

INSPECTION REPORT

CHALFONT ST PETER CE VA JUNIOR SCHOOL

Chalfont St Peter

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110456

Headteacher: Mr John Underwood

Reporting inspector: Dr Melvyn J Bradshaw
6169

Dates of inspection: 6th to 9th March 2000

Inspection number: 215569

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Penn Road Chalfont St Peter Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Mrs J Bartlett
Date of previous inspection:	18 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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		Science	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Geography	How well are pupils taught?
		Information technology	What should the school do to improve further
Jenny Mynett	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Diane Wilkinson	Team inspector	English (support)	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
		Equal opportunities	
Janet Gill	Team inspector	English	How well is the school led and managed?
Richard Brent	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed? (support)
		Science (support)	
		History	
		Special educational needs	
Elisabeth Matthews	Team inspector	English (support)	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Modern foreign language	
		Music	

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 356 pupils who attend full-time from Year 3 to Year 6, the number of boys and girls is more or less equal. When the school was last inspected it was a middle school and catered for pupils from Year 4 to Year 7. The school is over-subscribed and there is little pupil mobility. The school attracts pupils from a wide area, and 35 per cent are from outside the school's immediate catchment. The majority of pupils (about 95 per cent) are white. There are no pupils whose first language is not English. The background of pupils is generally above average; seven pupils (two per cent) claim free school meals, which is well below average. The figure, however, underestimates those eligible, as no hot meals are served at the school. Most pupils live in owner occupied accommodation, although a little under 20 per cent are from local authority housing. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below average; 58 pupils (16 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, and of these eight have statements. Attainment on entry is above average, particularly in reading and mathematics.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chalfont St Peter CE VA Junior School is a very well organised and happy community. It has maintained its strengths identified in the previous inspection, improved further and is a very effective school. Pupils progress well and achieve standards that are well above average; in addition their attitudes to learning are high. The dynamic headteacher leads by example and, as a result, the quality of teamwork in the school is outstanding and this helps to ensure consistently good teaching. All staff want the school, and its pupils, to succeed. The school has broadly average income; it uses its resources well and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are excellent; he is very well supported by staff and governors.
- Teaching is good overall, it is never less than satisfactory and almost a third is very good or excellent.
- All staff in the school work very well together as a team and this helps to create a happy learning environment.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress during their time in the school. As a result, they achieve above average or higher standards.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good; they develop into mature and responsible individuals.
- The school makes very good provision for all aspects of pupils' personal development.
- The overall arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good; all subjects include helpful assessment procedures.
- The quality of care and the support given to pupils are high, and the very good links with parents have a significant impact on pupils' education and learning.

What could be improved

- Raise standards in science to the same high standards found in English and mathematics.
- Minor areas for improvement include the need to ensure that all pupils write using a joined script, to improve the detail in written reports sent home to parents, to enhance further the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, so that they include greater reference to behaviour and numeracy targets when necessary and to ensure the improvement plans for information technology are fully implemented.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in November 1996, Chalfont St Peter CE VA Middle School was found to have many strengths and relatively few weaknesses. Since then it has maintained its strengths, improved further and all areas of weakness identified in the previous report have been successfully

dealt with. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good. The results achieved by its pupils, especially in the National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics, at the end of Year 6, have risen further. Information technology lessons are used effectively to support learning in other subjects. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, and almost a third is very good or excellent. This improvement is associated with improved planning, clearer identification of what pupils are to learn and the effective use of subject specialist teachers in Years 4 to 6. The library is used well and greater emphasis is given to encouraging pupils to apply their knowledge and work independently, although this could be encouraged more in science. Provision for pupils' personal development, especially in relation to spiritual reflection and their awareness of cultural diversity, has improved significantly. The desire to succeed and ensure pupils achieve their very best means that the school is very well placed to maintain its current high standards and improve even further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	B	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	A	B	A	B	
science	B	A	B	C	

There has been an improvement in results since 1996; the rate of improvement is similar to that nationally. The improvement is most evident in English; results in science have varied little since 1996. As a result, standards in English and mathematics, when children leave the school, are generally well above the national picture and above those of similar schools. The school is meeting its targets effectively. Attainment in information technology is about average and specific lessons in information technology promote learning in other subjects well. The school has maintained standards in other subjects, standards are at least satisfactory and are often higher. Standards are high in history and physical education, and good in art, geography and French.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very positive attitudes to learning and participate fully in activities in and around the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour, in and out of classrooms, is very good and has a significant impact on learning. Only occasionally does behaviour fall below this high standard.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between staff and pupils, and pupils themselves, are very good. They work and play harmoniously. Pupils are developing into mature and confident individuals.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and significantly above the national average. Pupils arrive promptly and lessons start on time.

Pupils enjoy school and display very positive attitudes to their work. They behave very well and their attendance is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
90 lessons seen overall	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.

All teaching is at least satisfactory, and 32 per cent of lessons are very good or excellent. In about 85 per cent of lessons teaching is at least good. Teaching is of a high standard in each year group. English and mathematics teaching is very good. Strengths of teaching include good planning and teamwork within each year group, outstanding relationships with children and good pupil management. In the best lessons, the teachers' enthusiasm interests pupils. The use of setting for many lessons, especially in Years 4 to 6, is effective in helping the school to meet the needs of its pupils effectively. Occasional weaknesses include not always challenging able children sufficiently, for instance in science, and keeping less able groups inactive for too long. As a result, these pupils become restless and occasionally inattentive. Teaching promotes high attainment of gifted pupils in physical education particularly well. Literacy is taught effectively across the whole curriculum; the teaching of numeracy is also good but it is not yet developed as well in other subjects. The high quality teaching helps to promote children's learning. They work hard, showing interest and concentration; opportunities for pupils to develop independence are well planned.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad and rich curriculum provides well for the needs of all pupils. Statutory requirements are fully met. The programme of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The management of special educational needs is good. Careful organisation of classes, including the use of setting, effective deployment of the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support staff help these pupils make good progress. The school has identified the need to enhance still further the information contained in pupils' individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The personal, social and health education programme is good and promotes pupils' personal development well. Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pupils are well cared for by all adults in the school. Assessment of pupils' work, progress and attainment is a strength of the school. It is very effective in providing educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievements.

The very strong links with parents, their involvement and support have a significant impact on pupils' education and learning. The school provides pupils with a broad and rich curriculum and an outstanding range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are well cared for and the assessment of their attainment and progress is a strength of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior management team and staff. They form a very strong and effective team determined to maintain high standards in all areas of school life.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The Governing Body fulfils its duties and statutory responsibilities very well. Governors are very clear and positive in relation to their roles and responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very effectively through the Governing Body, senior management team, year leaders and co-ordinators. It is very aware of how well it is doing and sets challenging targets to do even better.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, finance, resources and accommodation are used very effectively to give pupils maximum benefit in the classroom. The school's income is about average, it uses it very well and provides very good value for money.

The school is well staffed and benefits from very good accommodation. Resources are generally good, except that there are not enough computers available currently. The school is very well led by the headteacher and Governing Body. The principles of best value are applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
- Children like school. - Children's progress is good. - Behaviour is good. - The school sets the right amount of homework. - Teaching in the school is good. - Parents are well informed about their children's progress. - The school is approachable. - The school expects children to work hard. - The school works closely with parents. - The school is well led and managed. - Children are helped to become mature and responsible. - The range of activities outside lessons is good.	- The amount of homework, although some consider there is too much and others not enough. - Behaviour in the playground. - Reports to parents are not always clear.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. Children do like school, they behave very well and become mature and responsible. Their progress is good because of effective, well organised teaching and high expectations of pupils. The school is approachable and works well with parents. Management and leadership of the school are very good. Homework is used very effectively and supports pupils' learning. Extra-curricular activities are excellent. Behaviour in the playground is usually good, although the limited space does have an impact when children are involved in boisterous activities. Written reports to parents about their children's progress do lack sufficient detail.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Standards of attainment when pupils left the school in July 1999, at the end of Year 6, were well above the average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. In comparison with similar schools, results were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and similar to the average in science. In English and mathematics attainment has improved at a similar rate to the national improvement. Results in science have not changed significantly over the past four years. In all three subjects, pupils in the current Year 6 show attainment that is similar to last year. The school's targets are challenging, but they were attained last year. The generally good standards identified in the previous report have been maintained.
- 2 In 1999, in National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above was well above the national average in English and mathematics, and above the average in science. Similarly, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was very high in English, being in the top five per cent in the country. They were also well above the average in mathematics and above the average in science.
- 3 Pupils join Year 3 with attainment that is above average, especially in reading and mathematics. The content of pupils' writing is good, although they use a mixture of print and joined script on entry to the school. Attainment in science and information technology is about average when pupils start in Year 3. From this position, pupils make good progress as they move through the school and they achieve standards that are well above average overall. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate attainment that is well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Standards in information technology are in line with the expected level and, in information technology lessons, pupils use their skills well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils read very well; they read with accuracy, good expression and understand what they have read. Handwriting is generally very neat, but there is still a mixture of print and joined script. Correct punctuation and accurate spellings are features of pupils' work in all subjects. Pupils write at length when reporting their work in other subjects and when writing creatively. Pupils' listening skills are very good and the vast majority of pupils are confident to answer questions or share their ideas in class. Pupils have a very good knowledge of how to use books for research; they know how to use the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book, and understand the classification system used in libraries. Pupils' literacy skills are very good and they are used effectively. Throughout the school, effective use is made of pupils' independent research and literacy skills, especially writing, in subjects such as science, geography and history.
- 4 Pupils' mathematical knowledge is well above average, illustrated by the fact that over a third of Year 4 pupils are completing Year 5 work successfully. Pupils have particularly good number skills, and apply these to good effect when solving problems. They understand time and the use of the 24 hour clock when using bus and train timetables. Pupils' mental mathematical skills are also very good. They draw block graphs, histograms and line graphs carefully. Pupils' numeracy skills are well above average and used well to support learning in other subjects. Teachers

generally promote this by using, for instance, time lines in history that are mathematically accurate. However, there are not enough opportunities, particularly for pupils in the top groups, to interpret data in subjects such as science. Accuracy in graph work is not always encouraged sufficiently, because teachers do not always provide squared paper. Attainment in science is not as high as in English or mathematics because fewer pupils gain the higher Level 5. Their knowledge of science is good and they use correct scientific vocabulary very well because teachers emphasise this when discussing science topics. Pupils display good skills associated with practical science, and their progress is helped because they enjoy practical activities. However, currently, much of the work is teacher directed and there are too few opportunities for pupils to investigate problems they have been set. This weakness is illustrated by the fact that, as noted by the school, although pupils answer questions very well, they are less good at raising scientific questions. The school hopes these areas will be improved through the recently introduced Qualification and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. In information technology, attainment is about average. Pupils use word processing facilities effectively to communicate information and find out about different topics using CD-ROM. By the end of Year 6, they combine text and other forms of information, to produce multimedia presentations following a visit to France. Pupils in Year 3 still show uncertain mouse control and pupils in Year 5 are not certain of the layout of the computer keyboard. As part of the plan to improve information technology standards, all lessons currently take place in the computer suite or in areas close by. These lessons always link specifically to other subject areas, such as when Year 4 pupils tried to replicate the George Seurat's 'Pointillism' artistic style or when those in Year 6 used a programmable toy to control its movements to make a range of regular shapes, such as pentagon and hexagon.

- 5 Throughout the school, pupils generally achieve good standards in other subjects. The above average standards identified in the previous report have been maintained in most cases and some areas have improved. In history, pupils have a very good knowledge of societies from the past, such as the Anglo-Saxons and the Tudors; they also appreciate how historical evidence is used. Their knowledge of geography is good, in particular, when comparing a range of localities with different features. Work in science and geography supports a good understanding of the water cycle. Standards in art are good, with pupils working in a wide range of media, although the development of artistic skills is not always given sufficient emphasis. In design and technology, pupils' skills develop well, but the time available sometimes limits the quality of the final products. Standards in music are satisfactory throughout much of the school, but better in Year 6. High standards are achieved by individuals supported by specialist instrumental teachers. Pupils sing enthusiastically. Attainment in French is good and generally above that of most Year 5 or 6 pupils who are taught the subject in other schools. Standards in physical education are especially high. This is reflected through most lessons and in the quality exhibited in the wide range of extra-curricular activities. As a result, the school has outstanding success in competitive sport.
- 6 Throughout the school, pupils' achievement is good. This is due to well organised teaching, very good year group planning and interesting lessons. Pupils are helped to achieve by the use of good questions and the full involvement of all. Achievement across the wide range of subjects is consistently good throughout the school. The school recognises that they have not yet helped pupils achieve sufficiently highly in science, but this is to become a target for improvement. The very well conceived plan to raise standards in information technology is effective and is already helping

to raise achievement. The use of setting generally results in suitably challenging work, and hence good achievement for higher attaining pupils.

- 7 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school, and this is aided by the appropriate use of ability sets. This is particularly evident in their English, which then helps support learning in other subjects. The amount of progress is illustrated by the fact that, in 1999, by the time they left school, all pupils achieved at least Level 3 in English, mathematics and science. Although in most subjects, there is, currently, no formal identification of gifted pupils, the use of setting helps teachers ensure that such pupils are generally given suitably challenging work. This ensures their progress is at least satisfactory, and often good. The exception is physical education. Gifted pupils in areas such as gymnastics are identified, given considerable extra support and, hence, they make excellent progress and achieve very high standards. There is little significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls, by the end of Year 6. The school sets challenging targets in relation to attainment in English and mathematics, and it aims to improve the proportion achieving at least Level 4 in English and mathematics still further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 8 Pupils, throughout the school, generally demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They enjoy being at school and demonstrate very mature work habits. They are highly motivated, applying themselves enthusiastically to different tasks and activities in their work. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher and are interested in each other's experiences, ideas and opinions. Stimulating teaching results in pupils who are enthusiastic and well motivated. They concentrate on their tasks and activities for extended periods. In the small number of lessons which are not well managed or too much time is spent sitting on the carpet, pupils become restless, and a small minority can become deliberately disruptive. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the out-of-school clubs and activities, with a large number participating on a regular basis. Pupils respond positively where opportunities are provided for them to make choices about their own work or take responsibility for their own learning. They undertake extensive projects and personal research at home.
- 9 Pupils' very good behaviour is a strength of the school, and has a significant impact on their positive attitudes to learning. This was also noted during the previous inspection. They are aware of the behaviour policy and respect the school and class rules. Over 95 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire thought the school promoted good standards of behaviour. Behaviour in the playground is usually good, although the limited space does have an impact when children are involved in boisterous activities. Pupils are courteous and friendly, speak well of their school and take care of it. They are happy to talk about what they are doing and show their work to visitors. Pupils work in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour, racism or sexism. They reported little evidence of bullying in the school. They knew who to go to, and felt confident that, if any incident were to occur, it would be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and effectively. There have been no exclusions in the school.
- 10 Relationships within the school are very good, both between pupils and staff, and amongst the pupils themselves. This is a strength of the school. Pupils work well together in both pairs and groups, and this harmonious atmosphere promotes a

good working environment and makes a positive impact on learning. Pupils were observed undertaking good pair work in French or helping each other on the computers. Groups were working effectively with number games in numeracy and during discussions in literacy lessons. There was good collaborative work in science where Year 4 pupils were designing electrical circuits. Within the many sporting activities pupils demonstrate good teamwork, and show enthusiastic support and recognition for the achievements of others.

- 11 Parents have very positive views about the attitudes and values the school promotes, helping pupils develop into mature and responsible individuals. The clear ethos of the school promotes value and respect for each other and the environment, and is reinforced by the good role models of the staff and older pupils. Pupils show respect for each other, with opportunities provided in assemblies and religious education lessons to enable them to consider the values and beliefs of others. The personal, social and health education programme further promotes pupils' personal development. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to undertake roles of responsibility and develop their initiative. These extend from helping out with tasks in the classrooms to monitor functions around the school. A small number of pupils act as library monitors helping out during lunch times sorting, ordering and classifying the books. Pupils are very willing to share their expertise to help others, such as in gymnastics skills training during extra-curricular sporting activities, or offering instruction on the drums. Fundraising activities for charities are also organised by some children.
- 12 The levels of attendance in the school are very good, and well above the national average with no unauthorised absences. Since the last inspection, there has been a small improvement in the attendance rate. Pupils are generally prompt into school in the mornings and lessons start on time. Registers are completed and maintained correctly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 13 Pupils are well taught and this helps to raise their achievement and learning. Teaching is consistently good in each year group. All teaching is satisfactory or better, with about 85 per cent being at least good. Very good or excellent teaching is a feature of 32 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection report when a few lessons featured unsatisfactory teaching, and there was little teaching that was very good. The improvement is associated with the use of setting and specialist subject teaching in Years 4 to 6. What children are to learn is also identified much more clearly than when the school was last inspected.
- 14 Teaching of English, mathematics and physical education is very good. Teaching of design and technology is satisfactory. In music, teaching is at least satisfactory, good in Year 6 and enhanced by very good instrumentalist teaching. In all other subjects teaching is good overall. The strengths and minor weaknesses are similar throughout the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least satisfactory, and often good. Some of the outstanding teaching in physical education, especially games and gymnastics, is associated with very good subject expertise. As a result, pupils' learning is enhanced because of excellent attention being given to the teaching of particular skills. Literacy and numeracy are very well taught. Occasionally, in English, in otherwise outstanding lessons, insufficient time is given to the final, whole-class session and pupils do not have an opportunity to share their learning with other pupils. As a result, the teacher cannot use this to guide pupils

further. Pupils' literacy skills are developed and used well in other subjects. Teachers use questions very well to help develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as to extend understanding in a wide range of subjects. They plan a range of writing activities in subjects such as science, history and geography. In addition, good opportunities are provided for pupils to use their literacy research skills independently. Mathematics is taught very well. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced effectively and teachers plan a wide range of mathematical activities. Mathematics is used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects, especially science and geography, although greater demands could be made in the interpretation of data. Expectations of pupils are generally high. The organisation of classes helps teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils effectively. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching from the class teacher and also benefit from the effective use of classroom assistants. As a result they make good progress and learn well. There are occasions when these pupils, in particular, are kept on the carpet for too long and, as a result, their attention falters and behaviour is less good. This affects, in particular, groups of lower ability pupils.

- 15 Lesson planning is good throughout the school. Year group teachers plan together carefully to ensure all pupils receive an appropriately demanding curriculum and good subject content. Plans identify clearly what children are to learn, and take account of previous work. Pupils are clear about what they are to learn because the expected outcomes are shared with them. In most lessons, a wide range of methods is used well; this is an area of improvement since the last inspection. Teachers encourage discussion and good group work is organised effectively, when appropriate. A weakness in science, which the school is planning to overcome, is that there is a tendency for teachers to direct the work too rigidly. As a result, for more able pupils in particular, there are not enough opportunities for exploration of different ways of tackling problems. For younger pupils, there is a tendency to try and cover too many scientific skills in one lesson, as a result detail is lacking. Pupils are managed well, but occasional weaknesses occur in lower attaining sets when pupils are not kept sufficiently involved or active. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. This is an important reason for the school's success; pupils appreciate being valued and respond positively.
- 16 Within most lessons time available is used effectively. Lessons are usually conducted at a good pace, although occasionally, for instance in the odd physical education lesson, pupils are not moved on to activities quickly enough. Resources are used effectively to support learning and, although computers are not yet available in most classrooms, information technology is used well to support learning. During lessons, assessment procedures are effectively used by all teachers; this enables them to refine what they are teaching when necessary and support individual pupils well. The quality of marking is variable. All work is marked, but sometimes consists merely of a series of ticks, with few comments used to help pupils improve. The best marking includes helpful comments, encourages improvement, acknowledges when this has been achieved and comments specifically on subject content. Where the assessment has been thorough, the information is used effectively during introductory sessions in the next lesson. Homework is very well organised, it is extensive and is used effectively to support pupils' learning across a wide range of subjects.
- 17 The effective use of setting and good planning by teachers help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are taught well. As a result, these pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. Throughout the school, good teaching helps to

promote good learning and progress by all pupils. In virtually all lessons teaching interests pupils who then work hard and concentrate very well. Where pupils move around a sequence of three activities during an afternoon, learning is sometimes less good in the last session. This was especially evident in French and music. The acquisition of new skills and knowledge across the whole curriculum is good. The clear guidance given by teachers helps pupils to gain a good understanding of the knowledge they have gained and what they need to do to improve. This level of understanding reflects the mature approach to school work shown by the vast majority of pupils.

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

- 18 It is an aim of both the staff and Governing Body to provide a full and rich curriculum for pupils, and in this they are successful and have made good improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum is both broad and balanced as well as giving due emphasis to the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and emphasising literacy and numeracy. French is also taught to pupils in Years 5 and 6. The curriculum is relevant to pupils' needs and interests. The quality of provision is a significant factor in the good progress pupils make in their learning and the high standards they achieve. This is also the view of most parents.
- 19 Both the range of activities provided, and the planning for these, are good. They are particularly good in literacy and numeracy where they help promote good progress and the well above average attainment of pupils. They are also good in geography and history. In physical education they are excellent where the impact is seen in the very high standards pupils attain. Very good provision is made for pupils of different ability, particularly in the setting in the core subjects. This means that the equality of access and opportunities for pupils are very good. Good opportunities to make cross curricular links are seen in a number of subjects, for example in promoting pupils' speaking and listening in art and in encouraging pupils to write clear instructions in design and technology. The school is also ensuring that this is promoted well in information technology, for example, in using data handling programs related to learning in science.
- 20 The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is effectively planned and aided by the setting arrangements. The use of individual education plans is effective because they ensure that individual needs are met while enabling pupils to have full access to the curriculum. Individual education plans are monitored regularly and reviewed carefully. Targets identified in individual education plans relate, mainly, to literacy. The school is planning to increase the number of references to numeracy and behaviour targets where appropriate. Withdrawal from classes of pupils with special educational needs is rare and this helps to ensure full equality of access to the curriculum. Teachers and learning support assistants offer discrete and effective help with a good blend of support and challenge. The provisions contained in the Statements of Special Educational Needs are implemented effectively.
- 21 The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. A very wide range is offered to pupils. During the week of the inspection activities included verse speaking, choir, guitar, gymnastics, circuit training, cross-country, team games and table tennis. Pupils are also able to take part in poetry, video, chess and art clubs. Excellent arrangements are made to ensure that all pupils can take part with enjoyment as well as encouraging the learning of gifted and talented pupils. A large

number of staff give freely of their time at week ends as well as before and after school and at lunch times. Pupils are very enthusiastic about attending and are very well supported by their parents. The quality and range of activities offered make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

- 22 The school uses its community links very well to promote pupils' learning. A strong feature of this is the involvement of the school in community projects; for example in designing a poster to promote the church's Millennium Festival and in fundraising for local, national and international charities. The school is also very good at arranging sponsorship from local businesses; for example for the minibus and for sports kit. The local sports pavilion is now managed by the school and used by other organisations such as a senior citizens' group. Visits to the local area and beyond, for example the residential visit to France, all enhance pupils' learning across a range of subjects. Visitors to the school, who include a number of parents, also share their expertise with pupils, most recently to talk about the Hindu faith and customs. Links with other schools are good and this ensures that pupils transfer easily between one phase and another and that their progress is not adversely affected.
- 23 The school provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils are taught about drug misuse in Years 4 and 6 and sex education in Year 6. The curriculum promotes pupils' health and safety very well; for example through learning about healthy lifestyles and diets. Swimming is taught to all Year 3 pupils and pupils from other year groups who cannot yet do so. Harmonious relationships and dealing with conflict are also covered well in PSHE lessons. Very good opportunities are also provided in religious education and other subjects. As a result of the school's provision, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents a very good improvement since the last inspection.
- 24 The provision for spiritual development is very good. Pupils are taught to be reflective about their learning. Very good opportunities are provided in assemblies and religious education lessons for pupils to think about the meaning of life. During assemblies, candles are lit, Christian artefacts are well displayed and both the music and prayer time encourage pupils' spiritual awareness. Enthusiasm for and an appreciation of learning are promoted very well in the school. These encourage a sense of awe and wonder; for example, when studying literature or the work of famous artists and in considering new life when frogs spawn in the school pond.
- 25 Pupils' moral development is very well supported. Very good opportunities are taken in assemblies, religious and personal, social and health education to promote an understanding of what is right and wrong. Adults provide very good role models and pupils confidently discuss moral issues with them. Pupils are encouraged to be polite, well behaved and tolerant to others who are different from themselves. The need to avoid unkind and aggressive behaviour is very well covered in the school's PSHE lessons. As a result, nearly all pupils behave very well.
- 26 Provision for pupils' social development is well linked to moral development and is very good. As well as being very effectively promoted in PSHE lessons, it is also very well dealt with in other activities, for example, in the encouragement to work co-operatively. A particularly good example is where pupils who are gifted and talented, for example in gymnastics, attend extra-curricular sessions to help demonstrate and encourage pupils of lower ability. Pupils develop maturity and learn to be members

of a community in such activities as taking part in sports competitions and on their residential visits. They are given responsibilities such as helping to look after the library and encouraged to develop independence and make choices about their own learning, for example, in choosing and using resources in art. However, this is more limited in science and prevents greater progress being made in their experimental and investigative science by some higher attaining pupils.

- 27 The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. A particular feature of this is the school's commitment to the teaching of French, which helps pupils to gain an insight into life in a different country. Very good opportunities are also made to help pupils learn more about their own and other cultures in subjects such as English, history, geography, art and music. The cultural diversity of society is particularly well promoted through religious education lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 28 Pupils are well cared for by all adults in the school. There are precise and helpful documents which are implemented successfully by both teaching and non-teaching staff in order to ensure the welfare and safety of pupils. The arrangements for child protection are in place and understood by staff with the headteacher taking the ultimate responsibility. The assessment of pupils' academic and personal development, as well as that of their attendance at school, is both efficiently and effectively carried out. This represents considerable improvement since the last inspection. The school is committed to raising pupils' achievement and provides good support and guidance in order to fulfil this aim. The school is very effective in providing educational and personal support and guidance in raising pupils' achievements. There are good systems in place for monitoring pupils' attendance and following up absences.
- 29 The school staff know individual pupils well and, in particular, those pupils with special educational needs together with those potentially higher attaining pupils. Teachers are fully aware of pupils' physical, emotional and intellectual needs and respond to them in a sensitive and positive way. Usually there is a strong sense of the importance of the health and safety of the pupils and they are never at risk. At times, however, when all pupils are at play outside, some of the natural rough and tumble is not so well supervised. The playground is small for the number of children and the school tries to stagger the lunch time break to minimise the risks. Lunch time supervisors are diligent and conscientious but now need further in-service training and support when organising interesting and productive play for the pupils' recreation. The school is aware of this and is keen to improve the outdoor recreational facilities. The working environment is safe and pupils are well supervised with their safety and welfare in mind. When necessary, the school works co-operatively with outside agencies such as the educational welfare officer, the educational psychologist or speech therapist in order to secure the pupils' welfare. The wishes and feelings of parents and carers are always considered, giving due consideration to individual children's racial background. The impact of the personal, social and health education of pupils is strong. It helps them towards good self-esteem, independence and self-confidence. Any form of bullying or harassment is dealt with sensitively and effectively. Parents express a trust in the school in its efforts to promote good attendance and behaviour.

- 30 Assessment of pupils' work, progress and attainment, which required some improvement, is now a strength of the school. Pupils are assessed on entry and as a result they are given appropriate work in Year 3 which acts as a basis for the setting for numeracy and literacy in Years 4, 5 and 6. Regular testing and assessment continue for the core subjects and the results again are used to inform planning of work and the provision for individual pupils' needs. Pupils' academic performance and personal attendance are carefully monitored.
- 31 The school's procedures for assessing and identifying pupils with special educational needs are both effective and consistent. The school complies fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Statements of special educational needs and reviews are up-to-date. There is particularly good liaison with external agencies, such as educational psychologist, behavioural support and other specialists.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 32 The school has maintained the strong links with parents reported previously. It recognises the importance of effective liaison between home and school, and the active role parents can play in their children's education. Parents are very supportive; they feel their children are making good progress and are very happy with the education and opportunities provided by the school. Parents commented that they thought the school and staff very approachable, and they appreciate the caring attitude of staff. Most parents have signed and returned the home/school agreement. Detailed information, about the school and its activities, is provided in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Regular contact is maintained through newsletters and frequent reminder letters to parents. Curricular information, with details of projects and topics to be covered, is shared with parents during a meeting at the start of each year. Occasional workshops are run to keep parents updated and suitably informed about recent developments, such as the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Parents are also consulted about different initiatives and were involved in the development of the home/school agreement. Regular consultation evenings are held to provide opportunities for parents to meet teachers to review their child's progress and achievements. The school operates an open-door policy, and parents can meet with teachers or the headteacher to discuss any matters of importance or concern. Parents have opportunities to visit the school and meet with staff before their children join the school. The quality of information provided about pupils in their annual reports is inconsistent. They generally provide rather brief detail regarding pupils' progress and attainment and what has been covered, and rarely provide targets for improvement.
- 33 The school offers every opportunity for parents to become involved in their child's learning. Where adults are able to respond, for instance by listening to readers, this is making a significant contribution to the standards of reading. A number of committed adults are regularly volunteering to help in the classroom during literacy lessons or getting involved in other aspects of the curriculum and the day-to-day activities in the school. Parents are well briefed and trained for these activities. They are very supportive of the homework policy and regularly review their child's project work writing comments in their topic books. The parent teacher association makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. It runs a large number of successful fundraising and social events each year, and organises sponsorship activities, which generates substantial amounts of money to support the school. A

large amount of money was raised last year. This money has been targeted to help purchase various resources and equipment for the school, such as text books for literacy and numeracy lessons, multi-media equipment for the classroom or funding the mini-bus. Members of the parental body were also instrumental in initiating and organising the after school club, which facilitates a homework club and additional after school activities for pupils. Overall, the level of parental support has a significant impact on the facilities and resources offered by the school, and education provided for pupils.

- 34 The school informs parents at the first opportunity of the identification of children with special educational needs. Parents appreciate this. They also appreciate being encouraged to be involved in supporting their children's learning and in school life. Parents of these children are also involved in regular reviews of their progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 35 The school benefits from the outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher, ably supported by a very efficient and effective deputy headteacher, all the staff and the Governing Body. The senior management team, year leaders and subject co-ordinators make significant contributions to the management of the school. An exceptionally clear vision and educational direction have been established, with excellent teamwork and commitment from everyone. These strengths have a very positive impact on maintaining standards and of raising them still further. Day-to-day administration is very good; the secretary offers very friendly, efficient service. She ensures that there is effective communication in the school. She works effectively to ensure the smooth running of the school and keeps intrusion into the working day of the headteacher and staff to a minimum. The school's aims and values are reflected in the excellent ethos and commitment to high standards. The very harmonious relationships and very positive attitudes contribute to equality of opportunity for all pupils and staff.
- 36 The Governing Body is very effective, has a clear committee structure and meets regularly. It has very good levels of expertise and is most enthusiastic and supportive of the school and its staff. Governors ensure that they are well informed about all aspects of school life, make a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the school and recognise and act on areas for development. They meet all their statutory responsibilities.
- 37 The school has taken positive steps to address the key issues raised in the previous report in relation to teaching and learning, planning and making more opportunities for spiritual reflection and the raising of awareness of cultural diversity. In many subject areas there have also been improvements, for example literacy, numeracy and many of the foundation subjects. There are still some outstanding developments regarding information technology, although many areas have already been dealt with and standards have risen in the subject. There is a very clear action plan that is currently a priority in the school development plan to ensure staff are trained, appropriate hardware and software are purchased to implement fully the school plans, based on Qualification and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work.
- 38 Subject co-ordinators manage their areas very well. This has helped the school move forward in some of its recent developments, for example, the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The whole curriculum is very effectively managed by the deputy headteacher, who has an excellent knowledge

and understanding of the curriculum. Good systems are in place to monitor teaching and curricular development, with the senior management team, year leaders and co-ordinators contributing to the overall system. When subjects are the focus for development, release time is given to the co-ordinators to manage their subject. This is particularly valuable, as it allows them to offer guidance and advice to colleagues, and to be aware of standards. The system for identifying teachers' developmental needs is very good and carried out on a regular basis by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The standards fund is used very effectively to ensure that all staff receive appropriate and well focused training in relation to both school and professional needs. There are very good procedures in place to monitor and support newly qualified teachers. This is achieved by very good working relationships in year teams and mentoring arrangements.

- 39 The special educational needs co-ordinator makes an extremely effective contribution to the management of the school. She often attends meetings of the senior management team, who are fully aware about their reliance on her competence. The provision for special educational needs is managed well. The governor responsible for special educational needs supports the co-ordinator effectively.
- 40 Financial administration and budgetary control are very effective. Strategic financial planning is very good with a clear analysis of future commitments. The school development plan clearly identifies priorities and costs. It links well to the budget allocation process. The governors are aware of the future implications of current financial decisions. These are set against the need to reduce gradually a deficit, which arose over a long-term sickness a few years ago. The day-to-day administration of the school finances is undertaken efficiently. The bursar has very good systems to provide the headteacher, co-ordinators and governors with up-to-date, accurate monitoring information. Minor issues raised in the last auditor's report have been dealt with. The school takes very good steps to ensure value in the purchase of resources and services. The school makes very good use of specific funds for pupils with special educational needs, and this has a positive impact on their progress.
- 41 The school has a very good number of teaching staff who are appropriately qualified with a wide range of experience. Specialist teachers for French, peripatetic music teachers, and the headteacher's expertise and teaching commitment in physical education, ensure the pupils make good progress in these areas. They make a positive contribution to the excellent opportunities and broad education pupils receive. The school has clearly defined a priority to provide single aged classes, grouped effectively within year groups and has used staffing resources very well to support this. Very effective setting of pupils into ability groups in Years 4 to 6 has had a very positive impact on the high standards pupils reach.
- 42 The accommodation is very good and over the last few years has been imaginatively reorganised to provide effective learning areas. The limited use of the library was identified in the last report; it is now a well organised, attractive learning area where pupils carry out individual research and borrow good quality books. The playground is rather small for the number of pupils, although the school tries to stagger some breaks, at other times it is very crowded. It is due to the positive attitudes and good relationships with each other that the majority of children cope well with the limited space. Displays are used effectively in classrooms and corridors to create a stimulating environment.

- 43 Resources are good and used well in all areas with the exception of the limited use of computers in classrooms. The school has plans to address this issue imminently and also to create a larger area for the suite, the present one being rather cramped. The school values the significant contributions made by the parents, which help to provide valuable resources such as books and resources for the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 44 Standards of attainment in the school are generally high although they are not as high in science as they are in English and mathematics. The school has already introduced a detailed plan to help improve standards in information technology further. Pupils' writing is well formed and presentation is of a very high standard, however not all pupils use a joined script consistently. Written reports to parents meet statutory requirements but they lack sufficient detail. The school has recognised the need to extend the already good individual education plans of pupils on the special educational needs register to include precise numeracy and behaviour targets where necessary.

(1) Improve standards of attainment in science by:

- implementing the co-ordinator's plans for the improvement in science, including the careful analysis of the results of recent National Curriculum tests to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses;
- improving the challenge for more able pupils, especially in enabling them to plan and carry out more of their own investigations;
- identifying precisely, especially early in the school, which scientific skill is to be taught within a lesson and ensuring sufficient time is allowed for this activity;
- making greater use of data handling and providing more opportunities for pupils to interpret scientific data.

(paragraphs 61-66)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Ensure the planned improvements in information technology are implemented. (paragraph 87)
- Introduce a planned programme to ensure all pupils consistently use a joined script in their writing. (paragraph 49)
- Implement the special educational needs co-ordinator's plans to include, where necessary, specific numeracy and behavioural targets in pupils' individual education plans. (paragraphs 20,54)
- Provide clearer detail in the written reports sent home to parents so that they have a better idea of what their children can and cannot do. (paragraph 32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4.4	27.8	53.3	14.4	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	356
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	58

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	46	46	92

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	36	38	39
	Girls	43	41	42
	Total	79	79	81
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (85)	86 (84)	88 (93)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	39	41
	Girls	44	43	43
	Total	81	82	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (89)	89 (89)	91 (92)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	335
Any other minority ethnic group	16

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: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	74

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	567036
Total expenditure	548494
Expenditure per pupil	1541
Balance brought forward from previous year	-23004
Balance carried forward to next year	-4462

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	356
Number of questionnaires returned	160

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	25	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	40	2	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	43	9	4	2
The teaching is good.	65	33	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	41	11	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	29	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	16	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	41	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	78	20	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	31	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73	21	4	0	2

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

ENGLISH

- 45 In 1999, when pupils left the school at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment recorded in the National Curriculum tests was well above the national average. Over 85 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or above, which is well above the national average. Fifty three per cent achieved the higher Level 5, which is very high in comparison with the national average. Pupils' performance was well above the average when compared with similar schools. The rate of improvement over the last four years has been similar to the national rate, although it was much greater in 1999. The target set for 1999 was 78 per cent of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in the tests, the school successfully exceeded it. The school, in its determination to continue to raise standards still further, has set an ambitious target of 89 per cent for the tests in 2000. The very high results were associated with the successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the intervention due to the booster classes, where twelve of the thirteen pupils put forward for the extra work achieved Level 4 and one pupil Level 5.
- 46 Inspection findings from current and previous work show pupils' attainment to be well above the national average by the end of the key stage, in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils enter the school with just above average standards in English. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, make good progress, so by the time the pupils leave the school, attainment is well above average. Setting is used effectively throughout the school; it ensures equality of opportunity and challenge as the work is very carefully matched to pupils' ability. As a result, pupils make good progress. The school looks set to continue to maintain its very high standards in English in the next two years in National Curriculum tests, as the present top groups in Years 4 and 5 are achieving high standards. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented; this has given the pupils a very broad range of experiences in literacy. Teachers promote all aspects of literacy well in other subjects. For example, pupils discuss the comparative styles of Matisse and Holbein in art, and put forward their views with maturity and confidence. They write detailed scientific reports and express their views well in historical accounts, such as work on Louis Pasteur. Labels are used well in design and technology when designing bridges. Pupils now have greater opportunities to use the library and information technology to help them carry out individual and group research. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The school has improved its resources for reading and now has good quality group texts for the pupils.
- 47 Standards of attainment in speaking and listening are well above the national average. Teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to ask and answer questions, to listen and respond to others, to present their own ideas and opinions clearly. High expectations and effective discipline ensure pupils listen attentively and build on each other's responses whilst waiting for their turn to speak. There is imaginative use of role-play in many subjects, drama and 'hot seating' which help pupils become confident, articulate and to listen to others well. Teachers have a very good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use and encourage pupils to use the correct terminology, not only in literacy, but in other subjects as well.

- 48 By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading are well above average. Teachers motivate and inspire pupils with their enthusiasm for literature. A particularly good example was seen when a teacher in Year 4 captivated the pupils' interest when reading 'The Mousehole Cat'. Pupils responded to the text with a great understanding and appreciation of the events and characters. Very effective questioning from a teacher in Year 6 meant that pupils deduced the underlying meaning in the text, 'Goodnight, Mr Tom'. Pupils read with very good expression, adapting their speech for the audience very well. In preparation for questioning each other, whilst in the role of one of the characters in the story, pupils had to read the text well and be able to draw out the salient features, which they did with great skill. Pupils successfully locate books in the library using a classification system and access information in non-fiction books, and know the functions of the glossary, contents and index.
- 49 Attainment in writing is well above average by the time pupils leave the school. They make particularly good progress in extended creative writing and when writing in other subjects. Teachers offer their pupils challenge and good opportunities to write in a variety of forms. For example, in Year 5, pupils wrote their own creation myths based on the knowledge they had acquired about myths in the lessons. Very effective teaching ensured that pupils wrote lively, interesting stories, their ideas were developed well, with words and punctuation chosen for maximum effect. In Year 3, following a discussion about different types of instructions, pupils wrote clear instructions, using appropriate language, about dressing a cut finger. Punctuation and spelling are usually correct, with a good understanding of the different parts of speech. Handwriting is quite often a neat, joined script. However, some pupils are still using a mixture of print and cursive handwriting. The school is aware of the problem and plans to develop a more systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting. This is necessary as the school receives pupils from several infant schools; consequently a variety of handwriting is used.
- 50 The quality of teaching has a significant impact on the positive attitudes of the pupils and the high standards achieved in English. Teaching is never less than good and for over half of the lessons it is very good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers are very knowledgeable about the National Literacy Strategy, teach basic skills and use technical vocabulary very well. However, there are a few occasions when teachers do not make full use of the conclusion to the lesson to enable pupils to evaluate and review their work. Effective teaching strategies and high expectations enable pupils to work independently with concentration, either individually or within groups. There are a few occasions when a minority of pupils become a little restless as they sit on the carpet for too long. The many new resources are used effectively to motivate and interest the pupils: this includes group readers which were inadequate previously. Planning is effectively carried out by the teachers within year groups, and this arrangement ensures a good match of work for all pupils. Work is evaluated very well and the next lessons planned accordingly. Homework is used effectively to support work that is carried out in class.
- 51 There is very good management of English. The subject is led by two highly motivated and knowledgeable co-ordinators. They are committed to raising achievement still further in literacy and have successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. All issues identified previously have been addressed very well. There have been good opportunities to monitor teaching, planning and pupils' work.

The co-ordinators are fully aware of the standards in the school and work with the senior management team in setting targets. They ensure that governors are fully informed about literacy in the school and have very good links with the governor responsible for literacy. The library, which was underused at the time of the last inspection, is now an attractive area which helps to promote pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

- 52 In 1999, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment recorded in National Curriculum tests was well above the national average and above that of similar schools. Over 85 per cent achieved the expected Level 4 or above, a figure well above the national average. Forty one per cent achieved the higher Level 5, which was well above the average. Analysis of test data shows pupils have made good progress compared to their results in Key Stage 1. Boys and girls perform equally well. The trend over the last three years has been good: the average point score has improved broadly in line with the national trend, but this has been maintained from a relatively high starting point. As a result, the school has kept its good position relative to similar schools.
- 53 The current performance of pupils in Year 6 is well above that expected nationally and progress is good. By the time they leave the school, pupils are confident with number. The good rate of progress is linked to the consistency of the teaching, which is never less than good and to the planning of the curriculum, which ensures that knowledge is developed systematically. Pupils have a very good mathematical vocabulary, which they use effectively to describe what they are doing. They understand place value and know their multiplication tables well. Pupils estimate accurately and check the reasonableness of their answers; they understand area and volume and calculate them accurately. Many pupils convert fractions to decimals correctly and most use data and a variety of graphs effectively, often to support their learning in other subjects.
- 54 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are organised into teaching groups according to their prior attainment and the teaching is then organised carefully to match their needs. Overall, they attain standards at least in line with their abilities and often above. Nevertheless, the school is aware of an area of weakness and is planning to develop individual education plans specifically for those with difficulties in numeracy. Similarly, higher attaining pupils perform well as the number achieving Level 5 indicates.
- 55 Overall standards in numeracy are good by the end of Key Stage 2 and pupils are encouraged to think mathematically. Good arrangements are in place to ensure that mathematical skills are developed across the curriculum. In science, in Year 3, pupils measure plants accurately under test conditions and record their results clearly. Similarly, Year 6 pupils show efficient skills of practical measurement when building their bridges. In physical education, pupils record their heartbeats accurately before and after exercise and are often required to double or halve their results. Nevertheless, weaknesses remain: graphs are sometimes produced on plain paper and often a wide range of mathematical data is collected but not always evaluated. There are too few opportunities for higher attaining pupils to interpret data in science.

- 56 The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills. This is mainly due to the extra time provided by the National Numeracy Strategy for oral work which is used effectively by teachers. For example, they encourage pupils to explain their ideas and use quick-fire question and answer sessions well.
- 57 The school is planning to extend the use of information technology in lessons because it is currently limited. However, within these limitations, good work, using computers, is done in information technology lessons. For example, pupils in Year 3 interpret data on a spreadsheet and those in Year 5 create identification keys. These activities contribute significantly to data handling skills.
- 58 Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics which contribute significantly to the quality of their learning. They persevere when faced with problems, show interest in lessons and are prepared to talk about their difficulties and achievements. In particular, they work well collaboratively and take a pride in the presentation of their work.
- 59 Teaching is at least good in mathematics and often very good. Teachers introduce lessons well and engage pupils rapidly; they also encourage pupils to take part in oral and mental work by ensuring that they are given thinking time. They promote mental skills and efficient strategies for mental calculation. As a result, pupils in Year 3 show good multiplication skills and use the nine and eleven times tables correctly. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils calculate in fractions and understand algebraic relations. An impressive feature of the teaching is the promotion of correct mathematical vocabulary, for example, large wall displays in all classrooms contain a 'word and number of the week' and some problems for pupils to tackle associated with the particular word. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher drew on the class wall for ideas and solutions relating to frequency charts. The teaching of mathematics and the quality of learning benefits from the school's setting arrangements and the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Learning objectives and class activities are matched accurately to pupils' abilities. For example, pupils in Year 3 are introduced to geometrical shapes carefully according to their aptitudes, so that pupils in an average group were confident about describing shapes using acute and obtuse angles. Teachers end lessons effectively by highlighting what pupils have learnt and need to remember, and setting the scene for the next lesson. All teachers make good use of the school's National Numeracy Strategy objectives to identify progress and to locate both the key ideas in mathematics and the relationships between different topics. Accordingly, there are no areas of significant weakness.
- 60 The subject is managed efficiently by a competent and thoughtful co-ordinator who has successfully addressed the issues raised in the last inspection. Teaching has improved and pupils are given more investigations to complete. Assessment is also used more effectively. Marking is now satisfactory but the co-ordinator has some comprehensive arrangements in place to improve it. Overall, the subject is well placed to sustain its rate of improvement.

SCIENCE

- 61 In 1999, at the end of Year 6, attainment recorded in National Curriculum tests was above the national average and similar to that of similar schools. Almost 90 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 or above, a figure above the national average. Thirty two per cent achieved the higher Level 5, which was also above the

average. Attainment in the National Curriculum tests has remained similar over the past four years. There is little significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

- 62 The previous inspection report indicated that standards in science were above average. This position has been maintained over the past four years and is evident in current pupils' work. Pupils enter Year 3 with scientific knowledge and skills that are similar to, or a little above, average. From this base, pupils make good progress. Pupils in Year 3 are taught by their class teachers while in Years 4 to 6 they are taught by specialist year group science teachers. Classes in Years 5 and 6 are formed on the basis of prior attainment, and this helps teachers target their work more closely. This was well illustrated in the way in which the earth in space topic was delivered by the teacher in Year 5. After setting down their ideas to explain night and day, all pupils watched a demonstration using a globe and light source. The upper set were then introduced to the concept of time zones and challenged to calculate the number of degrees corresponding to a complete time zone. The lower attaining pupils, through very good questions and the use of suitable vocabulary, were led to a good understanding of how the Earth's rotation leads to night and day, why it is night in Australia when it is daytime in Britain, and then provided with a helpful recording sheet.
- 63 Pupils in Year 3 make good use of vocabulary to describe some of the properties of different materials and use the terms transparent, translucent and opaque correctly. Some pupils understand the meaning of a fair test, but only where the teacher has taken time to explain it carefully. Pupils know the main features of plants. However, because the teaching of the skill of observation is not given sufficient attention and because access to resources is limited, their drawings are inaccurate, especially in relation to the relative sizes of different parts. In Year 4, pupils understand that forces can involve pulling, pushing, twisting and squeezing and that they can cause objects to move, speed up, slow down or change direction. They make simple circuits, which include a switch, and draw suitable circuit diagrams. In Year 5, pupils have a good understanding about the properties of solids, liquids and gases. The best work includes imaginative descriptions, such as, 'Particles in gases are very hard to control. They keep wanting to escape!'. Year 6 pupils extend suitably their knowledge of forces and the highest attaining explain why things float by correctly making reference to the upthrust of the water. They measure forces accurately using a Newton meter. They have a good understanding that organisms depend on each other and can be arranged into food chains. They know that when muscles contract they pull, but that when they relax they do not push. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the lower sets when the teacher carefully matches the language used to their work. The differences in scientific attainment, reflected in pupils' written work, are mainly associated with English skills. There are examples of pupils who, although on the register of special educational needs, are in an upper science set, because they are able to demonstrate good understanding when talking about their work. In these cases, teachers give good support and encourage the use of different recording techniques.
- 64 Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their science. They are interested in the work, especially when it is related to their own experiences. This was well illustrated by pupils studying the cause of night and day. Their attitudes to science are good, illustrated by the interest shown during teachers' demonstrations and their willingness to answer questions. The school has correctly noted the weakness that pupils rarely pose scientific questions. Behaviour is very good in both whole-class

and group activities. When working in groups, pupils do so sensibly and share resources very well. The standards of behaviour and attitudes, coupled with very good relationships, help to promote good learning.

- 65 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and usually good. In Year 5 it is very good. The good teaching helps to promote good learning by pupils, often because of the interest generated. The best teaching uses resources effectively and reflects good subject knowledge and high expectations that are matched well to pupils' levels of understanding. Teachers' knowledge of science is good. The organisation of teaching so that year group subject specialists teach science in Years 4 to 6, together with the setting in Years 5 and 6, help teachers match work carefully to the needs of the pupils. However, not enough attention is given to always ensuring that the needs of higher attaining pupils are fully met. This explains why the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 is lower than in either English or mathematics. Teachers throughout the school make particularly good use of pupils' literacy skills. A range of opportunities is used to include aspects of numeracy in science. However, these are not always used to best effect. Too often pupils draw bar charts which are inappropriate, for instance when the answer is 'yes' or 'no', and they are not always provided with squared paper when drawing graphs. In Year 4, pupils are introduced to the idea that, in science, experiments are often carried out more than once. However, when pupils collect three readings for an experiment they are not used systematically or the average taken. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, are not given enough opportunities to collect and analyse their own data, or to interpret scientific results. Pupils are managed well and resources used satisfactorily.
- 66 The pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum. The recently introduced Qualification and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work should help to ensure a good balance between the development of pupils' knowledge and skills, and increased opportunities for pupils to complete independent or group investigations. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are to be developed further following the introduction of the new scheme of work. Data from National Curriculum tests have not been analysed to identify any patterns in pupils' strengths and weaknesses. This is to be the first action completed by the co-ordinator as part of her plans to raise attainment in science further. Science enhances pupils' cultural understanding through a study of famous scientists, such as Isaac Newton and Louis Pasteur. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and has a good awareness of what needs to be done to raise standards further.

ART

- 67 The school has improved both the quality of its provision and the learning of pupils since the last inspection. Learning is good and across the school pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age. The curriculum has been well planned to build up pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. Year 3 pupils increase their knowledge of primary colours when making block patterns in the style of Klee and then use this knowledge to good effect in colour mixing and matching for abstract patterns. Year 4 pupils study collage in a variety of styles and gain knowledge of abstract work when they complete very good collages in the style of Kurt Switter. Year 5 pupils begin to create depth in their pictures and to draw good portraits in a Japanese style. Year 6 pupils work very confidently in three dimensions when they make paper sculpture heads.

- 68 Teaching is never less than good and some is very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, using a range of methods and demonstrating and explaining new techniques well. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding. Art is taught in a carousel of three subjects in some year groups and this limits the time pupils are able to spend practising and improving their skills. However, their progress in this aspect is satisfactory. A significant feature of a number of lessons is the enthusiasm of teachers. Where this is seen, pupils are very well motivated and respond very positively to the work of different artists, such as Matisse and Holbein. Pupils very confidently identify and compare different styles before working with very good concentration and effort to produce a painting or collage in a similar style. A very good balance is maintained between the need to learn different techniques and the opportunity to explore creativity. Pupils are both directed to plan a task in a specific way as well as being given the freedom to express themselves. This is done particularly well when working in abstract, for example in working in the styles of Klee or Switter. Homework supports learning effectively, for example, pupils are regularly asked to find and choose resources from home to use in their art work. Pupils' learning in art supports their work in literacy very well through very good opportunities for discussion as well as increasing pupils' vocabulary. Recent development in the teaching of information technology allows Year 4 pupils to explore the work of George Seurat and create pictures on the computer in his style. The subject also gives very good support to pupils' spiritual and social development. Mainly as a result of the enthusiasm of staff, art contributes very well to pupils' experience of awe and wonder at the world around them. Social development is promoted by allowing freedom of choice and the development of pride in their achievement as well as encouraging good co-operative work.
- 69 The curriculum is well planned to give pupils experience of different techniques and media, including working with three-dimensional material, such as clay. It builds very effectively on pupils' previous knowledge and skills and so they make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Despite the present requirement to focus more on the core subjects, the art curriculum is both broad and rich. Good attention is given to the work of famous artists and those from non-western cultures and this supports pupils' cultural development well.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 70 During the inspection only one lesson was observed. Evidence is also taken from the scrutiny of work, discussions with staff and pupils, curricular planning, photographs and displays. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. They attain the expected standards for their age and exceed them in their knowledge and understanding of structures and mechanisms.
- 71 Pupils have a sound grasp of the design process and a good knowledge of how to ensure their design is sufficiently strong and fit for its purpose. They work carefully to complete their designs, testing and improving them. This was seen in the lesson observed. Year 4 pupils had previously acquired a good knowledge of mechanisms, incorporated this in their designs for pop up books and then began to make them, evaluating their success. Pupils build effectively on their knowledge and understanding, and satisfactorily on their designing and making skills. By Year 6, pupils have a good, secure knowledge of structures which allows them to design, make and test a model bridge.

- 72 From the work seen, teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory. Pupils respond well and with interest, most working carefully to complete their models. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory overall, but they have a good knowledge of the structures pupils need to learn about in order to make their design successful. This aspect is taught well, resulting in good progress being made. The progress pupils make in other aspects is not as good, but is satisfactory overall. This is due to the fact that the subject is taught as part of a rotation which, in some classes, means that lessons last less than one hour. As a result, pupils often have to leave their work in the middle of making or testing a design and return to it a week later. This limits progress. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils. Teachers are good at using homework to support learning. For example, a recent topic involved learning about mechanisms and the necessary components of a design for a pop-up book. Pupils then worked on their own designs at home before testing and making them in school. Good provision is also made to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills into pupils' work through requiring clear labelling and instructions, and accurate diagrams. Learning provides good opportunities for personal development through encouraging the careful handling of resources and co-operative work.
- 73 Despite the requirement to focus on literacy and numeracy, the school has endeavoured to give all pupils access to the full curriculum in design and technology. As a result, the school has maintained the standards seen at the last inspection. Learning includes working with different materials and components, and food technology. This is achieved through following two topics each term which are often effectively linked to another subject, for example, Year 6 pupils design and make bridges in conjunction with their science work on forces. This, together with the good teaching of the skills required when designing structures and mechanisms with different materials and components, results in the good progress made in this aspect.

GEOGRAPHY

- 74 Standards of achievement are above expectations and remain similar to those noted at the last inspection. Pupils' progress and their learning, including for those with special educational needs, are good. Pupils achieve well in all of the important study programmes and there are no significant areas of weakness. Pupils in Year 4 understand contrasting areas well when they compare High Wycombe with Bembridge in the Isle of Wight. They map shops and undertake traffic surveys before producing interesting brochures on why people should visit High Wycombe. This work also enables them to develop literacy skills, in particular that of persuasive writing. Numeracy skills are developed when pupils produce tally charts and traffic graphs. When they visit Bembridge for a residential stay, they develop further important fieldwork skills, such as mapping, observing and recording. As they progress through the key stage, they move further afield and produce impressive studies of Kenya. Pupils' quality of learning is enhanced further through imaginative activities, as when a local expert mapped the school and its grounds in colour and pupils were required to examine ways of improving their environment. Their responses included the opinion that more space, including a nature area, was needed. Environmental studies in the curriculum are further developed when pupils write accurate and thoughtful pieces on the 'Life-cycle of a Plastic Bottle'.

- 75 The school has thought carefully about re-organising the geography curriculum to match new national requirements. It has produced a balanced and effective set of teaching arrangements which make allowance for the teaching of important subjects, such as physical geography. Most pupils, for example, understand the characteristics of river systems and how they change landscapes; they have a similar grasp of the world's major climates. Their quality of learning is helped because of a curriculum which has clear progression of skills and knowledge built in to it. In turn, this is delivered to the pupils through some good teaching methods, for example when a Year 6 class was introduced to the features of a river through a large three-dimensional model. The school also takes advantage of information technology to help pupils' understanding: the Internet and CD-ROMs are used well to investigate environmental problems and mapping.
- 76 Pupils are keen to find out about places in geography and show positive attitudes. They work well in pairs and in groups when on assignments both in and out of school. The subject makes a strong contribution to social and cultural provision by introducing pupils to the local area and other places in Great Britain, Europe and the wider world.
- 77 Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Planning is good and appropriate use is made of resources, such as maps and also the results of fieldwork; as a result, pupils become familiar with the methods and resources available to geographers and the quality of their learning improves. Occasional unsatisfactory features of lessons are related to weaknesses in pupil management and a limited range of teaching strategies. Consequently, pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable.
- 78 The co-ordinator has played a major role in producing a curriculum which maintains good standards of learning; assessment arrangements are satisfactory but the lack of non-contact time makes it difficult to take further steps to raise standards. Overall, the school has improved its curriculum and standards of learning since the last inspection and is well placed to sustain this improvement.

HISTORY

- 79 Standards of achievement are well above expectations and remain similar to, or above, those noted at the last inspection. Pupils show good standards in both historical knowledge and skills.
- 80 The school follows a chronological approach to the subject content so that pupils begin with the Egyptians in Year 3 and study Britain in the 1930's in Year 6. This arrangement, coupled with an emphasis in timelines and change over time, means that pupils develop a surer grasp of chronology than is often the case. Similarly, because of both some well-chosen visits, where practical activities are undertaken and the careful use of interesting artefacts, more pupils than usual know the research methods used by historians. Teachers encourage a sense of curiosity and adventure among pupils and use literacy effectively to give it expression. Thus, pupils write about what they would do as Saxons when night falls on the first day of their invasion. Pupils with special educational needs use the 'Big Book' on Tudor medicine well during their English lessons to help understanding. All pupils use appropriate historical vocabulary as a result of teachers planning for its use and they also develop their numeracy skills when they learn about the Egyptian number system. Overall, the use of information technology is limited in history, although

pupils enjoy using a CD-ROM on Egypt and produce some interesting word-processed work. History contributes well to the overall school provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Year 4 pupils produce reflective work on the Anglo-Saxon poem 'Beowulf' and visit the local Tudor inn, encouraging pupils to consider how Chalfont St Peter has changed over time. Similarly, they study local, national and ancient history and the Year 6 visit to France enables them to get a different cultural perspective on World War Two. Assembly themes are often linked to famous historical international figures such as Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa.

- 81 Pupils enjoy history and bring both curiosity and excitement to its study. This is capitalised on by clear curricular arrangements, interesting visits, a variety of resources and thoughtful assignments. As a result, the quality of learning of most pupils is sharpened and history is not dull. Standards and achievement improve as a result. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils show a good grasp of chronology. Most place events in a wider context and some understand the relative time distances between the Egyptians and the Anglo-Saxons and between the Tudors and our own time. They are particularly good at communicating their knowledge and thoughts in writing, and know about the range of sources available to the historian.
- 82 As a result of the school's timetabling only three lessons were seen during the inspection. The teaching in these lessons was of good quality. Evidence about teaching was also gathered from a study of teachers' planning, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work. Planning is good and high standards of research and presentation are encouraged. Teaching succeeds in capturing the pupils' interest and a variety of interesting teaching methods is used.
- 83 The co-ordinator organises the subject well; she is enthusiastic and well aware of what children enjoy studying. She utilises this to make effective links with the recommended historical Programmes of Study and, as a result, maintains the very good standards noted in the earlier report.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 84 The previous inspection report indicated that the standard achieved by most pupils was similar to the expected level, although information technology was not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects. The school has made good progress and attainment is in line with that expected, reflecting the greater demands now recognised.
- 85 Pupils enter Year 3 with broadly average skills. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is about average. By the time they leave the school, pupils word process their work to a satisfactory standard and appreciate the value of computers in enhancing display. They produce good multimedia displays following a visit to France. They apply their mathematical knowledge well to program a robotic toy so that it completes a series of movements correctly. As a result, the toy completes shapes such as a pentagon, hexagon and octagon. As pupils' learning improves, they challenge themselves to program the toy successfully so that it completes other, larger regular shapes. Pupils in Year 5 use computers to program a screen turtle to produce squares and rectangles. They word process competently, but are unsure of the layout of the computer keyboard. In Year 4, pupils experiment when using an art program, trying to replicate George Seurat's 'Pointillism' style. After initially using too larger dots or

brush streaks, they improve to produce good pictures of, for instance, trees, leaves and birds. They enter data into a spreadsheet accurately in preparation for producing an identification key. Pupils in Year 3 examine data in a spreadsheet to find out about features of different birds, such as their habitat, size, colour and clutch size. Many pupils of this age still experience difficulty when trying to control the computer mouse. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress as other pupils, and use the technology well to support their learning in English, such as spellings.

- 86 Pupils enjoy their work using computers and concentrate well. This aids their learning, which is good. Pupils are sensible and work well without direct guidance from the teacher when working outside the computer suite. Pupils in Year 6 were excited when programming either the screen turtle or the robotic toy, which many had not used much before. Good teaching also aids learning. The work is carefully planned to develop pupils' skills at a reasonable rate, and to ensure all have opportunities to complete the tasks, despite the limited number of computers in the suite. An effective element of the teaching was how class teacher and learning support assistant worked well together to ensure all pupils gained from the sessions. All information technology lessons are carefully planned to support learning in other subjects. During the period of inspection these areas were art, English, mathematics and science. In English, for example, pupils were encouraged to compare the value of using a conventional encyclopaedia and a CD-ROM when undertaking research. Teaching would be further improved if more emphasis was given to good explanations of the cross-curricular links, such as in art and mathematics.
- 87 The school offers a broad curriculum, which meets statutory requirements fully, to all pupils. It is based on the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work. Currently, few computers are available in classrooms, since the focus has been to raise both staff's and pupils' understanding of information technology. As computers are reintroduced into classes, the technician, who comes in about twice a term, will ensure all relevant programs are loaded and accessible. The co-ordinator is providing very good leadership. She has already led a number of in-service sessions with staff to improve their ability to use new programs and equipment successfully. The decision to concentrate current work in the computer suite has been carefully planned. The next stage of development will be an in-service session at which staff will consider and discuss a wide range of work reflecting the levels expected in a junior school. This will be followed by the introduction of a very good, comprehensive scheme of assessment; this should help staff to target work even more closely to the needs of individuals. Resources are satisfactory, although the number of computers is rather low for a school of this size. The computer suite is only large enough to accommodate half a class at a time. This difficulty is overcome by careful planning and the effective use of resources. It is planned to increase the size of the suite at the earliest opportunity. These developments, once fully implemented, should result in higher standards of attainment.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - FRENCH

- 88 French is taught once a week to Year 5 and 6 pupils. It provides a valuable extension to the curriculum and the pupils enjoy their French lessons. They attain slightly higher levels than might be expected for pupils of these ages. This represents considerable effort on the part of the specialist teacher as well as of the pupils.

- 89 The quality of teaching is never less than good and at times it is very good. The teacher establishes a good working atmosphere in her classes. She moves competently and effectively between English and French using as much spoken French as possible, ensuring, at the same time, that pupils understand and become more and more confident. The teacher's accent and fluency ensure that the pupils have a good model which they can copy. On occasions, a parent, whose Mother tongue is French, joins the class in a supportive role and gives the pupils further benefit of good accent and a developing vocabulary.
- 90 Long and medium-term plans are thorough and individual lesson plans are detailed. When planning the work the teacher provides a variety of interesting tasks matching work to pupils' individual strengths and aptitudes and she always looks for progression and continuity in learning. The pupils learn how to greet each other courteously and how to offer personal attributes, such as age and name. They learn, for example, colours, dates, and how to describe the weather.
- 91 Several other activities promote the learning of French. There is residential experience for some pupils in Normandy. At times the class register will be called in French. Several labels around the school are written in French, such as "bibliotheque", "entree". There is a class display depicting shopping in France. Care is taken to develop cross-curricular links with history, geography and mathematics.
- 92 The quality of learning is good. Pupils are well motivated to learn another language. They attain relatively good standards and make good progress. This is true for the full ability range with those pupils with special educational needs reaching their own personal good standards. Equality of opportunity for access to the curriculum is carefully monitored in all French lessons. The pupils concentrate well, remain on task and are not self-conscious as they make their first efforts to speak in French. Behaviour is usually very good.
- 93 The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who has not long been in post. She has built up a good collection of resources, which is accessible and used sensibly. There are pictures, recordings of songs, texts, games and videotapes. This aspect of the curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance. It contributes effectively to the pupils' wider education and cultural development.

MUSIC

- 94 Music at this school is important to pupils, staff and parents. The school has worked hard, since the previous inspection, to maintain a secure place for music within the curriculum at a time when the demands for English, mathematics, science and information technology are growing. Pupils overall attain standards in line with those expected in listening and appraising, and in composing and performing. Some pupils, particularly those receiving extra tuition, either during out-of-school hours or from the visiting peripatetic teachers, attain at a higher level than the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is steady but there is evidence to suggest that progress should be better and attainment higher for a greater majority of pupils.
- 95 The quality of peripatetic teaching is very good. Pupils are required to pay for this but over 60 pupils benefit from the teaching and learning for the flute, violin, guitar, brass and drum. The quality of class teaching overall is satisfactory and is good in

Year 6. Although the planning of lessons is sound, there is not always enough detail to ensure that expectations are sufficiently high for all pupils. Too often the pace is slow and the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged. The concentration of afternoon lessons in music, in strict rotation, puts a burden on the music teacher who will be teaching up to 90 pupils in an afternoon. Some of the class teaching lacks dynamism and there is too little variety in the teaching strategies. Time is sensibly set aside for the practice of singing hymns. However, during the inspection there was no evidence of teachers giving clear teaching points and guidance as to how pupils might improve their performance in singing.

- 96 The quality of the pupils' learning about music is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy singing and playing, and are well motivated to learn. Many show considerable talent and are eager to take part in concerts, festivals and competitions, which are numerous. In lessons where the demands are too low, pupils become restive and inattentive. For the most part, pupils show satisfactory attitudes towards learning about music in class and respond well when the lessons are varied and interesting, as observed in Year 6.
- 97 While resources for teaching music are good, the accommodation, although adequate, is not always well used. The music room, often used for other purposes during the morning, is cramped and pupils' enjoyment of music is sometimes marred because of too many chairs and tables which restrict the use of instruments as well as contact with the teacher and with each other.
- 98 The curriculum for music is co-ordinated satisfactorily by the subject manager, although her timetable prevents her from monitoring the teaching of music in other classes or arrangements for music in assemblies. She manages the good resources carefully although storage space is at a premium. Extra thought should be given to making the display of instruments more attractive and inviting. On occasions instruments are not handled with sufficient care. The co-ordinator gives much more to the school than would fit her part-time hours.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 99 At the last inspection both the quality of teaching and learning were good. The school has made very good improvements in both the quality of the provision and the learning of pupils which are now of a high quality. The school is justly proud of its achievements in physical education and this motivates all pupils to make very good progress. As a result, across the school, standards of achievement are well above those of pupils of the same age.
- 100 Year 3 pupils begin to develop the good skills needed to play team games such as football, hockey and netball. Pupils make very good progress in using these skills in competitive games. Nearly all Year 3 pupils swim more than 25 metres and just under half are confident swimmers who are developing a good technique. Year 4 pupils have very good control in gymnastics, combining a sequence of movements varying level, balance and speed to a high standard. By the time they get to Year 5, all pupils have made very good progress in their floor work and gifted and talented pupils achieve very high standards. A group of Year 6 pupils is learning the skills needed for touch rugby. The pupils have made very good progress in their ability to dodge and tackle, and good progress in catching an oval ball.

- 101 Teaching is never less than satisfactory and it is very good overall. When taught by the specialist teachers it is of the highest quality. In all lessons teachers' knowledge and understanding of the skills pupils need to acquire is at least good. Where teaching is very good or better, the explanations and demonstrations of these skills are excellent. This very good teaching ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop at least average skills and make very good progress in their learning. Gifted and talented pupils attain the very highest standards. As a result, the school is very successful in competitive sport, for example, football, netball, cross-country and athletics. During the weekend prior to the inspection, two of the school's teams won the South of England Gymnastics Championships. In the best lessons the pace of learning is excellent. Pupils are very well motivated and determined to improve their skills and performance. In two lessons taught by non-specialists the pace was slower and although learning was satisfactory, it was not as good as that of which most pupils are capable.
- 102 The curriculum is excellent. All pupils are given full access to a wide range of activities. Excellent provision is made for the teaching and development of skills in swimming, dance, gymnastics, athletics and team games. Overall, the subject gives very good support to pupils' personal development. They develop very good attitudes towards their learning, maintaining interest and concentration very well. They develop very good social skills through being part of a team.
- 103 An exceptional programme of extra-curricular activities supports both the very good progress of pupils and the high standards they achieve. Very good arrangements have been made to promote the learning of gifted and talented pupils as well as allowing all pupils equal access to learn at their own level. The success of this is largely due to the commitment of staff who spend time at weekends, as well as before and after school and at lunch times working with pupils. In this they are ably supported by parents and also the large number of pupils who enthusiastically take part.