eager to contribute their ideas and to talk about their work. These features are significant strengths that result from the good quality of teaching.

For example, in a lesson in Year 1 every pupil was transfixed by the teacher's very good story telling technique. The use of puppets ensured they all understood the meaning of the story and were able to express their feelings very clearly in response.

13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies and in the playground is very good. There have been no permanent or temporary exclusions during the past three years. Parents and pupils say bullying does not happen; inspection evidence supports this view. Pupils are very polite, cheerful and courteous and enjoy very good relationships with each other. They play and work together very well and co-operate sensibly in groups and pairs. All pupils are included well in all activities. They show respect for the feelings of others and appreciate the efforts of their friends. For example, in a Year 2 ICT lesson, pupils showed very good levels of co-operation, helping each other with spellings and showing good levels of independence as they set out text on the screen.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. For their ages they undertake a good range of tasks with enthusiasm and maturity. With adult direction children in the reception class put out benches for a physical education lesson. Three Year 2 pupils spoke confidently to their Year 1 friends in a formal lesson where they gave a presentation about their enjoyment of out of school activities, such as their activities at clubs such as rainbows, beavers and football. They were well prepared, confident and acted as fine role models. The task also made a valuable contribution to speaking and listening and citizenship.
15. Attendance levels are satisfactory with overall levels at about the national average. Levels of unauthorised absence and lateness are below average. A significant number of pupils take holidays in term time, especially in the summer term when last year over a third of the pupils took at least one week. This means that those pupils miss important parts of their learning. The school does all it can to discourage this practice.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT**

16. Teaching is of good quality and supports pupils' learning well. Twenty-three lessons were observed of which one was excellent, eight were very good and a further ten were good. The remaining four were satisfactory. The proportions of very good and good teaching have improved since the last inspection.
17. Teaching is good in over half of the lessons in the reception class and this enables the children to make good gains in their early learning. The teaching for these pupils is lively and enthusiastic. Very good use is made of the class teddy who sends children letters asking them to help him with precise aspects of learning. This creative strategy ensures the children know precisely what they are to learn and gives lessons a clear focus. By asking teddy if he understands the learning at the end of sessions the children learn to summarise and evaluate their knowledge and understanding. There is a good balance between listening and practical activities to meet the needs of pupils

of different abilities. The job share arrangements for this age range are satisfactory. Teachers maintain good communication to secure continuity in the strategies they use and share information about pupils' progress. The movement of children to different rooms on the day they change their teacher each week results in some discontinuity. Less able children, who have been at school for only six weeks find it hard to adapt to this amount of change and require the very good support of the adults to stay on task. This arrangement arises because the small hall in which the reception class is based is used for physical education lessons and the mother and toddlers group on this day. This is an example of the impact of the limitations of the accommodation on the school's activities.

18. In all classes the effective use of questioning ensures that pupils listen carefully and are prepared to answer questions and contribute their ideas and opinions. Teachers skilfully require all pupils to become involved. On occasions the use of puppets captures pupils' imaginations and secures their involvement. This brings excitement and fun to group discussions. This was evident in the teaching of mathematics when pupils took turns to answer the questions posed by the dragon puppet. In reception, the children enjoyed acting out the actions of *The Five Little Speckled Frogs* as they took turns to jump into the pool. These practical, creative strategies bring a touch of 'magic' to learning and encourage the younger pupils to help each other in their learning through well-structured role-play opportunities. These strategies are used very effectively to reinforce school rules and enhance social and moral development.
19. Good use is made of the subject expertise of staff. For example, teachers regularly plan together and the teachers in Years 1 and 2 share the teaching of English and mathematics across the two classes. This provides good continuity and enables pupils to make good progress. Teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good with almost one in four lessons being very good, for example in the teaching of mathematics. This reflects the success of the action taken to improve teaching in this subject and has made a positive contribution to raising standards. Particular features of the very good teaching are the confident way in which teachers apply their subject knowledge to support pupils and ensure the different elements of the daily numeracy session link well to the skills and knowledge pupils practise in their individual and group tasks.
20. Weekly planning is thorough. Lesson plans identify clear objectives for learning and the activities pupils will be involved in. Teachers plan tasks that are challenging and well matched to the needs of average and more able pupils. The weakness lies in the use made of their regular assessment information to set individual targets to enable pupils, especially those who are less able, to understand what they need to learn next to improve. Lower attaining pupils receive very good quality adult support, which assists them well in group and individual tasks. A small proportion of these pupils are not placed on the school's register of special educational needs at an early enough stage so their learning is not broken down into small enough steps to

support independent learning at faster pace. The new headteacher has already identified this problem and new arrangements are to be introduced when she takes over the role of managing special educational needs provision.

21. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs have individual educational plans that highlight targets for learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work in close partnership and ensure all pupils are fully included in lessons. They provide appropriate guidance and intervention to enable pupils to succeed. For example, they enable pupils to contribute to discussions and complete their tasks through appropriate intervention and sensitive questioning to develop confidence and encourage independence. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and the close working partnerships enhance teaching and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.
22. Time keeping is good. In the literacy hour teachers make good use of books that appeal to the pupils to initiate discussion. Through good modelling of reading all pupils participate and consequently learn to use pace and expression well. A weakness in literacy lessons lies in the nature of writing tasks to support development in this aspect. Too often the tasks for lower attaining pupils do not provide clear frameworks on which to structure their ideas, consequently pupils do not complete as much independent writing as they could within the allocated time. However, pupils talk happily about the different purposes of writing they experience and both boys and girls say they enjoy both reading and writing.
23. The management of behaviour is a strength. Teachers praise pupils for their good work and good behaviour. The rules are reinforced through sensitive questioning which generates enthusiasm for learning and a culture of trust and mutual respect. Pupils consequently are confident that everyone is valued. Expectations are high so pupils behave well and are eager to please. A difference between the very good and good teaching is the way teachers inspire the pupils through their own enthusiasm for learning and their presentation skills which make pupils look forward to the next lesson. An example was observed in the teaching of music when the teacher involved every pupil in singing, playing percussion instruments, taking on roles within a music game and performing their final efforts as an orchestra. Because the teacher participated and performed with the pupils, encouraged them to praise and criticise each other and used humour when sounds were unexpected, the quality of evaluation and enjoyment was high. All the pupils enjoyed the lesson and met the learning objectives. They went back to their class acting out their 'animal roles' and looking forward to the next music lesson.
24. Teachers evaluate work with pupils, through discussions during group tasks and at the end of lessons. This is a feature in all classes and is a reason why speaking and listening are a strength. In literacy, in Year 2, the teacher encouraged pupils to share their ideas about words that had similar shapes. This challenged them to think carefully, use a broad range of vocabulary, consider the possible meaning of words they invented and also look in detail at the correct orientation and height of letters. While oral evaluation is good in all classes, opportunities are missed to reflect pupils'

successes and areas for development in written marking. While all work is consistently marked the comments do not help pupils to know what they need to do next to improve.

25. Homework is used effectively for all age groups and this encourages partnership in learning between home and school. It also encourages pupils to develop independence and responsibility from an early stage. Most pupils say they like their homework. Regular reading, spelling and opportunities to research work linked to their lessons are features of the provision. Parents offer good support and although some are critical that their children have too much homework, the majority support the school's arrangements. Inspection evidence shows that homework makes a positive contribution to learning.

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

26. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum to its pupils and makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is securely based on the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has a good programme for personal, social and health education and governors have approved a sex education policy. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum.
27. In the reception class, the curriculum is also of good quality. Recent revision ensures children follow a programme of learning based on the national guidance for children in the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes). They benefit well from the good provision made for their emotional, social, intellectual and physical development.
28. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced the national literacy and numeracy strategies and these are supporting the effective teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum in other subjects is organised in units of work based on national guidance. A broad framework outlines the work to be covered annually and termly in each subject in Years 1 and 2. There are policies for all subjects but the majority are out of date and do not reflect current practice in the school. The staff are aware that the policies need to be reviewed but prioritised making changes to subject coverage and delivery in the period where they were also responsible for the management of the school. This decision was entirely appropriate.
29. A weakness lies in the timetabling arrangements, which do not maximise learning opportunities across all subjects well enough. This has a negative impact on the time available for teaching subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT. During the week of the inspection no lessons in art, design and technology or geography were timetabled, yet some lessons seen were too long. At the end of literacy and numeracy lessons short periods were used to develop specific skills and promote personal and social

development. While these sessions were entirely satisfactory in content, better use could be made of the time to improve opportunities for pupils to build up skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects across the curriculum on a more regular and frequent basis.

30. Weaknesses in accommodation have an adverse impact on learning in physical education and on provision for children of reception age. The reception class is positioned in the room that also houses the small amount of wall mounted physical education apparatus. The room is timetabled weekly to provide indoor games and gymnastics for all age groups. This necessitates the movement of the youngest children to other areas of the building. On the same day a thriving Mother and Toddler group meets in the reception classroom and the weekly visit of a pianist to accompany music lessons for each class takes place. The outcome is that reception children have no fixed home on this particular afternoon. The disruption of moving from room to room, together with a change in teacher on this day, has a very unsettling effect on young reception children who require the consistency and familiarity of their routines and surroundings.
31. Good provision is made for pupils who have statements of special educational need and good links have been established with outside agencies such as the speech therapist to meet individual needs and the targets set in individual education plans. Provision for the very small number of pupils placed on the school's register is satisfactory. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly. While the targets in the plans are appropriate, some are not as sharply focused as they need to be. Consequently the progress of this small number of pupils is not easily identified and measured. The precise needs of some lower attaining pupils, frequently boys at the present time, are not identified at an early enough stage. Tasks in lessons are planned appropriately and pupils receive very good quality support from the teaching assistants. However, less able pupils do not have precise targets for their learning to enable them to see the small steps they can take to improve. In this respect the school's procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs require some improvement. Procedures for the long-term support for pupils who may be falling slightly behind in their work are not good enough. A much more rigorous approach is needed to ensure that pupils are identified from an early stage and appropriate programmes of work are tailored to their individual needs incorporating regular reviews of progress. The school has already identified this weakness. Results of the latest baseline assessments for reception aged pupils have been used to identify those who may require additional support. The new headteacher is to take responsibility for this aspect of the school's work in the near future and has a very clear understanding of how provision can be improved.
32. A range of appropriate visits and activities enriches the curriculum. Members of the local clergy regularly lead assemblies and various community groups visit the school, for instance to promote road safety or raise awareness of drugs' misuse. Pupils participate in community events including a civic anti-litter initiative and a competition organised by a local bank. From time to time

they visit the theatre and local places of interest including Carsington Water. Pupils' regular visits to the local swimming pool are an important element of their physical education curriculum. Swimming skills are further developed in the extra-curricular weekly swimming club, largely financed by the Friends of the School. In general, provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and appropriate for the age of the pupils and the size of the school. The school has good links with local schools and the proposals to amalgamate the infant schools are improving these links further. The new acting headteacher is already seeking ways to use the strengths of adults more widely to reduce the burden of planning on very small teaching teams.

33. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Very good provision is also made for moral and social development. For spiritual and cultural development the provision is good. The arrangements for mid-day meals provide a very good opportunity for enjoyable social interaction. Pupils sit to eat their meals in mixed age groups, they chat to one another and to the motherly lunchtime staff. The atmosphere is relaxed, friendly and good humoured and pupils learn to relate to a wide range of different personalities. Provision for moral development is equally strong, based on the expectations and examples set by members of staff. Pupils develop a sense of fairness and, through their religious education lessons, awareness that all have a moral responsibility to use the world's resources with care.
34. Provision for spiritual development is good and is supported by a programme of assembly themes that, during the week of the inspection, dealt with thanksgiving for harvest. The good provision for cultural development includes theatre visits, involvement in Derbyshire well dressing and traditional maypole dancing. Pupils are introduced to the work of artists and composers, for example the music of Chopin was used well during inspection week, and pupils talked about the pictures they had created in the style of Van Gogh. They learn about the lives of people from the past and those who live in other countries through history and geography. Comparisons of different festivals and traditions also form part of their work in religious education. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to explore the diversity and richness of cultures beyond their immediate community.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS**

35. The school provides good care for its pupils and has maintained the good standards reported in the last inspection. Staff know their pupils well and help them feel valued and cared for. This is particularly noticeable in the reception class where the youngest pupils have quickly and happily settled into school.
36. Health and safety and child protection procedures are effective and staff have a good level of awareness. The school is clean, tidy and secure. First aid arrangements are good. Pupils are well looked after at the end of the day with staff ensuring that a responsible adult collects them. Personal development is monitored well and all pupils are given good personal support.

37. A consistent approach to the promotion of good behaviour is successfully encouraging pupils' very positive attitudes to school. Pupils and their parents feel they are treated fairly and are confident to approach staff if they have concerns. The good level of activities provided at playtimes contributes well towards very good behaviour and relationships in the playground, for example when pupils play games such as *The Farmer's in his Den*. Staff work hard and successfully to maintain a happy school.
38. The school has recently introduced a new system to record and monitor attendance. It provides very good information to enable staff to monitor trends and patterns in relation to attendance. The school takes good steps to promote attendance and to discourage parents from taking their children out of school for holidays during term time.
39. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall; appropriate steps have been made to develop assessment in science, a key issue in the previous inspection. The analysis of Key Stage 1 test results has recently been used well to inform the development of the curriculum in mathematics, resulting in improved standards. In English analysis of recent test results and assessments has identified lower attainment by boys than girls in reading and writing. A weakness is that on-going teacher assessments are not used sufficiently well to identify the specific steps in learning which individual pupils need to make to improve their attainment levels, particularly lower attaining pupils. Assessments do not track well enough the rates of progress made by individuals so that planning can be more carefully tailored to their needs through the setting of precise learning targets.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

40. A good partnership with parents has been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents indicated very good support and positive views about the school both in parents' questionnaire and at the pre-inspection meeting. The great majority believe that children like school and that they make good progress and behave well. They think that teaching is good, staff expect children to work hard and the school is well led and managed. Staff are approachable and the school helps their children become mature and responsible. Just over a quarter of parents responding to the survey felt the school doesn't provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons, and at the meeting several indicated concerns over annual reports.
41. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views. The range of activities provided outside lessons is appropriate for an infant school of this size. Annual reports meet legal requirements and give good details of what pupils can do; they give insufficient evaluation or information on progress and do not give specific targets or areas for development. This is a weakness that staff recognise. The school gives very good encouragement to parents to be involved in their children's education and the response from parents is very positive. In particular, the arrangements at the start of the school day

encourage every parent into the classrooms to share a few minutes learning with their children. This is very effective; it helps pupils settle very quickly into school and gives parents very good regular contact with staff and develops awareness of the work their children are doing. Through the toddler group parents and their little children experience a warm and positive introduction to the school.

42. Parents of pupils with individual education plans are invited to termly reviews to discuss their children's progress and contribute to target setting for the next term. Parents value the opportunity to speak informally to staff and to come into the school at the start and end of the day. Parents of statemented pupils speak highly of the school's work with their children. The school is aware that it needs to become more effective in identifying pupils' special needs at an earlier stage. This will also involve informing parents to enable them to support their children in partnership with the school.
43. Parents support homework well. They provide valuable support in the classroom and the Friends of the School provide good financial support.
44. Although most parents support the school's requests for prompt, regular, attendance, too many parents continue to take their children on holiday in term time.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED**

45. The school has experienced significant difficulties since the time of the last inspection. Following the retirement of the headteacher, senior staff agreed to temporarily accept roles to oversee the management of the school. These interim arrangements lasted for a total of five terms. Local decisions were then taken to consider the amalgamation of the two Wirksworth infant schools. An acting headteacher was formally appointed to coordinate these changes and proposals to eventually move the schools into new premises. The headteacher took up her position at the start of the term.
46. The senior teachers worked with commitment and enthusiasm to address important issues and move the school forward following a period of time when the pace of change was not fast enough. They involved governors in decision-making, reviewed the school development plan and identified areas for development. As a result of their vision the issues raised in the last report have been successfully addressed and national initiatives and changes to the curriculum have also been successfully introduced.
47. The new headteacher spends half her time in Wirksworth infant school and the remainder of her time in the neighbouring infant school. In the very short time she has been in post she has been able to make rapid changes because the staff and governors and parents support fully the positive moves taken to improve the quality of education provided. Consequently, the school is at the start of an exciting new era of development that is welcomed by all the partners

in learning. There is a positive ethos and eagerness to enhance further the quality of leadership, teaching, learning, the curriculum and the premises. All staff are anticipating the review of job descriptions with enthusiasm and there is a high level of commitment to school improvement. Staff and governors work well together as a team; the quality of leadership is good and there is a very clear direction for the work of the school.

48. Senior staff and the new headteacher and governors have accurately evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has worked closely with the governors and has already shaped the development of a new committee structure to develop a closer partnership between the two schools. Consequently, governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
49. Management roles and responsibilities are planned for review. In a small school such as this each member of staff holds a wide and varied range of responsibilities. The very good relationships between staff enable individual strengths and expertise to be utilised fully, for example subject expertise and in shared planning. An example of the success of teamwork is evident in the decision taken to prioritise the development of mathematics following a dip in results in 2000. The latest results show that the action taken has successfully raised standards, placing the school in the top twenty five per cent of schools nationally. A strength of the team is the flexible approach to managing issues and the sharing of problems in order to find resolutions. There is a high level of mutual respect and considerable optimism for the future.
50. Significant progress has been made in the last year. The governors are now well informed. There have been changes to the membership of the governing body and new members have recently been appointed to monitor the provision for special needs, literacy and numeracy. Governors are linked to subject areas and, although their roles are new, describe in detail the practical ways in which they have maintained awareness of the provision for literacy, numeracy and also the views of parents. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors attend training courses and provide loyal support. They have identified the need to make further use of information about standards and provision to judge the value they add to pupils' education more systematically. For example, they know that standards in mathematics have risen and through discussions with parents and pupils understand that the support of teaching assistants is valued. However, they have yet to consider fully the impact of their resourcing decisions on raising standards.
51. During recent weeks the governors have met very regularly with the headteacher and there is an effective partnership developing which is enabling the school to make the necessary changes to prepare for amalgamation. Governors are involved fully in decision making, they write the annual report for parents and plan the budget with staff. They spend time in school and make themselves accessible to parents. This open approach has sustained the confidence of the community in the work of the school. The parents' questionnaire shows that a high proportion of parents strongly agree with the

school's work. There is a clear vision for the future and a high level of commitment to enable the school to succeed.

52. The school plan provides a three year overview and separate action plans for annual priorities. The plans review provision in literacy, numeracy and ICT and place good focus on raising pupils' achievements. Funding, including grants for staff training and the refurbishment of parts of the building, have been used appropriately. Timescales for achievement and personal responsibilities are also set. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are identified but there is no formal review planned to enable staff and governors to evaluate the impact their decisions have had on teaching and learning together and to measure changes in the outcomes from year to year. This is a minor issue for the governors to consider.
53. Curriculum coordinators have started to monitor teaching and learning by reviewing planning and evaluating standards achieved in national tests. The interim headteacher introduced the monitoring of literacy and numeracy and drew appropriately on local advice and support. The latest analysis of the 2001 test results has identified aspects of writing and reading as priorities for development, for example in reviewing the standards achieved by boys. The new acting headteacher has also identified the review of provision for special educational needs. While the support for pupils with statements is well targeted through individual education plans and adult support, too few lower attaining pupils were identified at an early enough stage to enable intervention programmes to be introduced as soon as possible. Progress was evident in this aspect during the inspection reflecting the willingness of staff to respond to ideas to improve existing provision.
54. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. The school did all it could to avoid disruption to pupils' education but experienced some recent recruitment difficulties resulting in reception pupils being taught by a regular supply teacher for two days a week. While these arrangements are entirely satisfactory these young children take time to adjust to different teachers. The teaching assistants work in close partnership with teachers and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, ensuring all pupils are included fully in discussions and tasks. They use humour, reinforce instructions and directions and calmly reassure pupils to enable them to confidently participate and achieve their best. The support from external agencies is utilised fully. The caretaker, cleaning and administrative staff are all highly committed and make a significant contribution to the smooth running of daily routines and the provision of a very clean environment.
55. There are weaknesses in the accommodation. The reception class is based in the small school hall and consequently have to move rooms for physical education lessons held on one day a week to provide access for the other classes. While this room offers the closest proximity to the outside play area, there is no direct access and all play activities require adult supervision. The room has no running water and, while there is a sink in the nearby corridor, its position does not support the development of personal independence. Adults

keep a watchful eye to ensure the children's health and safety. There is no school field to support games and this inhibits the school's ability to deliver the curriculum. While other local schools offer their facilities in the summer months, the time taken to travel between sites raises issues about the efficient use of curriculum time. The school provides regular swimming lessons for pupils, supported by parents' fund raising. This compensates in part for the lack of facilities on site but takes up a larger than average proportion of curriculum time. The school makes the best possible use of its available resources for physical education but staff and governors look forward to the time when a new site provides improved facilities. The position of the school office means the secretary is not near enough to the school entrance to welcome visitors to the school. At the present time the headteacher has no office to hold private discussions and the secretary's office is in need of refurbishment. Health and safety checks are thorough and areas of concern are acted upon quickly.

56. Financial management is good. Governors receive budget reviews regularly and oversee decisions about virements. Funds are used appropriately to support developments. The most recent audit highlighted minor aspects for development that have been addressed. The use of new technology to support the day-to-day running of the school is good and the school's routines are well managed. The secretary is calm and efficient and has taken on more management duties to support the school in the last two years and enable senior staff to concentrate on the school priorities. The management of resources, including the application of the principles of best value, are satisfactory. Governors understand the principles well but do not yet evaluate with sufficient rigour to accurately identify the success of their decisions.
  
57. Progress made in addressing the school's circumstances and the relatively minor issues raised in the last report is good. Recent developments have enabled standards in English, mathematics and science to continue to be above average by the age of seven and the curriculum has been reviewed to follow national guidance. However most policies are out of date and do not reflect the current practice and schemes of work. This is a minor weakness, already acknowledged by staff and governors. The assessment policy has been reviewed and assessment procedures are now good. However, the information is not yet being used well enough to support target setting for individual pupils. Resources are satisfactory overall but some books are old and tired and need replacing, particularly if they are to appeal to boys. The school provides a good quality of education and good value for money. It is a rapidly improving school.

## 58. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

**In order to further raise standards and the quality of education, the headteacher and governors, supported by the staff, should:**

- \*Improve the quality of written marking and the use of teacher assessment information by:
  - ensuring that written comments on pupils' work provides them with helpful guidance on its strengths and weaknesses;
  - using monitoring information to evaluate the rate of pupils' progress in relation to prior attainment; and
  - setting precise targets for learning for pupils, particularly lower attaining pupils.Paragraphs 2, 5, 7, 20, 24, 31, 39, 57, 70, 73, 78, 82, 95.
- \* Review the provision for special educational needs by:
  - identifying pupils' needs at the earliest stage possible and placing them on the school's register and
  - ensuring that pupils at the early stages of support have individual plans which detail precise targets for learning.
  - broadening the range of resources and reading and writing activities to appeal to boys.Paragraphs 2-3, 20, 31, 39, 53, 70, 71
- Review the organisation of the timetable to make the most efficient use of time and maximise the opportunities to deliver the full range of curriculum activities.  
Paragraph 9, 29
- Seek ways to improve the quality of accommodation for the reception class and enhance the quality of the office environment to improve the accessibility of the secretary to staff, pupils and parents.  
Paragraphs 9, 17, 30, 55, 59, 64, 96.

**Minor areas for improvement that the school should consider for inclusion in the action plan:**

- Improve the quality of annual reports to parents on pupils' progress.  
Paragraphs 5, 40-1
- Review curriculum policies to reflect the current practice.  
Paragraph 28, 57, 90
- Improve the evaluation arrangements to formally review the impact of decisions on teaching and learning.  
Paragraph 52, 56

- Increase pupils' opportunities to learn about the diversity and richness of cultures beyond their immediate community.  
Paragraphs 34, 90.

\* Denotes an area that the school is aware of and has included in its existing school development plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	10	4	0	0	0
Percentage	4	35	43	17	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		68
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		7

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	16	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above				
	Total	23	20	25
	Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above			
	School	89 (94)	81 (91)	97 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above				
	Total	23	24	26
	Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above			
	School	88 (89)	92 (89)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (87)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	65
Any other minority ethnic group	1

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y2**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	186,390
Total expenditure	194,299
Expenditure per pupil	2,399
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,425
Balance carried forward to next year	3,516

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	68
Number of questionnaires returned	24

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	25	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	33	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	33	0	0	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	58	38	0	4	0
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	46	13	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	29	0	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	21	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	38	46	8	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	33	8	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	46	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	25	29	0	13

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

59. Children who have their fifth birthday in the autumn term start school in September. Those with spring and summer birthdays start school in January. All reception aged pupils are admitted to school on a full time basis in line with the local policy. Early assessments of children when they start school show there is a broad range of attainment and that their attainment is broadly average and lower than at the time of the last report. Many have attended local playgroups. The setting has a very warm, caring, and positive ethos. The teaching observed during the inspection was of good quality. In four lessons in ten it was very good with occasional features of excellence, a further three lessons in ten were good and the remainder were satisfactory. The children have only been at school for six weeks and are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. The curriculum is well planned and the activities provide a good balance of practical tasks and opportunities for discussion and to play with friends. The job share arrangements for this age range are satisfactory. Teachers maintain good communication to secure continuity in the strategies they use and share information about pupils' progress. The teachers know the children well and have very recently started to use their early assessments to identify pupils who are more able and those who are likely to need additional support. On the day when physical education lessons are timetabled for classes, the children have to move from their base to be taught in other areas of the school. They also have a change of teacher on this day. These factors cause some insecurity and affect adversely the well organised daily routines. However, the teacher manages the situation positively and with sensitivity. The teaching assistants provide good support and work with groups to ensure all children are challenged and achieve success. This enables children to enjoy learning and to develop positive attitudes to school. Teachers capture children's imagination through the use of expressive language, and resources are used well to make learning fun. The analysis of children's work by the end of the reception year shows they make good progress. Many exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. At this early stage four children have been identified to receive additional support and individual education plans are drafted.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

60. Good teaching supports children to understand how to cooperate and share with each other. Consequently they listen carefully and know that the adults who help them will value their ideas. They receive good encouragement to become independent, for example to put away equipment and tidy *The Milkshake Café* for the next customers. The use of games and role play provides valuable opportunities for pupils to play different roles and to act out their experiences. The children are well behaved and enthusiastic, and usually concentrate well. The children are still learning to take turns to speak, sustain their concentration and meet the high expectations of the school. They have made good progress in the six weeks they have been at school and these social skills are developing well. They take turns to play with toys and know the difference between right and wrong. A small number prefer to play independently and need adult help to become involved with others and

contribute to group tasks. The teachers create a stimulating, bright environment where each child is made to feel special. Expectations are high, and the children are happy and eager to please and to succeed. Most children are likely to meet the age related expectations in this aspect of learning and more able children are likely to exceed them by the end of the year.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

61. The children's attainment in this aspect of their learning is likely to exceed the expectations for their ages by the end of the year. In a short space of time children have begun to recognise some letters and sounds. Those who are more able try to write their names and some sound out individual letters. Children enjoy discussions and are eager to talk to the teachers and to each other. They mainly speak clearly and respond in simple sentences because the teacher expects them to. Teaching is good and in all sessions the children are encouraged to develop their vocabulary, to listen carefully and to show respect for each other's views. They recognise simple words and sounds, and a small proportion follow the teacher to read simple sentences and order the words. The children enjoy books and like to talk about them; they know the terms 'author' and 'title' but only more able pupils use them at present. The teachers and assistant are enthusiastic and because of this the children have very positive attitudes to their learning. A rich stimulating range of activities encourages listening, reading and writing. The teacher's planning is clearly focused and tasks are well matched to the needs of individual pupils.

### **Mathematical development**

62. The children's attainment is likely to exceed the expectations for their ages by the end of the year. They learn to count to ten and can recognise number patterns and some geometric shapes such as squares, rectangles and circles. In one lesson, the children enjoyed sorting shapes and counting the number of corners and edges of each shape. They delight in singing number rhymes and taking part in the actions that help them to understand the value of numbers. They are also learning to use mathematical vocabulary appropriately, for example identifying shapes in the environment and repeating the terms after the teacher to pronounce them accurately. A small proportion found this hard and received good support from the adults. The teaching is of very good quality and provides children with exciting practical experiences which make learning fun. Tasks are well matched to individual needs and this ensures success in learning.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

63. The children's attainment in this area shows rapid development and many are likely to exceed the expectations for their age range by the end of the year. They recognise and name parts of the body and know the difference between hot and cold, loud and soft. More able children use computers with confidence and print their work independently. Others achieve this with support. Most

control the mouse with increasing accuracy and skill. Teaching is very good. The teacher and support assistant have high expectations and encourage children to learn through their play, for example finding out that bubbles are made by blowing air into water and creating prints by adding colour. They also learn the importance of wearing appropriate clothing in the different seasons and name their oldest and youngest family members.

### **Physical development**

64. The children's attainment in this aspect is satisfactory. Provision is limited by the constraints of the building. There is no separate hall within the school building; consequently the children have to move from their base on the day when gymnastics lessons are timetabled for classes. There is no direct access from the classroom to the outside area to enable the children to play independently. However, with adult support children have planned opportunities to use large wheeled toys in the playground. Manipulative skills are developing appropriately. Children find it hard to manipulate scissors but at this early stage in learning they are trying hard and persevere. They hold pencils and brushes appropriately because they are taught to do so. Teaching is very good. The children learn to move by running, skipping and jumping, follow simple instructions and begin to balance on one leg and on low-level benches. In the playground children move confidently, use the space well and show a good awareness of others as they play.

### **Creative development**

65. Attainment in this aspect is satisfactory. The children have opportunities to draw, paint, make models and print. They paint pictures of flowers and of people using bright colours and most children name the primary colours accurately. Manipulative skills are developing appropriately, for example, holding pencils and paintbrushes and controlling their movements when using scissors and toys. They enjoy opportunities for role-play in *The Milkshake Café* and enjoy singing songs and rhymes. Activities are well linked to language and social development encouraging children to share and play together. Good teaching encourages the children to be creative and to try out ideas. The allocation of time to these activities is appropriate for the age range and ensures that the needs of these young children are met well.

### **ENGLISH**

66. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average by age seven and in reading and writing they are above average. This picture is similar to the one reflected in the latest test results set out above in paragraph 1. Despite the staffing difficulties and the lower level of attainment of children on entry to the school standards have been maintained since the school was last inspected. There is evidence of improvement in the quality of handwriting which was criticised previously. This has been built upon through the introduction of a structured handwriting programme that is regularly reinforced across all classes. Speaking and listening skills are a particular strength because teachers are skilled in planning opportunities for discussions that

require pupils to ask and answer questions, offer opinions and ideas and use the new vocabulary they have learned.

67. Pupils listen carefully because their teachers are enthusiastic and make their lessons exciting. In story time pupils in Year 2 eagerly discussed the other books they read by the author saying which ones they liked and why. They take turns to put forward their ideas, praise each other and their teachers and refer back to previous lessons. Because pupils know their contributions are valued they are confident to present their ideas. They say they love reading and, through following the good modelling of their teachers, they read with fluency and expression. In discussion pupils describe the differences between fiction, non-fiction and poetry. They talk with excitement about opportunities they have to fact-find and make good use of dictionaries, contents and index pages to locate information.
68. Pupils independently use dictionaries to look up words they are unsure of in their writing. They have favourite stories and have a love of well-known fairy tales such as *Cinderella*, *The Three Little Pigs* and *Goldilocks*. One pupil described her preference for funny poems talking enthusiastically about *Please Mrs. Butler* by Allan Ahlberg. They delight in listening to stories told by their teachers and look forward to story time. In the literacy hour they all join in during group reading because the teachers expect everyone to contribute and the teaching assistants give very good support to pupils with statements to ensure they are included in all aspects of the session. Most pupils read regularly at home and are keen to share their books and spellings with parents. This partnership is a strength and the arrangements contribute positively to pupils' learning. Parents regularly change their children's books at the start or end of the school day and voluntary helpers regularly hear pupils read in classes.
69. Pupils describe a range of different types of writing they have used such as poetry, stories, reports and instructions. They refer to these differences in examples of their work such as the directions to make a toy in design and technology and their class anthology of poems in Year 2. Computers are used appropriately for drafting and presenting work. Phonic skills are taught well. They are introduced from the earliest days in the reception class and most pupils are confident to spell words independently. Spelling is mainly accurate or phonetically plausible. The introduction of subject specific vocabulary in lessons other than literacy extends pupils' range of language and requires them to use new and more difficult words in discussion and in their recording. Pupils have a good understanding of the use and purpose of punctuation, for example, capital letters, full stops and question marks. Analysis of work shows that by the time the pupils leave the school a high proportion have a good understanding of the use of inverted commas. Teachers draw good attention to the use of punctuation in shared reading books. This works well because pupils follow the teachers' model and learn that commas require a pause and inverted commas mark the speech of a character.

70. The teaching of literacy is consistently good. This supports the learning of most pupils well and by the age of seven the majority are competent readers and writers. Those with statements of special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and receive very good support from classroom assistants to contribute to discussions and to complete the tasks which are linked to the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers make regular assessments of the progress pupils make but too little use is made of the information. Consequently, the needs of lower attaining pupils, at present mainly boys, are not identified at an earlier enough stage to place them on the first stages of the register of special educational needs. Although these pupils receive additional adult support of very good quality to help them to complete their written tasks, the tasks are not specifically related to the precise areas of learning which need to be developed, too little use is made of writing frameworks to encourage greater levels of independence and consequently progress is not as fast for this group as it could be. A further weakness of a minor nature lies in the use of marking. While all work is marked the comments do not help pupils to recognise their successes and areas for improvement. However, the quality of oral feedback teachers give to pupils is good.
71. The use of puppets and role-play to bring excitement to learning and enable pupils to communicate in a creative way is a further strength. The pupils look forward to literacy lessons because the focus on learning for purpose and enjoyment is strongly reinforced. A minor weakness is the need to improve the range of books and resources to motivate and capture the interest of boys.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. As reported in paragraph 1, in the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils attained standards that were well above the average of all other and of similar schools. The school has successfully reversed a downward trend in mathematics and standards are now similar to those described at the time of the last inspection. Following the 2000 teacher assessments, staff carried out a careful analysis of the results and identified areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge and understanding and the school's provision. Revisions to the curriculum and enhanced staff training ensured these areas were taught thoroughly during the next year. The 2001 test results indicate that the school's action has been effective. Inspection evidence shows most pupils are achieving standards that are at least above average with higher attaining pupils achieving beyond this. The good progress pupils make over time, evident in the analysis of work, indicates that the school is likely to continue to maintain high standards and attainment will continue to be well above average overall.
73. Since the last inspection the school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. Because the quality of teaching is very good, particularly in number, the majority of pupils have a good grasp of the number system to a hundred by the age of seven. They add and subtract confidently, are beginning to use simple multiplication and know about halves and quarters.

Teachers provide a range of interesting opportunities to enable pupils to use their knowledge of number to solve simple problems, for example, when measuring length and mass, telling the time to the nearest quarter hour and recognising a right angle. Through well planned activities pupils gather information, create tally charts and present data using line and bar graphs. In this way they learn to interpret data. More able pupils work with numbers to 1000 and know a range of multiplication tables. Lower attaining pupils make slower progress because their work is not precisely targeted to their individual needs. However, pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported to meet the targets in their individual education plans. Teaching assistants offer very good support to pupils with special needs and lower attaining pupils and consequently they all achieve the learning objectives and are fully included in lessons.

74. Teachers extend more able pupils well. For example, in a lesson in Year 2 mental mathematics skills were extended well in an activity at the start of a lesson that required pupils to count forwards or backwards in tens. Similarly in Year 1 mental calculations within 20 were developed progressively during their numeracy session. Again, average and higher attaining pupils were well challenged. Teachers make good use of the incidental opportunities that arise during lessons to extend and reinforce learning, for instance counting the numbers of pupils present at registration and subtracting the number absent from the number on roll. The use of number lines supports pupils to note accuracy in ordering. During one observation a Year 1 pupil noted that the numbers hanging in the number line were in the correct order. The teacher took the opportunity to praise the pupil and reinforce the ordering sequence of the numbers. Careful questioning ensures the full inclusion of all pupils during class and group work.
75. Teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of mathematics was evident in lessons seen on shape. They use mathematical language very well and ask questions which challenge pupils and require them to use the correct mathematical terms in their answers. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on solid shapes, the differences between triangular and square pyramids were well explored and this led to a deepening of pupils' understanding of the properties of these geometric shapes. Significant strengths lie in the teachers' ability, at the start of a lesson, to arouse pupils' curiosity, engage them in learning and share with them the objectives for learning. As a result pupils make very good progress and reach high standards in their work. Lessons invariably end with good opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and for teachers to draw all the strands of the lesson together, asking pupils what they have learned. This very effectively consolidates the learning.
76. Teachers use learning resources well. For instance, in the lessons on shapes there was a good range of solid and flat shapes for pupils to handle and, in addition, good access to appropriate ICT programs. There are computers in each classroom that are used well to support learning in mathematics. There are good opportunities for mathematical skills to be used across the curriculum. In science, observations during experiments are recorded at ten-

minute intervals, hand-spans are measured and, in the reception class, children's height is recorded against the classroom door.

77. Teachers' management of pupils is very good and is underpinned by the very good relationships between all teachers and pupils in the school. Expectations are high and pupils respond well. They have very positive attitudes to learning, behave well and are keen to contribute. Pupils have a real interest in their work and have a good degree of independence. During group work, even when not directly supervised by an adult, pupils remain hard at work and are keen to do their best. They listen carefully and rarely need instructions to be repeated. Most co-operate well and share equipment and resources amiably. They help each other and speak to one another in a positive and affirming manner. There is a high degree of harmony.
78. An interesting feature of teaching in the school is that for some subjects, including mathematics, the Year 1 class is taught by the Year 2 class teacher and vice versa. As a result all teachers know all pupils well. Assessment procedures have been introduced which provide good information about pupils' learning. The school is aware that further refinement is desirable to ensure that precise targets for learning are set to match individual needs, particularly for lower attainers. Teachers take a collective approach to subject co-ordination. There is a strong commitment to improvement and the staff have already carefully analysed the 2001 SAT results and identified areas for improvement.

## **SCIENCE**

79. During the inspection it was not possible to see any science lessons. However, evidence from the analysis of pupils' past work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that pupils attain standards which are at least above average with higher attaining pupils achieving beyond this. In the 2001 statutory assessments standards were found to be well above average and in the top five per cent of similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level 3 increased from 29 per cent in 2000 to 46 per cent in 2001. The standards attained at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. The school has successfully addressed weaknesses in science assessment procedures noted at the time of the last inspection and pupils' progress is systematically assessed each half term. Pupils currently in Year 2 are making good progress and are likely to maintain the school's high standards.
80. A scrutiny of pupils past and present work shows that in Year 1 pupils use their senses to classify objects and learn about the properties of different materials. By the age of seven they are able to sort materials using different criteria and know that some have magnetic properties. Through opportunities to investigate, they learn that heating or dissolving can change materials and that some of these changes are reversible. For example, pupils explained how they had placed ice cubes in different parts of the classroom and observed the changes at ten minute intervals. One pupil identified the radiator was the

hottest spot in the classroom because the ice melted more quickly in this position. This activity is an example of the good provision the school makes to build up pupils' skills in experimental science. This is a strong feature of science teaching and learning in the school that has a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. In Year 1 pupils identify and label the external parts of the body and understand that humans need healthy food. By Year 2 they begin to understand that human characteristics vary by measuring hand-spans and noting differences. This work is extended as the pupils compare the differences between animals and humans, for example when discovering how the life cycle of humans is different to that of other creatures including frogs, birds and butterflies. They record plants and animals in differing habitats and learn about food chains.

81. Pupils' written work is carefully presented and computers are used well to support learning in science. Pupils talk confidently and enthusiastically about the topics they have covered in science and have a good knowledge of their learning. For example, following the experiment to investigate how ice can be changed from a solid to a liquid one pupil said; "I didn't realise that ice was frozen water." Pupils also describe experiments they have shared with parents at home following their science lessons at school and remember with pleasure the seed diaries they kept to record the growth of a seed to a plant.
  
82. Strengths in the provision for science are the good opportunities for developing experimental and practical aspects of learning and the joint planning between the teachers in Years 1 and 2. Regular assessment opportunities are built into teachers' planning and the criteria for assessment are usually specific. However, the school has yet to identify pupils' particular strengths to set more specific individual targets. The subject is well co-ordinated and there are sufficient resources that are easily accessible. Interesting, carefully assembled displays successfully combine the celebration of pupils' work with opportunities to explore natural objects. This technique very effectively arouses pupils' interest and curiosity and provides a focus for learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY AND MUSIC**

83. Art and design and design and technology were not timetabled during the inspection so standards achieved in these subjects have been judged through discussions with pupils and staff and the analysis of pupils' work.
  
84. In the three lessons observed in the teaching of music the quality was at least good and in one lesson it was very good. The very good pace, variety of individual and group participation enabled the pupils to make rapid progress and enjoy their music making. For example, six-year-olds followed symbols and the directions of the conductor, by the age of seven the pupils understood how to maintain the beat using percussion instruments and responded accurately to the teacher's directions to perform high and low loud and soft notes. This element of the lesson forged good links with science and literacy.

Pupils developed their vocabulary and improved their ability to maintain a regular beat following the teacher's example. Good pace, high expectations and the teacher's enthusiasm supported pupils to evaluate and improve their performance and to enjoy their learning.

85. In art and design and design and technology pupils talk about the opportunities they have to draw, paint, create pictures and use a range of materials when designing and making. They know that Van Gogh painted flowers using bright colours and thick paint and are developing awareness of colour mixing to create effects. They draw portraits and look at paintings such as *The Milliner* by Degas. Displays are bright and attractive. They enhance the learning environment and place value on pupils' work. They reflect good links with other subjects. Displays, photographs and discussions with pupils indicate a high level of enthusiasm, and regular opportunities to design and make articles for specific purposes. They understand the importance of reading and writing instructions clearly for others to follow and recognise the importance of choosing materials that are suitable for a particular task. By the age of seven pupils make stringed puppets and pop-up cards and consider the most appropriate materials to use for summer and winter clothing.
86. Standards in these subjects are in line with age related expectations and, while they appear to be lower than at the time of the last report, it should be remembered that the school has reviewed the allocations of time to teach these subjects with the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Subject coverage is evident in teachers' planning. A minor weakness is the lack of an up-to-date policy to reflect the school's revised practice.

## **GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

87. During inspection week it was only possible to observe a limited amount of religious education being taught and no history or geography was taught whilst inspectors were in the school. However, a scrutiny of past and current work, displays, teachers' planning, discussions with staff and pupils and evidence from two lesson observations indicate that standards in all three subjects are in line with the expectations of seven-year-olds in these subjects and pupils make satisfactory progress. ICT is used well to support pupils' learning.
88. Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to learn about famous people from the past. Pupils in Year 2 talk enthusiastically about their study of Florence Nightingale and her courage as a nurse. In geography they have been introduced to the lives of children living in different cultures to their own, for example, the Gambia. There are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about the history and geography of their own town of Wirksworth. In religious education, the teachers draw good attention to the need to care for the local environment. Following a walk around the town, Year 2 pupils identified features of their locality that showed a lack of care for God's world. They were able to discuss the action that they could take to improve the world by picking up litter or dealing with a neighbour's troublesome pet. However, a weakness

in the history and geography curricula is that the richness of the local environment is not utilised well enough to develop pupils' sense of time and place and develop their skills of historical or geographical enquiry through the use of first hand evidence.

89. In lessons pupils behave well. In a religious education lesson, Year 2 pupils felt a sense of value and responsibility when they contributed to the learning of pupils in Year 1. They prepared a talk for the pupils in which they wore the uniforms of their various clubs and described what they did. Year 1 pupils listened very intently to their older friends. Pupils learned to recognise names, symbols, badges and clothing, which identify people who belong to local clubs and groups. They began to understand the significance and value of belonging to associations such as 'Rainbows' and how every person is an important part of a team. Good listening skills were also evident in the Year 2 lesson in which pupils contributed interesting and imaginative ideas about how their local neighbourhood could be improved.
90. In the small number of lessons observed the teaching of religious education was good. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this enables discussions to take place that are open and honest. Pupils can express their ideas in a very safe and affirming environment. Medium term planning in history and religious education is clear. Geography was not being taught during the half term of the inspection. However, the school's long-term plan indicates when geography is to be taught. The school is aware that its curriculum policies do not now reflect current practice in the school and need to be updated. The religious education scheme of work is based on the local authority agreed syllabus. Although pupils learn about aspects of other religions such as Judaism and celebrate festivals such as the Chinese New Year, the curriculum is heavily weighted to Christianity and does not celebrate cultural diversity as widely as it could.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

91. Standards in ICT are above those usually expected of seven year olds. This is an improvement since 1997, when inspectors found that standards were average. Improvements have been realised as a result of :-
- good teaching;
  - a clear scheme of work with identified targets for each year group;
  - the support of a specialist instructor;
  - increased ICT expertise of school staff; and
  - improved access to computers for specific skills teaching.
92. Pupils make good progress in ICT. When they leave the reception class their skills are in advance of those usually found in five-year-olds and, as they move through the school, these skills are steadily built upon. In Year 1, pupils learn to gather and organise information from a range of sources. For instance, they arrange pictures of toys and household objects according to the room in which they may be found and organise groups of objects on a grid according to size

and function. When working on computers they use the mouse to correctly position objects belonging to large, small and medium sized bears. They also know how to print out their screen pictures and a very small number do so independently. In Year 2, pupils know how to use the 'undo' button to retrieve work that has been accidentally deleted. They correctly place a space between each word and insert full stops and capital letters in their on screen text. By the time they leave the school some send e-mail messages and download words and images from disc. They learn to control a range of devices including tape recorders and programmable toys such as 'Roamer'. They create pictures using a range of colours, shapes, outlines and paint textures. Imaginative use is also made of computer generated text to add captions and speech bubbles to pupils' drawings. These activities are well linked to learning in other subjects such as English and mathematics.

93. Pupils behave very well in ICT lessons. Their highly positive attitudes have a beneficial impact on their learning and achievements. In class sessions they listen attentively and eagerly contribute their ideas. In their groups, they work productively and purposefully. They are confident and maintain concentration even when not supervised directly by an adult.
94. Teaching is good and as a result pupils' learning is effective. Good planning and organisation ensure that lesson content is relevant to pupils' interests. In one lesson seen, tasks given to Year 1 were related to the story of *The Three Bears*. A strong feature of ICT lessons is the high quality support given by a number of well deployed teaching assistants. Class teachers ensure teaching assistants are well briefed and they play an effective role in leading group activities. In particular, the expert ICT instructor works with small groups giving individual guidance and setting the challenge appropriate for each child. Because of this, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in lessons, work at their own pace and make good progress in consolidating and extending their computer skills. Teachers lead the whole class sessions well, they have good subject knowledge and use questioning well to extend pupils' understanding, for instance by encouraging them to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of word processing and handwriting. Pupils are very well managed; teachers know and respect pupils and have high expectations of them and this is reflected in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning.
95. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is well planned and identifies criteria for the assessments which take place at the end of each half term. The school is aware that it has yet to ensure that its assessments include sufficient detail about individual performance. In addition to the bank of computers which is primarily used for ICT teaching, there are computers in each classroom to support learning across the curriculum. There is evidence that these are well used in mathematics, science, geography and other subjects. Provision for the subject has recently been enhanced by an effective local initiative to provide specialist support. This has had a beneficial impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to observe one swimming lesson in Years 1 and 2. Evidence from this lesson, observing pupils at play, analysis of school documentation and discussion with staff indicates that pupils make appropriate progress and reach the standards expected for seven-year-olds in this aspect of their learning. Although the school does not have a separate hall it makes appropriate arrangements for pupils' physical education development in gymnastics and swimming and uses available resources as best it can.
97. Year 2 visited the swimming pool during inspection week. Because the pool is relatively small, the class is divided into ability groups for tuition. Good individual and small group tuition is provided by a swimming instructor who is well supported by the class teacher and two parents at the poolside. Pupils are making good progress. Less confident pupils all managed to swim the length of the pool (approximately 12 metres) with buoyancy support and about half were beginning to swim a few strokes without support. Those who were more confident were extended well because the instructor required the remaining 16 pupils to choose their best strokes to swim the length of the pool. They did so confidently, using front or back crawl. A weakness of the provision is that pupils' time is not used efficiently enough because they cannot all be in the water at the same time. Although the teaching assistant ensures that educational games and discussions fill the waiting time, the pool is small and, even when pupils are in the water, opportunities to practice are staggered because space is limited. Consequently, only small groups of pupils are active at any time. Nevertheless, when pupils are active, their rate of learning is very effective and they progress well.
98. The school makes adequate provision to ensure that pupils are well and safely supervised. When not in the water, groups are very well supervised by an experienced teaching assistant and parent volunteers. In good weather, pupils play supervised games sitting or standing in the small outdoor area. In poor weather, the only available waiting space is the changing room. Despite this pupils' behaviour in and out of the pool is commendable. They are co-operative, sensible and use equipment carefully. They comply with safety procedures and listen to the commands of the swimming instructor. When in the pool, pupils persist well and even those who are a little nervous of the water try their best and are delighted to find they can swim a stroke or two. The strong encouragement and support given by the swimming instructor is very effective in building pupils' confidence and ability to have a go. In and out of the pool, relationships with adults are very good, characterised by a sense of mutual respect and good humour. This has a positive impact on pupils' swimming attainment and their good behaviour and patience. Provision for swimming is enhanced by an extra-curricular, weekly swimming club organised by the Friends of the School.
99. Judgements about standards in other aspects of physical education cannot be made but playtime observations indicate that pupils' physical skills are developing appropriately and their positive and cooperative attitudes enable them to play playground games in small and larger groups well. They use the

limited space available well. The lack of need for adult intervention is an example of their awareness and respect for others. The picture is similar to that described at the time of the last inspection.