

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHORTSTOWN LOWER SCHOOL**

Shortstown, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109498

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Heather Haddon

Reporting inspector: Mrs Karen Finney  
23163

Dates of inspection: 21 – 23 March 2000

Inspection number: 217767

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Canberra Road Shortstown Bedford
Postcode:	MK42 0UZ
Telephone number:	01234 740148
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Daphne Payne
Date of previous inspection:	13 – 15 October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Karen Finney	Registered inspector	Under fives	The school's results and achievements
		English	Teaching and learning
		Art	Leadership and management
		Music	Staffing
		Religious education	School effectiveness and improvement
		English as an additional language	
Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well the school cares for its pupils
			How well the school works in partnership with parents
			Accommodation
Peter Collings	Team inspector	Mathematics	Curriculum opportunities
		Geography	Assessment
		Information technology	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
Edward Fielding	Team inspector	Science	Financial efficiency
		Design and technology	Resources
		History	
		Equal opportunities	

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school is a small lower school for boys and girls aged between four and nine years. It has 119 pupils on roll, including sixteen part-time pupils in the reception class. Seventeen pupils were aged under five at the time of the inspection, including five pupils of nursery age. Pupils' attainment on entry is variable from year to year but, overall, it is below average.

The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. The school is part of the Social Inclusion Project for local schools to improve attendance and it will be part of the Bedford Education Action Zone aiming to raise school standards in the area. The majority of pupils are from a white ethnic background, although twelve pupils (10 per cent) are from ethnic minority backgrounds. Only two pupils have English as an additional language. Eighteen per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register; which is in line with the national average. Three of these pupils have statements, a proportion above the national average.

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

Shortstown Lower School is an effective and improving school. Most pupils work hard and have good attitudes to their work. By the time pupils leave, standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics and only slightly below average in writing. The acting headteacher and governors, supported by the Local Education Authority, have made substantial improvements to the quality of teaching, which is good, overall. There is a positive atmosphere in the school, which is valued by parents. Taking into account pupils' attainment on entry, the standards achieved, the quality of teaching and learning and high unit costs the school provides sound value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics and attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average when compared with similar schools.
- Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school and have good attitudes to learning; this contributes to good progress in many lessons.
- The quality of teaching is good for children in the reception class and in Key Stage 2.
- There is good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in literacy, and they make good progress.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety.
- There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and the rate of attendance at the school is now very high.
- The partnership with parents is good and most parents have positive views.
- The acting headteacher has established a staff team working successfully for the future improvement of the school.
- The governing body are actively involved in supporting the school and discharge their responsibilities effectively.
- There is good financial control and school administration.
- The school's resources are used effectively.

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

- Writing standards are slightly below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4.
- Pupils' attainment in science and information technology is below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4.
- The role of curriculum co-ordinators is not yet developed to ensure that they have a clear overview of standards and can influence the effectiveness of teaching throughout the school.

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

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

When the school was last inspected, in 1997, it was judged to have serious weaknesses in many aspects of its work. There has been a substantial improvement in the standards achieved in English and mathematics since then and good progress in addressing all the key issues for improvement. The quality of teaching is now better as a result of recent appointments to the school, effective monitoring by the acting headteacher and good use of Local Education Authority advisory support. There has been a good improvement to the provision for children under five as a result of the

appointment of an experienced teacher and the development of outdoor facilities. There have been considerable improvements to the leadership and management of the school, in particular through the appointment of the acting headteacher and the increased involvement and effectiveness of the governing body. There has been a good improvement to the monitoring and support arrangements for pupils' welfare and a very good improvement to procedures for monitoring attendance. The attendance rate at the school is now very high. The school has developed a better partnership with parents and parents are much more supportive of the work of the school.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven year olds, based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	E*	D	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	E*	D	D	C	
Mathematics	E	A	C	B	

There has been a very good improvement in standards achieved in test results at the end of Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection. Reading and writing test results in 1997 were in the bottom 5 per cent nationally and mathematics test results were well below average. In 1999, although reading and writing test results were below the national average, they were average when compared with similar schools. Mathematics test results were in line with the national average and above those achieved in similar schools. These results broadly reflect current standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4, which are about average in mathematics and reading and slightly below average in writing. Standards in science are not as good as they should be because pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to explore topics in sufficient depth to achieve the higher levels of knowledge and understanding. Standards in information technology are also below national expectations by Year 2 and by Year 4 because insufficient time is allocated to teaching and for pupils to practise their skills. In religious education pupils achieve standards in line with the expectations set out in the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils enjoy coming to school and show an enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to adapt to school routines.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is usually good. A small minority of pupils in Year 1 are noisy and disruptive.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good relationships with one another. There is often a good rapport between pupils and staff, which contributes to progress in lessons. Pupils throughout the school show a good sense of personal responsibility.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	good	Satisfactory	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.*

Overall the quality of teaching in the school is now good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. Fourteen per cent of lessons were very good; 43 per cent were good and 43 per cent were satisfactory. The quality of teaching was better for children under five, older pupils in Key Stage 1 and pupils in Key Stage 2. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Lessons are well structured and teachers establish clear learning objectives. Group activities are well organised and interesting and this enables pupils to work independently and the teacher and learning support assistants to give focused attention to small groups. The teaching of numeracy observed during the inspection was satisfactory overall, although pupils' recorded work and achievements in mathematics indicate that teaching is usually good. Most lessons include a stimulating introduction of mental mathematics and pupils' previous learning is used effectively to develop new skills and understanding. The teaching of science was satisfactory overall, although written work shows that pupils are rarely given an in depth understanding of scientific concepts and higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged. Pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils receive good additional support, particularly in literacy lessons, and this enables them to make good progress. Overall, pupils are learning well. Learning is less successful when class control is not securely established or the pace and challenge for higher attaining pupils is not demanding enough.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, too little time is allocated to the teaching of information technology and for pupils to practise their skills. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities for a school of this size.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good individual and small group support, particularly to develop literacy skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by the good teaching in literacy and additional literacy support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is good. The school has initiated a number of effective strategies for improving and rewarding good behaviour. There are good opportunities for pupils to relate to adults from the wider community and these support the good relationships and positive ethos in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school demonstrates good care and concern for all its pupils. Staff know pupils well and provide good informal support and guidance in lessons. There are some weaknesses in the use of assessment information to inform curriculum planning.

The school has worked hard to improve parental involvement in the school. Most parents support the school and appreciate the open and relaxed lines of communication. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection spoke highly of the school and recent improvements.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED?

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher has contributed substantially to the development of an effective staff team and positive school ethos. This has resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements. The role of some subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently developed to ensure that they have an overview of standards and can support teaching throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body are actively involved in the work of the school through meetings, visits and lesson observations. They have been particularly pro-active in seeking additional funding for the school and monitoring and improving provision for special educational needs and financial procedures.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has been given a clear picture of its performance through local education authority monitoring visits. The acting headteacher has established procedures to evaluate and support teaching in literacy and numeracy, although this is not yet extended to other areas of the curriculum. Test results and targets are now being systematically recorded to monitor pupils' progress and school effectiveness more accurately.
The strategic use of resources	Overall the school makes good use of staffing, resources and accommodation. It has made particularly good use of links with the community to achieve additional funding to enhance the school's accommodation.

There are a good number of appropriately qualified teachers and learning support assistants for the number of pupils in the school. However, four teachers are currently part-time, including two temporary appointments. This restricts the acting headteacher's ability to delegate whole school responsibilities and the effectiveness of some co-ordinators. The building and outdoor accommodation are good, although classroom space for children under five is somewhat restricted. The quality and range of learning resources is at least adequate in all areas of the curriculum. The school provides sound best value principles to the acquisition of its resources.

## 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>Children like school and are making good progress in their learning.</li> <li>The improvements that have been made to school staffing and the leadership and management of the school.</li> <li>Improvements to the school accommodation and resources.</li> <li>The school encourages children to work hard and become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents feel that they are not informed about how their children are getting on and the school does not work closely enough with them.</li> <li>Some parents are dissatisfied with the arrangements for homework and extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Inspection evidence generally supports parents' positive views. The quality of written information and communication with parents is at least satisfactory and parents at the meeting and during the inspection had no complaints about the information they received. The homework arrangements and extra-curricular provision are also satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. There has been a good improvement in National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 since 1997, particularly in mathematics. Reading and writing test results were very low when compared with the national average in 1997 but only just below the national average in 1999. The results were average when compared with similar schools. Mathematics results were well below the national average in 1997 but in line with the national average in 1999 and above when compared with similar schools. The results of tests in 1999 broadly reflect current standards, which are just below average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. This significant rise in standards is a result of recent improvements in the quality of teaching and changes in the leadership and management of the school. The particularly good improvement in mathematics is a result of the school's participation in the National Numeracy Project two years prior to the national initiative. There is some evidence, in National Curriculum writing test results last year, that boys do less well than girls, although no significant variations were noted in current work.
2. The school is likely to achieve its realistic target of nearly 80 per cent of pupils achieving the average Level 2 expected in reading and writing tests at the end of Key Stage 1. Mathematics targets for Year 2 pupils in 2000 were not agreed in consultation with relevant staff at the time and are too high taking into consideration pupils' current attainment. However, the school is likely to achieve the co-ordinator's revised target of approximately 87 per cent of pupils to achieve the average Level 2, including about 20 per cent likely to achieve Level 3.
3. There are variations in attainment on entry from year to year but an analysis of baseline assessment data from the last two years and discussion with the acting headteacher indicate that overall attainment on entry is below average, particularly in language and literacy skills. Currently children are making good progress in the reception class and by age five they are achieving standards broadly in line with expectations for children of this age. There has been a good improvement in the provision for children under five, particularly in the quality of teaching, which is reflected in the better standards now being achieved.
4. Pupils are currently making good progress in literacy lessons and the additional literacy support provided for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are broadly in line with the expected levels by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4, although writing standards are still slightly below. Pupils write with appropriate independence and in a reasonable range of forms but writing often lacks imaginative detail and the structure of sentences is not always accurate.
5. Pupils are achieving well in mathematics as a result of the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental and written computation skills are in line with expectations for pupils' age by the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4, although there is limited evidence that pupils are given regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science.
6. The results of teacher assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well below the national average, particularly in the experimental and investigative aspect. The school has placed an increased emphasis on this aspect of science and standards are improving. However, standards are still below national expectations by Year 2 and by Year 4. Whilst pupils have a basic understanding of all aspects of science they do not explore topics in sufficient depth to achieve the higher levels of knowledge and reasoning. Higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged by more demanding work.
7. Standards in information technology are below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4. Although pupils experience all aspects of information technology, insufficient time is allocated to direct teaching by class teachers and for pupils to practise their skills.

Pupils do not achieve the level of expertise expected in word processing, handling information or the control and modelling aspects of the curriculum.

8. Pupils make sound progress in religious education and achieve standards in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils by Year 2. Pupils in Year 4 are in line to achieve the standard expected by the end of the key stage. Pupils in Year 2 know that there are 'special books' related to different religions and recall some stories from the Bible. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of the theme of commitment and can relate this to different religious ceremonies and to their own lives.
9. Pupils achieve a satisfactory standard in design and technology and music. There was insufficient evidence to judge overall standards in art, geography, history or physical education, although the quality of work on display indicates that pupils are achieving a good standard in observational drawing in art by Year 4.
10. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are making good progress, particularly in their literacy skills, because of the good support they receive from class teachers and learning support assistants. There is particularly good additional literacy support for pupils in Key Stage 2, which is having a positive impact on pupils' reading and writing skills in particular. Higher attaining pupils are not always achieving as well as they could do, particularly in science, because the work set is not always sufficiently challenging.
11. Overall, standards are higher than reported at the last inspection, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is an improvement recognised and appreciated by parents. Standards in science and information technology are below those reported at the last inspection. Standards in religious education have been maintained at a satisfactory level.

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

12. The majority of children start school with below average personal, social and academic skills. Some find it difficult to communicate with more than a few isolated words. However, almost without exception, the children under five show an enthusiasm for learning and a willingness to adapt to school routines. Most children recognise school rules and their behaviour is good.
13. The previous inspection found pupils' attitudes to their learning to be positive. Current findings endorse this judgement. Throughout the school, most pupils display good attitudes to their work and willingly attempt the tasks set for them. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, respond particularly well when work is clearly explained to them, well matched to their ability and suitably challenging. This was exemplified in a Year 3 English lesson where pupils concentrated very hard to spot and suggest adjectives to describe a person's character. Whilst working in groups, pupils often build on their existing knowledge by exchanging their views or sharing methods of working. This was demonstrated in an information technology lesson where a Year 3 pupil showed his group, and his teacher, exactly how to drag a picture into the correct position on screen. Pupils of all ability levels willingly read to interested adults and are happy to discuss their reading habits with them. The school has continued to progress and instil the positive attitudes and values reported at the time of the last inspection. The majority of parents replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that their children liked school.
14. The behaviour of pupils is good around the school, in assemblies and in the vast majority of lessons. In the past three years, the number of excluded pupils has been reduced from eight to none. Pupils behave well when their interest is engaged as it is in most lessons. The very few incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons arose as a consequence of inadequate behaviour management by the class teacher. For example, in a Year 1 music lesson, pupils resorted to silly behaviour when they were supposed to be listening.
15. In the playgrounds and on the large play equipment, the vast majority of pupils play happily together and recognise the fundamental rule that unkind behaviour towards anyone is neither expected nor tolerated. Most pupils respond positively to the first warning given, by acting promptly to amend it. This results in a calm atmosphere in school with minimal signs of tension.

16. Pupils show a good sense of personal responsibility for their age and use their initiative well. Their capacity for independent personal study is developed well in lessons across the curriculum and through homework. There are frequent examples of pupils working and thinking independently in lessons, particularly when they are required to act and respond quickly as in, for example, their daily sessions of mental mathematics. Most pupils complete the homework activities they are given, which increase as they move through the school. In lessons and at break-times, teachers and supervisors make frequent use of praise, which reinforces the "I can do that" attitude amongst pupils. Pupils willingly and cheerfully assist the smooth running of the school. They take responsibility for a number of routine tasks, including tidying school equipment and resources and helping to clean their classroom at the end of the day. They carry out tasks diligently with minimal reliance on adults.
17. The school works hard to promote co-operative attitudes amongst pupils, including the few who at times have found it harder to sustain positive relationships. Their efforts are rewarded by the good quality of relationships in school. There is often a good rapport between pupils and staff. Pupils respond particularly well to the teachers who believe in their capabilities and their potential, know their strengths and support their weaknesses. There are frequent instances in lessons where positive relationships between adults and pupils encourage pupils to concentrate and apply themselves to their learning. A prime example of this was evident in a Year 4 literacy lesson where pupils were keen and confident to suggest comparative adjectives and to read their own poetry to one another. Pupils say that the lunchtime supervisors and teachers deal with any complaints about the attitudes and behaviour of others in an effective manner.
18. The attendance of pupils is very good. At the time of the previous inspection, the overall rate was well below average. However, new and rigorous procedures, including contact with parents within the first few hours of an absence, have brought about significant improvements. In the past year, the average daily attendance has been 97.2 per cent, well above the national average of 94.1 per cent. Holidays during term time are few. The attendance registers show very few instances where pupils are absent for unknown reasons. Their punctuality is good. Most pupils arrive in good time for registration and well before the start of lessons. This ensures that pupils are well prepared for the school day. The significant improvement in attendance and punctuality has contributed to the rise in standards since the previous inspection.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

19. There has been a substantial improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when 27 per cent of teaching was reported as unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection and over half of the teaching was good or better. Fourteen per cent of lessons were very good and 43 per cent were good. The quality of teaching and learning was better for children under five, older pupils in Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Key Stage 2.
20. The recent appointment of two experienced teachers, the effective monitoring and support arrangements established by the acting headteacher, the good use of local authority advisory support and the appointment of additional learning support assistants have contributed to this improvement in the quality of teaching and raised standards in the school. These improvements have been less effective in the Year 1 class where there is a 'job share' arrangement. One of these teachers was absent during the inspection period.
21. The quality of teaching for children under five is good overall and sometimes very good. Language and literacy and mathematics sessions are very well organised to promote learning for a wide age and ability range. Very good use is made of the learning support assistant in group activities to support younger and lower attaining children. This was particularly effective in one literacy lesson when the assistant made very good use of hand puppets to encourage children's speaking and listening skills. Group activities are well prepared and organised to support the learning objectives of the lesson and to enable children to work independently of adult support. For example, children are encouraged to 'write' their own little books, or to use letter stamps to create their own words, in a literacy lesson. This enables the teacher to focus teaching on one group without interruption.

22. The teaching of literacy is usually good and sometimes very good and this is resulting in effective learning in lessons and a rise in standards. The school has successfully implemented the literacy hour structure. Class introductions are usually clear and include a range of activities to ensure pupils are well motivated and concentrate well. Good relationships are established between teachers and pupils and pupils try hard to answer questions and respond to feedback well. Group activities are well organised and well matched to the learning objectives of the lesson. This enables pupils to get on independently whilst the teacher and learning support assistant focus on small groups. Learning support assistants are particularly well used in group activities to support pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. However, the assistant's deployment in class introductions is sometimes wasteful in that they just sit and listen and don't undertake any particular tasks such as updating records or monitoring individual pupils' responses. The summary of the lesson (plenary) is used effectively to reinforce and check what pupils have learned and to extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. A particularly good example was seen in Year 2 where role-play was used to encourage pupils to ask and answer questions about the Pied Piper. Lessons are less successful where behaviour management strategies are not well established and a small minority of pupils call out and disrupt the progress of the class lesson or where group tasks are not particularly clear and pupils are unsure what to do.
23. The quality of teaching in mathematics lessons observed during the inspection was generally sound and occasionally good, although pupils' progress and achievements in mathematics indicate that teaching is usually good. Lessons usually begin with a stimulating mental mathematics session. Learning objectives are made clear to ensure that pupils know what they are expected to learn. Previous work is used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. For example, pupils' experience of doubling was used productively to teach the four times table. Group work is graded according to ability and lower attaining pupils are well supported by learning support assistants or the class teacher. However, the work for higher attaining pupils is sometimes not challenging enough and teachers do not place enough emphasis on the need for pupils to work quickly. This limits the amount of work completed by the end of the lesson.
24. Science teaching is satisfactory overall. Questioning is used effectively to extend pupils' learning and to develop their speaking and listening skills. There is an appropriate emphasis on the use of scientific vocabulary and opportunities for pupils to undertake practical investigations themselves. However, recorded work indicates that some aspects of science are not taught in sufficient depth and there is little evidence of more challenging work for the more able. This limits the learning of higher attaining pupils and accounts for the limited number of Level 3's attained in Key Stage 1 teacher assessments last year.
25. Very little information technology teaching was timetabled during the inspection. The quality of the small amount seen was good but overall too little time is allocated for the direct teaching of information technology and for pupils to practise their skills. Although the school has a good range of software to support learning in other subjects and some good examples were seen on display, for example, of art and history work, there was very little evidence that pupils are regularly given opportunities for using information technology in English or science lessons for example. Consequently, although pupils experience a range of software during their time in school they do not achieve sufficient expertise in each aspect.
26. The quality of teaching in religious education lessons was satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the locally agreed syllabus and identify clear learning objectives in their planning. In one lesson in Key Stage 1 the teacher used a good range of activities, including role play, to maintain pupils' attention over a long period but opportunities for discussion and writing were too brief. In Key Stage 2 the teacher made good use of religious artefacts to develop pupils' understanding but the pace of the lesson was undemanding for more able pupils.
27. The quality of teaching and learning in other lessons is generally sound and occasionally better. Teachers' subject expertise has been considerably enhanced by advisory support. Good or very good lessons were seen in art, music and design and technology. These were subjects previously identified by the school as requiring improvement.
28. The pace and timing of literacy and numeracy lessons is usually good and this ensures that pupils learn a substantial amount within the lesson. Learning is less effective, particularly for higher attaining pupils, where the pace is too slow and pupils are not challenged to complete their work briskly. Learning is also less effective where class control is not securely established and a small minority of pupils call out and slow the general progress of the lesson.

29. Generally teachers know pupils well and this enables them to ask appropriate questions and tailor feedback appropriately to develop pupils' confidence and learning. Written marking is variable in quality. Marking is more useful and promotes better learning where it is clear what pupils need to do to improve, particularly where this is related to their own personal targets in writing and mathematics.
30. Homework is provided regularly and contributes to pupils' learning of key skills in reading, spelling and mathematics.

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

31. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, with the exception that insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of information technology and for pupils to practise their skills. It provides for pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development at all stages and fulfils statutory requirements. The school gives appropriate emphasis to developing literacy and numeracy skills and the school's involvement in the National Numeracy project since 1997 has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. The school has implemented both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully, although opportunities for applying mathematics skills in science are not always planned and provided. The school is placing increasing emphasis on the practical and investigative aspects of science, which is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievements.
32. Governors have approved the programmes of sex education and drugs education taught in science and in personal, social and health education lessons throughout the school. These sessions help raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of abuse and how to look after their bodies. Parents are confident that the school deals with their children's questions on issues relating to sex and drugs education in a proper and sensitive manner.
33. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory for a school of this size, although a significant minority of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the school's arrangements. Recorder and netball clubs are provided for pupils in Key Stage 2 and there is football for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. These activities enable pupils to develop their social skills beyond school hours and enhance their experiences in music and sport. There is a satisfactory range of visits and visitors to the school. Particularly good use is made of the local church, and visits from the vicar, to extend pupils' understanding of Christianity and the church.
34. There has been a good improvement in the curriculum provision for children under five. The curriculum is now based appropriately on the areas of learning suitable for children of this age and ability. There are good opportunities for children to undertake practical activities and outdoor facilities have been improved to support children's physical development. However, the prospectus does not include information about the curriculum provided for this early learning stage.
35. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to make good progress. Individual Education Plans are clear and identify clear and specific targets for pupils' progress. This enables teachers and learning support assistants to provide appropriate support in lessons. On occasions when pupils are withdrawn from the classroom, care is taken that pupils do not always miss the same lessons.
36. There is sound provision for all pupils to have equivalent access to the curriculum regardless of age, ability or gender. There is good provision for lower attaining pupils, particularly in literacy lessons, through additional support from learning support assistants and there are opportunities for a minority of higher attaining pupils to work with older pupils for all or part of their time in school. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by teachers and learning support assistants and make good progress. However, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, particularly in science.

37. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is sound. Provision for moral and social development is good.
38. Assemblies are planned to allow opportunities for prayer and reflection and there are good opportunities in the religious education curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 2, for pupils to consider important life issues, such as commitment. In Year 4 pupils consider the important decisions made by St Francis and consider the relative importance of choices they will make. 'Circle time' (class discussion/activities to promote personal and social skills) is included on all timetables and pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on and appreciate the positive characteristics of other pupils.
39. The provision for moral development is good. The school has initiated a number of effective strategies for improving and rewarding good behaviour. The school code of conduct is prominently displayed around the school. This states clearly not only what pupils must not do but what pupils can do to improve the quality of relationships in the school. The maxims are regularly reinforced by teachers who are quick to point out good behaviour in class. There is also a weekly celebration in assembly of pupils who have carried out good deeds as well as achieving a high standard in their work. Teachers provide good role models for moral conduct and there are clear and high expectations of behaviour in most classes.
40. The provision for social development is also good. Children in the reception class now have good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning in individual and small group activities. Older pupils are given a range of responsibilities appropriate to their age and ability. For example, pupils in Year 4 are responsible for returning books to the library. There are good opportunities for pupils to co-operate in lessons and a range of adults visit the school to extend pupils' social contacts. For example, senior citizens help regularly in the Year 1 class and the school is also participating in a mentoring scheme to support pupils with social and emotional difficulties. A small number of parents regularly help in school and pupils are encouraged to raise money for charities. These experiences help pupils to develop an understanding of themselves within a wider context and support the good relationships and positive ethos in the school.
41. The school makes sound provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to develop an awareness of their own culture through art and literacy lessons, for example. The school also teaches pupils about other religions and beliefs, mainly through religious education lessons. There are attractive displays throughout the school reflecting different cultural traditions and beliefs to support pupils' preparation for life in a multi-cultural society.
42. Links with the community are good and much financial and practical support has been gained which has had a very positive impact on the attractiveness of the accommodation and overall atmosphere of the school. For example, a local charitable trust has financed the new library area, curtains and storage units; and building developers have been responsible for the new reception and office area.

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

44. The school has improved on the overall satisfactory level of care for pupils reported at the time of the last inspection. There are now very good procedures in place to monitor and improve pupils' attendance and good procedures to promote their good behaviour. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress and their personal development are satisfactory. Parents have a high level of confidence in the staff in school who all show a genuine interest and concern for the pupils' personal needs. Pupils know that they can turn to any member of staff for support. The trust they have in the security and support they receive helps them to concentrate on their learning. The school provides a safe environment for all of its pupils.
45. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills throughout their time at the school but particularly so in the early years. The good relationships between staff, parents and pupils have helped teachers acquire an informed view of the pupils' personal circumstances and their development both in and out of school. Pupils are encouraged to care for one another and show kindness and tolerance. Teachers listen patiently to pupils' oral responses in the conversations they have with them so that they can acknowledge and rectify their mistakes and misunderstandings. Those who demonstrate uncertain or negative attitudes

to their learning, or towards other pupils, are supported by gentle but persuasive one-to-one counselling sessions from staff and close liaison between the school and parents. Teachers keep good records on both the positive and the negative aspects of a pupil's attitude to work, behaviour and attendance. The progress made by all pupils in all these areas is conveyed to parents at open evenings, through informal discussion and in the annual reports on their academic and personal progress.

46. The school is very effective in identifying pupils with learning difficulties soon after entry to the school. Good attention is paid to the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Very good care is taken of pupils with learning difficulties, enabling them to be fully integrated in all aspects of school life and this has a positive impact on their attainment and personal development.
47. The school operates an effective system of rewards and sanctions to promote and ensure the good behaviour of pupils. The systems are readily absorbed into practice. Teachers, parents and pupils work together in recognising the advantages to be gained by all pupils behaving well. Teachers regularly praise the pupils who behave particularly well, giving all pupils examples of what they should be working towards in terms of the standard of their own behaviour. In the majority of lessons, the class teacher promptly and effectively redirects pupils back on task without inhibiting the flow of the lesson. The lunchtime supervisors exercise a good level of pupil behaviour management and control in the playground and in the dining hall. There are some reported incidents of 'bullying type' behaviour in school but these are dealt with effectively and consistently. Records are kept of all incidents and the acting headteacher makes effective use of these to monitor and eliminate the possible recurrence of such conduct.
48. New procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance have been introduced since the last inspection. These are of a very high standard and are supported by most parents. The success of these procedures is reflected in the high rate of attendance achieved by the school. Guidance for marking registers is clearly set out in the front of each register and closely followed by all teachers. Detailed records are kept on all given reasons for absence, totals in registers are updated on a daily basis and every absence or lateness unaccounted for is queried and investigated. The registers on their own provide a very clear and accurate picture of attendance patterns across the school. The school works closely with the Educational Welfare Officer, who carries out immediate checks on pupils' attendance and punctuality where there are any issues of concern.
49. Teaching staff are made aware through staff meetings, school policy and local authority guidance of all issues relating to child protection. The non-teaching staff have a good level of awareness of child protection procedures and know to contact the headteacher should they have any concerns.
50. Procedures for promoting pupils' wellbeing and health and safety are very good. There are very effective systems in place that record all those on site during the school day. Both teachers and governors have a high regard for pupils' safety and make regular visits to the school to identify potential risks and monitor what is being done to rectify them. Procedures for administering first aid are good. An exceptionally detailed record is kept on all pupils' injuries and accidents in school, any medication administered, and all contact made with the parents. There is however, only one member of staff qualified to administer first aid.
51. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Baseline assessments are carried out in the first half term of school. These results are used effectively to identify children who may require additional support, particularly with language and literacy. Statutory and non-statutory assessments are carried out, at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. These results are used to identify pupils who may require additional support with literacy skills and also to set individual targets in writing and mathematics. The school is now systematically recording the results of these assessments to monitor more carefully pupils' progress over time, to allocate support and to predict levels of achievement for each pupil by the end of the year. The school has begun to analyse assessment information to modify the curriculum. For example, the school identified a weakness in the experimental and investigative aspects of science and has now placed more emphasis on this area. However, this type of analysis is at an early stage of development and the school has not yet identified the need to provide more challenging work for higher attaining pupils in science. There are some weaknesses in teachers' ability to assess levels of attainment accurately, particularly in science, and there are few examples of levelled work, in

school or pupil portfolios, to support teachers in making these judgements.

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

52. The school has improved on the partnership it had with parents at the time of the last inspection. The partnership is now good and parents are much more supportive of the work of the school. They have good opportunities to ask questions, provide information about their children and discuss their children's needs. The school adopts an 'open door' policy towards parents and carers, encouraging them to approach any staff member should they have a particular concern or need for discussion. Parents consider that the teachers are relaxed and friendly in their dealings with them. This is a significant factor in the good rate of progress that pupils make. Parents and carers feel happy about coming into classrooms when delivering and collecting their children from school. Many use this as an opportunity to speak informally with staff. These opportunities play an important part in building effective communication between home and school. Consequently parents make an effort to respond positively to the school's communications with them. Teachers appreciate the good response they have had from parents on matters of pupil attendance and discipline.
53. The school recognises the diversity of needs among parents and the staff spend time supporting parents, listening to their views and providing them with advice on their role as prime educators of their children. There are signs that parents are becoming more involved in their child's education. The parents' association, once in danger of disbanding altogether, has been revitalised by new members and now raises substantial sums of money which is spent on a range of items of direct benefit to pupils in school. However, despite the friendly relationships between the school and its parents, only a few parents confidently and voluntarily give their time to help in classrooms on a regular basis. The school knows that it has more work to do before it can enthuse parents from all sectors of the community into taking a more active role in school life.
54. Parent/teacher consultation sessions are well attended, and parents are proud when their children come home with stickers and certificates for their good work or behaviour. Parents always give enthusiastic support for school productions and concerts. By showing a keen interest in these events, parents promote the feeling amongst pupils that their schoolwork is valued, which has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to their learning. Parents provide a satisfactory level of support for their children's education at home, helping with additional activities in English and mathematics. A home/school agreement is in place and parents have raised no objections to its content.
55. The quality of written information available to parents is of a satisfactory standard overall. Newsletters give useful information and timely reminders on school events and procedures. Parents appreciate the information they receive about what their children will be learning each term and copies of the information remain on display in the parents' waiting area. The end of year reports on pupils' progress meet statutory requirements and the best examples include a number of clear indicators on what the pupil needs to do to improve their work. The current edition of the school prospectus provides most of the information that must, by law, be given to parents, with the exception of detail on the school's policy for pupils with special educational needs. This is a significant and long-standing omission. The governors' annual report omits information on the next election of parent governors. The detail on pupil absence, although correct, is not made in the required format.
56. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved with the school's procedures of reviewing the targets set for their children's progress. They have a positive view of the provision the school makes for their children. Every effort is made to keep parents properly informed. Parents, including those of children with special education needs, very much appreciate the verbal information given to them during the informal chats at the start and end of the day and in formal teacher/parent consultation sessions on their child's progress. They know that teachers are always willing to spend time with them and are available to answer their queries. From time to time, the school arranges meetings on specific areas of interest to all parents, for instance, to explain the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Few parents attended the sessions, but those who did found that they helped them understand what was being taught and how they could support their children's learning at home.

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

57. There have been considerable improvements in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection. In particular the appointment of the acting headteacher in April 1999 has had a very positive impact on the school's ability to address the serious weaknesses noted at the previous inspection, especially those relating to the quality of teaching and standards in the school.
58. The acting headteacher, together with governors and the Local Education Authority, has created an effective staff team firmly committed to the future improvement of the school and to raising standards. A more rigorous system of monitoring and supporting teachers, recent teaching appointments and good use of local advisory support have contributed substantially to the good improvement in the quality of teaching and improved standards in the school. The acting headteacher has contributed directly to this improvement through her half-time teaching commitment and by supporting the school's active involvement in the Social Inclusion Project which has improved attendance and behaviour. The partnership with parents is now well established, and most parents appreciate and support the work of the school. In particular they recognise the improved atmosphere and ethos and the positive effect this has had on their children's attitudes and efforts.
59. The quality and level of teaching and support staff in the school have had a positive impact on teaching and pupils' learning. Recent teaching appointments in particular have been successful in increasing staff expertise and the school's ability to raise standards. Subject co-ordinators are identified for all subjects. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have supported teachers in their planning and monitored and supported teaching throughout the school. However, the science co-ordinator has not had an opportunity yet to influence teaching and standards in science and some part-time co-ordinators do not have a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and the priorities for future development.
60. The governing body is now much more effectively involved in the work of the school. There has been a big change in the make-up of the governing body since the last inspection and there is a high level of educational expertise which has benefited the overall knowledge, expertise and impact of governors' involvement. Committees have been set up to review finances, curriculum, health and safety and personnel issues. These committees are actively involved in monitoring the work of the school through visits and lesson observations, which are reported in an evaluative way to the full governing body. The chair of governors has been involved in accessing funds to improve the quality of the accommodation and resources and in seeking communication regarding the benefits to be gained by the school's participation in the Education Action Zone. Other governors have been very proactive in monitoring the schools' provision for special educational needs and improving financial procedures and planning. The governing body now has a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the school and its role in the school's future improvement. They have been actively involved in monitoring the school's progress in responding to the action plan from the previous inspection, although they are not yet involved in identifying priorities for the future.
61. The School Development Plan is comprehensive and includes most aspects of the schools' work, although its format does not clearly identify what the school has identified as priorities for improvement. Some actions and success criteria are only vaguely identified; for example the development of subject co-ordinators. However, the school's actions and recent improvements demonstrate that there has been a clear focus on the key priority of improving the quality of teaching.
62. The school's systems for financial planning are now sound. Financial priorities have been strongly guided by the recommendations of the last inspection report and appropriately focused on improving the level and quality of staffing. Good use has been made of advice from the Local Education Authority. All targets for school improvement are now costed.

63. All spending is systematically monitored, by a committed finance committee, which meets regularly. The school's internal computer system is reliably used to provide the headteacher and finance committee with current financial statements to support their financial considerations. The governing body is anxious to ensure that it achieves best value for its spending and members regularly visit the school. Typically, it uses its direct experience of the school's developing curriculum and awareness of pupils' attainment results as measures of the effectiveness of its spending decisions.
64. A strength of the school is the level of financial support it has achieved from a number of outside bodies to improve the physical and educational provision for staff and pupils. For example, an attractive and very useful library area has recently been developed, furnished and stocked with books. Also, a small office has been positioned near the main visitor's entrance to enable the administrative staff to effectively control entry to the school, without having to move from their work area. In cases where the money passes through the school's accounts, all such funds are disbursed for their allotted purpose and are fully recorded.
65. The day to day office administration and financial management are both efficient and effective. Procedures are very supportive but unobtrusive and do not upset the smooth running of the school. Financial records are accurately maintained using information technology and all special funds are appropriately allocated. All the issues raised at the time of the last local authority audit, some four years ago, have been addressed.
66. The school has a good number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers for the number of pupils in the school. The overall quality and expertise of teaching staff has been improved considerably by recent appointments and good use of Local Education Authority advisory support. However, four teachers are part-time, including two temporary appointments, and this limits the acting headteacher's ability to delegate whole school subject responsibilities and the overview that some subject co-ordinators have. The acting headteacher currently carries a large burden of subject responsibilities herself, as well as having a class teaching commitment and overall responsibility for the leadership and management of the school. There are a high number of learning support assistants who contribute substantially to pupils' achievements, particularly those with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. Other staff, including midday supervisory assistants, make a good contribution to the caring and supportive atmosphere in the school. The site agent works hard to maintain a clean and attractive environment.
67. The building provides good accommodation for the number of pupils and good space for their outdoor physical activities and team games. Pupils have access to hard surfaced playgrounds and a good-sized football pitch. The whole site is securely fenced off. The large green area includes trees and a corner of uncut grass which is developing into a wildlife area. This, and a separate garden with brick built raised flowerbeds, provide good facilities for the pupils' scientific and environmental studies. There is a separately fenced-off playground for the use of children aged five years and under. Space in the reception classroom itself is at a premium, considering the needs of children aged just four years of age. Children have a limited amount of room to move around and there is no separate area for younger children to be involved in free play whilst older children undertake more formal instruction from the class teacher. There are no showering facilities or a deep sink to assist staff when attending to the personal hygiene needs of very young children. All public areas of the school are accessible to wheelchair users and a toilet has been installed for their use. However, the school has no room set aside to offer pupils a degree of privacy if they are sick, injured or unwell. The routine tidying of all classrooms and library areas, carried out by the pupils themselves, assists the good level of cleanliness and hygiene found around the school.
68. Most classrooms and adjoining teaching areas are of a good size to deliver the subjects of the National Curriculum. The recent acquisition of a new library has been made possible through good links with community organisations. It is centrally situated and accessible by pupils in all classes. Displays around the school demonstrate the staff's commitment to providing an attractive environment for all pupils to learn. The reception lobby is a pleasant waiting area with notice boards and photo-albums offering useful information for parents and visitors while they wait.
69. Learning resources, including books, are sufficient in range and quantity to support the curriculum for all pupils. They are of good quality, many being new, and are appropriately stored. All resources are readily accessible for use by teachers and pupils and, with the exception of computers, are used effectively to promote learning and achievement. In a number of subjects, the local authority advisory service has suggested how resources might

usefully be developed to provide better support for the curriculum. These recommendations have been met, but subject co-ordinators are constantly looking to add to their bank of resources whenever the financial situation permits. The recent development of a new library area provides pupils with better access to books and a quiet place for personal study. It is well used by pupils and is having a positive impact upon standards in reading.

70. Taking into account the very high unit costs per pupil, their below average attainment on entry, the standards achieved by the school and the quality of teaching and learning, the school provides sound value for money.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

71. To maintain the good features of the school and remedy the weaknesses, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
  - Ensuring that when opportunities are provided, clear expectations are set about the quantity and quality of pupils' written work;
  - Ensuring that written marking regularly includes diagnostic commentary indicating clearly what pupils need to do to improve.  
(See paragraphs 30, 93, 140)
- Raise standards in science in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
  - Offering a greater depth in the range of scientific experiences offered to pupils;
  - Placing greater emphasis on scientific investigations;
  - Ensuring that work is planned and provided for pupils of differing abilities, particularly the more able;
  - Developing a system for moderating standards, which will enable teachers to be more secure in their judgements about pupils' abilities.  
(See paragraphs 6, 10, 24, 37, 99 -105)
- Raise standards in information technology in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
  - Ensuring that sufficient time is allocated to teaching all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and for pupils to practise their skills;
  - Planning and providing more opportunities for using information technology to support learning in other subjects.  
(See paragraphs 7, 25, 32, 93, 96, 124 - 128)
- Develop the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and supporting teaching throughout the school.\*  
(See paragraphs 59, 105, 141)

72. In addition to the main issues for improvement the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the prospectus and annual governors' report to parents include all information that is statutorily required.
- Improve the format of the School Development Plan to ensure that priorities are clearly identified and actions and success criteria are clear and specific.  
(See paragraphs 55, 61)

\* denotes an issue already included in the School Development Plan.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	43	43	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	111
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	21

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

## Attendance

### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.5
National comparative data	5.4

### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	9	15	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	5	7
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	21	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (70)	79 (74)	88 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	13	13	11
	Total	18	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (75)	79 (80)	71 (71)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	95
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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	85

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	98/99
	£
Total income	245,388
Total expenditure	240,413
Expenditure per pupil	2,206
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,245
Balance carried forward to next year	21,220

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	115
Number of questionnaires returned	44

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	23	5	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	59	36	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	45	11	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	43	11	5	2
The teaching is good.	58	35	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	42	19	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	25	11	2	9
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	32	39	16	2	11
The school is well led and managed.	61	20	5	5	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	44	5	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	25	18	23	7

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the pre-inspection meeting were very positive about the school and, in particular, appreciated the improvements to the atmosphere and ethos of the school.

## **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**

73. There has been a good improvement in the quality of provision for children under five since the last inspection. The appointment of a new teacher recently has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching for all children in the reception class. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during this inspection and most teaching was good or very good. The outdoor accommodation has been improved by the recent provision of apparatus for climbing and balancing. There are now adequate large wheeled toys and these are well used to develop children's physical skills.
74. There were 17 children under five years of age at the time of the inspection, including 16 children attending part-time. Five children of nursery age attend for morning sessions only and 11 children attend part-time in the afternoon. Children in the reception class are taught by a full-time class teacher and learning support assistant. The learning support assistant tends to take particular responsibility for the nursery age children in the morning session.
75. An analysis of baseline assessment data over the last two years indicates that children's attainment on entry is variable but, overall, below average, particularly in language and literacy skills. Children are making good progress in all areas of learning and are in line to achieve, or have already achieved, standards in line with those expected by age five.

#### **Personal and social development**

76. Children's personal and social skills are well developed for their age. They co-operate well in class and group activities, taking turns without any fuss, for example, when playing a listening game. They respond very positively to other adults in the class, including the learning support assistant, and this contributes substantially to their learning and achievement. They demonstrate a high level of independence in selecting their own activities and working independently during 'free choice activities'. This enables the teacher and learning support assistant to give focused attention when teaching small groups.
77. There are particular opportunities for developing children's personal and social skills in 'circle time' sessions, although none were observed during the inspection. Classroom routines have been clearly established and resources are well prepared and organised to promote children's confidence in choosing and working independently. The very good relationships established between the teacher and learning support assistant and between children and adults provide a secure atmosphere and very good role models for children's social development.

#### **Language and literacy**

78. Children enter school with below average language and literacy skills. In particular, a significant minority of children has poor speaking skills. There is a good emphasis on language and literacy skills in the reception class and by age five most children are achieving standards almost in line with the expectations for their age. Most children listen and respond to simple questions and instructions. They explain what they are doing and respond to questions in simple phrases, although a minority cannot express themselves clearly. They enjoy looking at books, particularly with adults, and turn the pages in the right direction. They show good recall of familiar stories, such as *Farmer Duck*, and older and more able children recognise and read common words such as *said* and *the* from the text. Most children use 'letter-like' shapes or single letters to represent words in their writing. Older and more able children can spell and write simple common words correctly.
79. The teaching of language and literacy was very good in one lesson observed. The teacher uses a good range of appropriate activities and good direct questioning to ensure that all children are involved and well motivated. For example, all children are given an object and have to 'jump in the hoop' with the corresponding initial letter sound. Resources are very well organised to support language and literacy skills in group and free choice activities. Children working independently of adult support are well motivated to read and write by the provision of a well organised writing area and letter printing activity. Very good use is made of parental support to develop children's skills in reading, spelling and the use of information technology. The learning support assistant uses puppets very effectively to encourage younger and less

able children to respond to simple questions. This activity is very effective in promoting children's confidence and vocabulary when speaking.

### **Mathematics**

80. By age five, children's attainment in mathematics is in line with expectations for children of this age. The youngest children in the class are well supported by the learning support assistant in learning to recognise numerals to five and count accurately. Older children print simple repeating patterns and complete number sequences up to ten and twenty, although numerals are not always formed accurately. They learn to tell the time, and more able children are introduced to the concept of addition and subtraction. A minority of very able children record simple addition sums independently and accurately.
81. The teaching of mathematics is good. Clear learning objectives are identified for teacher directed activities, which ensure that there is a clear focus to the session. As for language and literacy, 'free choice' activities are well organised to support learning from the class session. For example, children can stamp and draw their own clock faces. The learning support assistant is well deployed to play snakes and ladders with a small group to reinforce number recognition and accuracy in counting. Children are encouraged to use information technology to support their learning, although the volume is too low for children to hear the supporting commentary. The teacher provides a well focused introduction to addition and subtraction but doesn't reinforce this by demonstrating how such an activity might be recorded.

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

82. There was limited evidence of children's knowledge and understanding of the world during the inspection although there is clear planning for this area of learning. Higher attaining children can name animals and vegetables accurately and most children use information technology confidently to support their learning.

### **Physical development**

83. There was limited evidence for physical development during the inspection, although a few children were observed cycling and manoeuvring wheeled toys and climbing and balancing on low level climbing apparatus with confidence. A minority of children have very good hand/eye co-ordination in using a bat and ball.
84. Only two very short sessions were observed outside. The teacher actively encourages children to try different activities and there is a good emphasis on health and safety. For example, the need to keep warm. The recently installed climbing apparatus has considerably enhanced the provision for developing children's physical skills and the school plans to paint markings on the hard core to make this area more interesting.

### **Creative development**

85. Evidence for this aspect is based mainly on one music lesson and a scrutiny of displays and children's records. Children enjoy playing percussion instruments and play confidently to accompany a story. Older and higher attaining children can maintain a steady beat and identify which instrument has been playing in a listening game. Most children enjoy listening to stories and join in with familiar phrases. Children have opportunities for painting pictures and for mixing and printing with paints. They use clay and dough and complete collage pictures using different materials. A few children were observed participating in role play in the class pet shop.
86. The teaching in one music session was very good. The teacher used a very good range of activities to promote children's listening, singing and playing skills. Very good use was made of the story of the *Three Little Pigs* to provide a stimulus for singing and playing, although the session was slightly too long for the younger and more immature members of the class. The role play area is not particularly well resourced or organised to stimulate imaginative play and indoor space is rather limited for this, especially during the afternoon session when more children are attending.

## ENGLISH

87. Standards in English are almost in line with the national average by Year 2 and Year 4. The quality of teaching throughout the school and additional literacy support is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements and the school is likely to meet its targets for nearly 80 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected Level 2 by the end of Key Stage 1.
88. The results in Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 1999 were below the national average in reading and writing but in line when compared with similar schools. These results were a marked improvement on the results in 1997, which were very low in comparison with the national average, and reflect the good improvement in standards since the last inspection.
89. Pupils enter the school with below average attainment in language and literacy skills, particularly in their ability to express themselves clearly and fluently. Pupils are currently making good progress in the reception class and in Year 2 and are achieving the level expected in talking and listening by the end of the key stage. The majority speaks clearly and confidently in response to questions using an appropriate vocabulary. A minority, whilst appearing to be attentive, do not always listen carefully and repeat responses to questions that have already been answered. Pupils' progress in Year 1 is not so good because a minority of pupils lack concentration and call out, thus slowing the progress of the lesson. By Year 4, pupils' speaking and listening skills are about in line with expectations for pupils of this age. Most pupils speak confidently and clearly in a range of contexts, showing an understanding of the main points of discussion.
90. Pupils' attainment in reading is in line with expectations for their age by Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils aged five in the reception class, older pupils in Key Stage 1 and pupils in Key Stage 2 are making good progress in developing reading skills. By Year 2 most pupils read a range of simple texts with reasonable accuracy and expression. They are beginning to develop a good understanding of the meaning of words and phrases because of the teacher's very good use of different texts and opportunities to read in literacy lessons. By Year 4 pupils read a wider range of fiction and non-fiction texts with fluency and accuracy. Higher attaining pupils express clear preferences for particular types of books and authors and understand how books are organised in the school library.
91. Pupils' writing skills are slightly below average by Year 2 and by Year 4. Pupils in Year 2 write in different forms: for example letters, instructions and stories. Writing is legible, and spelling of simple common words is generally accurate. Simple punctuation is used correctly, but writing often lacks detail and vocabulary is limited. By Year 4, pupils are writing in an increasing range of forms, including poetry. Their writing is more lively and imaginative and they are beginning to use a wider range of punctuation, such as speech marks, correctly. However, the structure of extended sentences is not always grammatically correct and writing not consistently joined.
92. Overall, the quality of teaching in literacy lessons is good. One out of four lessons was very good and two out of four were good. Teachers are following the structure of the literacy hour and planning includes clear learning objectives for class and group activities. The better lessons are well paced and include a good range of activities to ensure that pupils' concentration and learning are sustained throughout the lesson. Group activities are very well organised to support the learning objectives of the lesson and to ensure that pupils can work independently, allowing the teacher to give focused support to one group. Good relationships are established between the teacher and pupils. This was particularly evident in a lesson for older pupils in Key Stage 2 where the teacher uses humour very effectively to motivate interest and to ensure that pupils work hard throughout the lesson. Teachers ask challenging questions to encourage pupils' interpretation of the text: for example, why a particular character might walk with 'one step shorter than the other'. Clear challenges and time targets are set for group activities. For example, pupils are expected to complete 'at least five' sentences. The summary session at the end of the lesson is used effectively to check and reinforce pupils' learning. In one particularly good lesson, one pupil sat in the role of the Pied Piper whilst other pupils asked questions. This was very effective in promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as encouraging an understanding of 'character' in stories. Learning support assistants and additional teaching support are well used during group activities and contribute substantially to the progress of pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. However, during class introductions such staff are sometimes under used and just listen to the teacher's presentation without any specific task, such as assessing pupils' responses or

updating records. Lessons are less successful where the teacher's behaviour management strategies are not fully established and a minority of pupils are distracted and repeatedly call out. Also where it is not clear what pupils are specifically expected to do in group activities.

93. The English co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the school but has already contributed to the improvements in the quality of teaching and learning through observation and feedback on lessons and an analysis of pupils' written work throughout the school. Assessments of pupils' written work are used to identify individual targets for improvement. However, these are not consistently recorded by teachers in pupils' books and reference to them in marking is not consistent throughout the school. There are sound opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills in other lessons. For example, pupils write up their ideas in religious education lessons. However, expectations of the quality and quantity of this work are not always clear and pupils are not always encouraged to complete this work. Good use is made of information technology in some lessons to support pupils' reading and spelling, but the use of information technology to develop pupils' drafting and editing skills is very limited.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Key Stage 1 and by Year 4. National Curriculum test results in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, reflect these standards. Pupils' test results were average when compared nationally, and above average when compared with similar schools. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when results were well below the national average. This improvement is a consequence of the schools' involvement in the National Numeracy Project from September 1997 and improvements in the quality of teaching. The average standards reported at Year 4 have been maintained since the last inspection.
95. Pupils enter the school with below average skills in mathematics. They achieve well throughout the school and by Year 2 standards are broadly in line with average. Most pupils can complete addition, subtraction, multiplication and division calculations with numbers up to 100. They name basic shapes correctly and can use standard measures of length and weight. They interpret pictograms and understand simple fractions and right angles.
96. By Year 4, pupils can carry out calculations with numbers up to 1000 and begin to learn multiplication facts, for example the four times table, using their knowledge of doubles. They can use centimetre and metre measures and estimate length with reasonable accuracy. There is evidence of pupils using information technology to support work in mathematics in computer generated graphs, but the use of technology in mathematics is currently underdeveloped.
97. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was generally sound and sometimes better, although an analysis of pupils' work and pupils' achievement in mathematics indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is usually good. Lessons usually begin with a brisk mental mathematics session which ensures that pupils are well focused and interested. Teachers give clear explanations and questioning is effective in challenging and reinforcing the main points of the lesson. Effective use is made of pupils' previous knowledge. For example in Year 3 pupils were delighted to discover that they could calculate the four times table from their knowledge of doubling. Group work is graded according to pupils' ability, although the work planned for higher attaining pupils is sometimes not challenging enough and there is often a lack of urgency in pupils' efforts to complete this work in a reasonable time. The marking of pupils' work is variable in quality. It is better where pupils are given a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work.
98. The mathematics co-ordinator is an established member of staff and has had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics through lesson observations and feedback to teachers. This was reinforced through training days in school. The effectiveness of this monitoring and support and the school's involvement in the National Numeracy Project, two years prior to the National Strategy, have contributed substantially to the improvements in teaching and the achievements of pupils.

## SCIENCE

99. Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4, are below average. Although the standard of work achieved by pupils in lessons observed during the inspection was in line with expectations for pupils of this age, recorded work indicates that higher attaining pupils in both key stages have not explored scientific concepts in sufficient depth or had sufficient opportunity for scientific investigation to enable them to achieve the higher levels.
100. At the time of the last inspection report, in 1997, many pupils were found to be reaching the required level but more able pupils were not being sufficiently stretched. The current situation does not represent a significant change. However, since the last inspection, teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have displayed marked variations, with results clearly improving in 1998 only to decline very significantly in 1999 to well below the average level. These variations cannot be fully explained by the inspection evidence. They may, in part, relate to an absence of established procedures in the school to ensure that all teachers assess pupils' level of work accurately and uniformly.
101. In both key stages, the school is clearly placing more emphasis on and extending the opportunities that pupils have to undertake practical tasks and to carry out scientific investigations. Pupils in Year 1, for example, are currently making a simple electrical circuit that includes a battery and lamp or buzzer. They evidently enjoy handling the equipment and the large majority quickly learn from their experience the conditions necessary for the lamp to light. Most understand and use terms such as *solid*, *liquid* and *melt* appropriately, and carefully record their observations by drawing. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have experienced a range of practical tasks. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils were seen heating a variety of materials which they might commonly find at home. They are able to predict, with reasoned accuracy, what may happen as a result of the heating, and to make meaningful comments about what they observed, as this took place. Many use the apparatus with confidence and know not to use water, which is too hot, because of its dangers. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 are investigating the effectiveness of thermal insulators by practical experiments in which fair testing is an important consideration. Pupils are well motivated by this work and are effectively learning important scientific skills through it.
102. The above illustrates the effort the school is making to improve the experimental and investigative aspect of science but the subject co-ordinator acknowledges that there is insufficient depth in pupils' learning. Weaknesses in this aspect of the science curriculum was a possible contributory factor resulting in pupils' low attainment in the Key Stage 1 teacher assessments in 1999.
103. Pupils in both key stages cover all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Typically, in this school year, pupils in Key Stage 1 have studied forces, the materials used in the school building, sources of light and reflections, sounds, and the properties of a range of materials. In Key Stage 2, pupils have investigated soil drainage, explored conductors in electricity and added to their knowledge about materials by looking at flexibility and water proofing. However, pupils' recorded work indicates that some of these aspects are taught somewhat sketchily and there is little evidence to suggest that the tasks set are consistently challenging for more able pupils. Pupils' recorded work reflects little evidence of the use of information technology to support learning in science or of science contributing effectively to pupils' numeracy skills.
104. The quality of teaching in science was satisfactory in two lessons observed and good in one Key Stage 2 lesson. Lesson planning is at least sound. Teachers effectively question their pupils, skilfully drawing on their prior learning and experiences to develop new concepts and also to promote their speaking and listening skills. All teachers emphasise the use of an appropriate scientific vocabulary. Teachers know their pupils' abilities well and, during group activities, effectively focus their attention on supporting those individuals needing help. Pupil-teacher relationships in most classes are good. This is an important factor in motivating pupils and maintaining a good, uninterrupted, pace to learning. In one class, these good relationships are less evident and the unsatisfactory behaviour of a small minority of pupils interrupts the flow of lessons and leads to less effective learning.

105. The subject is led by an experienced member of staff who was appointed at the beginning of the school year. She is currently providing sound support to non-specialist colleagues and has identified clear objectives for the future development of the subject to improve teaching and learning. One of these objectives is to establish procedures to enable teachers to make more secure judgements relating to pupils' attainments. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning are aspects of the co-ordinator's role which are less well established. This limits her influence on the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

## **ART**

106. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and standards in art.
107. The quality of work on display suggests that pupils achieve at least a satisfactory standard in observational drawing. Year 4 pencil sketches of clay sculptures are detailed and accurate and show good use of technique to represent light and shade.
108. The school has made very good use of ongoing advisory support from the Local Education Authority to improve teachers' subject expertise. This is particularly evident in a well presented display of printing work completed by pupils from the reception class up to Year 4. There is clear evidence of progression in the skills and quality of work from simple potato printing by the youngest pupils to the use of string collographs in Year 3 and press printing in Year 4. The one lesson observed in Year 4 was very good. The teacher has very good subject expertise enabling him to chair an interesting discussion about the work of Paul Klee. This enabled pupils to focus their thoughts and to evaluate the appeal or otherwise of this artist's work. The very good relationships established by the teacher promote interest and concentration from the pupils who take care with their sketches and achieve a good result.
109. The school is currently developing a very useful scheme of work based on the training and support they are receiving from the Local Education Authority. Resources are being purchased accordingly to ensure that teachers can undertake whole class lessons. Good use is being made of the county loan service to borrow works of art to inspire the work of teachers and pupils. There is evidence in some classes of a good link with information technology. For example, pupils in Year 2 have used a painting program to create effective pictures in the style of Piet Mondrian.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Standards in design and technology at the end of Key Stage 1, and by the time pupils leave in Year 4, are in line with national expectations for pupils of this age. This indicates that standards have been maintained since the last inspection
111. Only one lesson in this subject was observed during the inspection. Judgements are mainly based upon discussions with teachers, a scrutiny of pupils' work, including those items on display in classrooms, and an interview with a group of pupils in Year 2. In Key Stage 1, pupils are provided with a sound range of experiences relating to mechanisms, structures, food and textiles. Pupils at the end of the key stage are currently studying mechanisms. Each has designed a chosen vehicle and is well advanced with its construction. They skilfully cut and glue the body shape made to their design and understand how to attach wheels and axles in order to allow the vehicle to roll. They have yet to paint and to evaluate the design of their model, and are enthusiastically looking forward to testing it by measuring how far it will run when released from a slope. Pupils are clearly highly motivated by what they are doing and this has a positive influence on their learning and progress.
112. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are similarly provided with a range of experiences, but with greater emphasis on control mechanisms. Pupils in Year 3, for example, are taking good advantage of the school's recent purchase of syringes to discover how a model may be made to move using pneumatics. Not all pupils are successful in their attempts, but the range of ideas they have produced suggests that they are quick to learn. By Year 4, pupils are designing a storybook with 'pop-up' and other moving features. They work very effectively in small groups, sharing their ideas and drawing up a list of agreed proposals for their design. They have not yet reached the construction stage but are clearly looking forward to it. The good pupil-teacher relationships and the enthusiasm generated by the good teaching in the lesson observed, were key factors in promoting the good progress pupils made in their learning.

113. The co-ordinator for design and technology was absent during the inspection. Discussion with the headteacher indicates that wide use has been made of advisory support from the Local Education Authority since the last inspection. Advisors have met staff to suggest how teaching skills might be extended, and how teaching resources could be usefully supplemented. As a result, teachers are now more confident in their ability to deliver the subject, and the quality and range of the resources available to them are already having a positive impact on pupils' learning. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when some restrictions on the availability of resources were noted.
114. The school has produced a clear policy statement to guide subject development and a sound scheme of work usefully draws upon ideas and suggestions from a variety of published sources. Teachers' medium and short-term planning is appropriately detailed but the opportunities and methods for assessing pupils' progress are not clearly identified.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

115. There was insufficient evidence during the inspection to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and standards in geography. Only one lesson was observed in Year 4.
116. Evidence from pupils' recorded work indicates that progress is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have some knowledge of their own locality, can use simple maps and plan routes, and have some knowledge of how food is provided. By Year 4, pupils can use a wider range of maps and atlases. They understand some of the conditions that influence the weather and have compared and contrasted their own area with an overseas locality.
117. The school has a sound policy and comprehensive scheme of work to support teachers' planning. The school has planned to incorporate nationally approved guidelines when the scheme of work is reviewed this year. The geography co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge and provides support and guidance to teachers. The previous inspection report noted that teachers did not follow the scheme closely enough. The present situation is an improvement, as the co-ordinator has monitored teaching, marking and progress through looking at pupils' work.
118. The time allocated to the teaching of geography is reasonable and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that good use is made of this time. The scheme plans for the use of information technology to support learning in geography and evidence of this was seen in all year groups.
119. Teachers' planning is good and closely matches the school scheme. In the one lesson observed questioning was used effectively to extend pupils' understanding of the use of scale in maps. Follow-up tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities. Lower attaining pupils were able to re-scale simple drawings whilst higher attaining pupils related their learning directly to maps. However, the teacher did not ensure that all pupils concentrated well throughout the session and some more able pupils did not complete as much work as they could have done.

## **HISTORY**

120. There was insufficient evidence at the time of the inspection to judge standards at the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils leave in Year 4, or the progress the school has made in improving the teaching and learning in both key stages since the last inspection.
121. A scrutiny of teachers' planning for Key Stage 1 suggests that some of the concerns relating to a lack of historical knowledge, understanding and skills evident during the last inspection have been addressed. However, the limited amount of written work available in some classes, in addition to the absence of the co-ordinator, prevent a secure judgement from being made about pupils' attainment.

122. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 have studied the early history of Britain and have explored the early invaders. The main focus of their studies, however, has been about Roman times. Pupils have clearly worked hard to gather information and present their learning in a variety of ways. These include an interesting wall display relating to the Roman army and to Roman shops and baths. The Boudicca story is also retold. Pupils at the end of the Key Stage have been studying local history. They have concentrated upon well known people, such as John Bunyan, who have local associations, and upon Shortstown and its involvement with airships and the R101 in particular. Pupils' writing displays a wide variation in both quality and quantity and provides only a limited indication of pupils' overall attainment. The subject does not effectively contribute to the development of pupils' literacy skills.
123. No teaching of history was observed during the inspection. A clear policy statement identifies the subject aims and objectives and planning includes nationally recommended guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). Termly plans are appropriately linked to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and follow the school's common format in indicating the main activities to be pursued and the proposed use of resources. However, there is little information about how assessments will be made.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

124. Standards in information technology are below national expectations by Year 2 and by Year 4. Evidence from displays indicates that pupils have an opportunity to develop information technology skills in all aspects of the curriculum at some time during their school career. For example, pupils in Year 2 use a word processing program to draft sentences about the weather and pupils in Year 4 use data handling programs to produce pie charts and block graphs. However, an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' records provide insufficient evidence that the majority of pupils achieve standards in line with the expectations for their age in all these aspects.
125. The school has an adequate range of hardware and good range of software to support learning in different subjects: for example, art and history. There are good examples of pupils having accessed the Internet to find information about the topic of space, and Year 2 pupils have used an art program to create pictures in the style of a particular artist. However, there is little evidence that these opportunities are regularly planned and provided. Opportunities were often missed in English lessons, for example, for pupils to develop drafting and editing skills and there was limited evidence in science of the use of information technology.
126. Teachers have received training in information technology recently and are confident in using the computers in their classrooms. The school is planning to use QCA guidelines to support the current scheme and this is being trialled in the reception class.
127. The quality of teaching in the two short lessons observed was good. The lessons were well planned, with clear learning objectives. The teacher clearly explained what pupils were expected to do, and in one lesson gave them the task of using a word processing package to create a poster. In the twenty minutes allocated a few pupils were able to demonstrate and practise the skill of typing and highlighting a title. However, overall, too little time is allocated to the teaching of information technology and for pupils to practise their skills.
128. The weaknesses identified at the last inspection, relating to a lack of time spent by pupils on developing their skills and limited progress, have not been addressed.

## **MUSIC**

129. Judgements in music are based mainly on observations of three music lessons (one of which was undertaken by a visiting music teacher), a scrutiny of documentation and discussion with the subject co-ordinator. No music lessons were timetabled for the oldest pupils during the inspection period.

130. Standards in singing and in responding to, and recording, simple rhythms are in line with expectations for pupils of a similar age in Key Stage 1 and younger pupils in Key Stage 2.
131. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 can clap simple rhythms and enjoy singing. Pupils in Year 2 can clap and move rhythmically in response to music. They sing songs in tune and with accompanying actions. Pupils in Year 3 compose simple rhythms using percussion instruments and record these using simple notation. They know and record the difference between short and long and quiet and loud sounds.
132. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory overall. The school has made good use of local advisory support and a visiting teacher to increase staff confidence and expertise. Lessons are well structured, with opportunities for listening and performing. The quality of learning is better where the teacher has good control of the lesson and there is a good balance between opportunities for pupils to listen and to express themselves.
133. As a part-time teacher the subject co-ordinator has had little influence on the development of music in the school. However, staff changes and training have improved teachers' confidence and expertise. Resources and accessibility have been improved since the last inspection, although the school still has little tuned percussion.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and standards in physical education. At the time of the last inspection planning for physical education was reported as being fragmented and pupils' skills were not being consistently developed from year to year. The school now has a well organised scheme of work which covers all aspects of physical education, with the exception of swimming. There is a very comprehensive scheme for the development of gymnastics to ensure that there is a carefully graded progression in the teaching of skills throughout the school.
135. Teaching in the one dance lesson observed was satisfactory. The teacher has a good relationship with the class and uses questioning effectively to ensure that pupils understand the need for warm-up activities before physical exercise. There is a reasonable balance in the time allocated to instruction and for pupils to practise their skills. The teacher makes good use of pupils to demonstrate dance sequences and pupils work hard to achieve control and rhythm in their movements.
136. The indoor and outdoor accommodation is adequate for the teaching of physical education but the lack of storage for apparatus means that the perimeter of the hall is rather crowded. Pupils have opportunities to play a wide range of games and the school has benefited from visits by a cricket coach and by participating in a health and fitness scheme. Older pupils have an opportunity to play netball or football in extra-curricular activities led by members of staff. These activities provide an opportunity for pupils to extend their physical skills as well as for social development out of school hours.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

137. Pupils achieve standards in line with the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards reported at the last inspection.
138. Pupils in Year 2 know that there are special books related to different religious beliefs. They know that the Bible is a special book for Christians and can recall some stories from the Old and New Testaments, such as the story of Moses. They recall the key elements of stories from their written work and by acting out in role play, such as in one lesson observed about 'The Good Samaritan'. More able pupils can relate such stories to their own experiences; for example, of friendship and forgiveness.
139. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of the theme of choices and commitment and can relate this to their own lives, the lives of other people (such as St Francis) and to religious ceremonies such as baptism, confirmation and the Jewish Bar Mitzvah. They understand that they make many choices in their lives and appreciate the relative importance of these choices. They recall their visit to the local church and identify significant parts, such as the font, from drawings.

140. The quality of teaching in two lessons observed was satisfactory. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the locally agreed syllabus and learning objectives in planning are clear and appropriate. They make good use of visits to the local church and from the local vicar to enhance pupils' learning about significant aspects of Christianity. They make good attempts to link religious understanding with pupils' own life experiences to promote their understanding of religious, moral and social issues, such as the importance of friendships and significance of marriage. Pupils in Year 2 sustain concentration over a long period because of the good range of activities provided, including role play. They recall the main events in the story of 'The Good Samaritan' but their understanding of the concept of a 'good neighbour' is limited by closed questioning and only a brief opportunity for discussion. In Year 4, the teacher makes good use of religious artefacts and photographs to develop pupils' understanding of the Jewish ceremony of Bar Mitzvah. However, the pace of the lesson is too slow and undemanding for more able pupils who complete little written work in relation to the time available.
141. The religious education co-ordinator is a part-time teacher and has limited influence on the quality of teaching and standard of work achieved throughout the school. She feels there is a necessity to be more thorough in her evaluation of teachers' lesson planning and has recently attended training regarding the use of assessment, although she has not yet had the opportunity to share these ideas with colleagues. There has been a good improvement in the quality of resources for religious education and these are used by teachers in lessons and to create attractive and interesting displays around the school to stimulate and enhance pupils' religious knowledge and understanding.