

INSPECTION REPORT

ALDERMASTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aldermaston

LEA area: West Berkshire LEA

Unique reference number: 109947

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Barke

Reporting inspector: Jill Head
2430

Dates of inspection: 10th - 13th January 2000

Inspection number: 182373

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wasing Lane Aldermaston Reading Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Bill Macdonald
Date of previous inspection:	21 st November 1994

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jill Head	Registered inspector	English Religious education Physical education Special educational needs	Information about the school How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Lizzie Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
David Westall	Team inspector	Science Art Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Brian McCutcheon	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Geography History Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than most primary schools and has 104 pupils on roll. The school takes in children in the term in which they have their fifth birthday and at the time of the inspection, four children were aged four. Some pupils come from Aldermaston, but many live outside the village. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are white English. Three pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is average. A small number of traveller children attend the school. Pupil turnover is low. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. Overall, the pupils' attainment on entry to Key Stage 1 is a little above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Aldermaston Primary School is a friendly and happy school where pupils attain standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science and achieve the expected standards in all other subjects, except geography where pupils' achievement is below expected standards. Pupils with special educational needs make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress and are well supported in their learning. However, more able pupils mark time in some lessons and do not achieve as well as they should. Almost all teaching is satisfactory and in one out of every six lessons teaching is good or very good. The headteacher is a strong and positive presence in the school. She has good management skills and provides effective leadership, which gives a firm steer to the school. The governors make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. They work closely with the headteacher and staff in a constant effort to raise standards. The school has an above average income per pupil, and pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in nearly all subjects. As a result, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher is a strength.
- Pupils' spiritual and moral education is good.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for school and are eager to learn.
- Relationships in the school are good and the vast majority of pupils behave well.
- Teachers plan well for the work of learning support assistants, who provide valuable teaching support.

What could be improved

- The start the school has made in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, needs further development.
- More opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas through discussions, and to take greater initiative in their work.
- The standards achieved by more able pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- The school day should be longer in Key Stage 2.
- Standards in geography.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1994, it has been through an unsettled period. There have been several changes of staff and governors and a new headteacher. However, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last OFSTED report. Improvements have been made to the assessment procedures, which are now generally satisfactory and commonly used by staff. These have a beneficial effect on most pupils' progress, although teachers sometimes under-estimate the potential of more able pupils. The school improvement plan is now providing a clear direction for the work of the school and is used well by staff and governors to establish priorities for improvement and set targets. The roles and responsibilities of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators are now clearly established. Priorities for curriculum development are identified in the school improvement plan. There is now a policy for equal opportunities, which has raised awareness of equal opportunities issues with staff and governors. Some modest improvement has been made to the monitoring procedures. The school is aware that more work needs to be done to establish fully the monitoring of teaching and learning, and this is identified in the school improvement plan. The school has maintained the good behaviour of pupils. The higher than average standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained, but standards in some of the foundation subjects, and particularly in geography, are not judged to be as high as they were when the school was last inspected.

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	A*	B	D	well above average A
Mathematics	A*	A	B	C	above average B
Science	A	A	B	C	average C
					below average D
					well below average E

In 1997 and 1998, the school maintained high standards in English, mathematics and science. The * denotes the highest standards when matched against national standards. In 1999, standards fell in all three subjects, but remained above the national average. When compared with schools with a similar intake, Aldermaston pupils did as well in mathematics and science, but did less well in English. The weakness in English was in pupils' writing. The school has analysed the results carefully and has introduced a programme for improving spelling. However, inspection findings confirm that there remain some weaknesses in standards of pupils' written work. The school has set appropriate targets for pupils in Key Stage 2, to raise standards in English and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils, including children under five, are eager to come to school and keen to do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Across the school, the behaviour of pupils is generally good and has a beneficial effect on their learning. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly around the school, show respect for other children and adults, and take care of school property. However, a small minority of boys in the Years 5 and 6 class does not behave well enough in some lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils willingly take responsibility for classroom and school duties, which they carry out reliably. They enjoy good relationships with each other and with adults. In relation to their own learning, however, pupils show less initiative or responsibility than could be reasonably expected.
Attendance	Attendance at the school is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

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.

In English, the quality of teaching is sound overall. Pupils in Key Stage 1 receive a sound grounding in the key skills of literacy. The teaching of reading continues to be developed satisfactorily in Key Stage 2, but the teaching of writing requires more attention. In mathematics, the key skill of numeracy is taught satisfactorily in both key stages. Across the school, the quality of teaching was sound or better in 92% of all lessons seen. 8% of teaching was unsatisfactory. Good or very good teaching was demonstrated in one in every six lessons taught by teachers in the school. All the teaching carried out by visiting instructors was good. Satisfactory provision is made for the learning needs of the vast majority of pupils; and the school makes mainly sound, and often good provision for pupils with special educational needs. However, in some lessons, the teachers do not have high enough expectations of the brighter pupils, and give them work which is not sufficiently challenging in English, mathematics and science.

Strengths in teaching are:

- the positive relationships between pupils and teachers;
- the teachers explain tasks well and use questioning skilfully;
- the learning objectives for lessons are clear and learning support assistants are well deployed.

Weaknesses in teaching are:

- in a significant number of lessons, the tasks planned for pupils in take insufficient account of the different ages and abilities in the class;

insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to discuss their ideas and solutions and to make informed choices.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides a sound range of learning opportunities for four year olds, but they need greater opportunities to learn through structured play and better provision for their physical development. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and reasonably balanced, and statutory requirements are met. The school allocates sufficient time to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. However, the length of the school day in Key Stage 2 is below the recommended minimum and this limits the time available for some subjects. Insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to discuss their own ideas, to use their initiative and to solve problems, in both key stages, and this is a weakness in the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs in learning is mainly good. Pupils receive good support from learning support assistants, and teachers plan work that is usually well matched to their specific learning needs. However, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties sometimes require better management of their behaviour.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The three pupils who have English as an additional language are all fluent English speakers and require no specific provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school has a strong moral ethos and makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development and satisfactory provision for their social and cultural development. Lunch time clubs are run by staff. The school recognises the desirability for after school extra curricular activities and provides these when adult help is available. No after school clubs were operating during the inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a happy and caring community and is sensitive to the pastoral and personal needs of all its pupils. All adults know the pupils well. Due attention is given to the safety and well being of pupils. The school makes good provision for the needs of traveller children and their families.

The school values the support and contributions that parents and carers make to their children's learning, especially the time they give to supporting school events, helping in lessons and with fundraising activities. The school keeps parents well informed about their children's progress and about school events.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has good management skills and is a strong and positive presence in the school. She is well supported by the senior teacher and by the administrative staff. The leadership and management of the curriculum needs to focus more on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well led and makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Governors visit regularly, but need to develop their monitoring role in order to focus on specific aspects of the school's work. The governors, headteacher and staff work well together. Governors take a keen interest in the school's performance and look at trends over time. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, with the exception of the appraisal of teachers.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher and staff analyse the performance data of the school carefully. Together with governors, they have set appropriate targets for improved test results over the next few years and expected levels for pupils in English and mathematics.
The strategic use of resources	The school has enough teachers and they are appropriately qualified. They have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Learning support assistants are experienced, well briefed and provide good teaching support. The accommodation in the school is cramped and this places some limitations on teaching. Overall, the school makes good use of the space available. There is a satisfactory range of resources in all subjects except geography. Resources are carefully stored, accessible and well used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents are satisfied with the standards their children achieve, particularly in English and mathematics. Parents generally feel the behaviour of pupils is good. Children enjoy going to school. The school promotes positive attitudes and values in their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A greater range of extra-curricular activities. More information about what is taught. The headteacher and staff to be more approachable.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the school and also their views on extra-curricular provision. There was no evidence during the inspection to support the parents' views that the school is unapproachable. However, there is evidence that parents could be better informed about the curriculum; the school recognises this and plans to provide parents with a summary of main topics being studied each term.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Children who are under five make sound progress in all aspects of their learning and, on entry to Key Stage 1, they are already achieving standards in early literacy and language, mathematics and science that are a little above average. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 statutory tests show that the percentage of pupils who reached the expected standards in reading was close to the national average, and the percentage of pupils reaching a higher level was well above the national average. The 1999 results for writing were well above the national average for pupils reaching and exceeding the expected levels. Pupils' performance was lower than that of pupils from similar schools in reading and matched their performance in writing. In mathematics, the results of the 1999 tests in Key Stage 1 were close to the national average, but pupils' performance was below average in comparison with results achieved by pupils from similar schools. In science, the teacher assessments in 1999 shows the proportion of pupils who reached or exceed the expected standard was above average.
2. In Key Stage 1, the performance of pupils in reading since 1996, has been above the national average, and well above the national average in writing. Their performance in mathematics was close to the national average. The data from 1996 – 1999 shows that the performance of girls was well above the national average in writing and mathematics and was above the national average in reading. The performance of boys was above the national average in writing, close to the national average in reading and below the national average in mathematics.
3. In Key Stage 2, the performance of pupils in English, mathematics and science in the 1999 SATs results was above the national average and, when compared with the results of pupils from similar schools, above average in science and average in mathematics. However, pupils' results were below the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools, in English. Results from 1996 to 1999 show that pupils' performance overall was well above the national average in all three subjects. The school attributes the comparatively lower results in 1999, in part to the cohort of pupils, but recognises this is not the only cause. In response to this lower trend, the school has introduced setting for mathematics and has closed off some teaching areas to improve pupils' concentration and reduce noise during the literacy hour. Extra time has recently been allocated in Key Stage 2 for extended writing.
4. Inspection findings show that at the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils attain average or higher standards in reading and writing. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' standards in English are generally above average. In their reading, pupils show a good understanding of a range of texts and can discuss the plots, characterisation and inferred meanings, often referring to particular passages to support their views. They are competent at using reference books. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate a mature grasp of structure and style in their writing. Overall, however, most pupils in Key Stage 2, including Year 6 pupils do not do enough sustained and extended writing. The additional time devoted to writing has not yet been in place long enough to improve standards, and there are some weaknesses in the grammatical structure and organisation of their work. Across the school, pupils speak clearly, fluently and confidently. Most listen carefully, but a small minority in most classes does not listen to their teacher or to other pupils. Overall, pupils present their written work neatly and legibly.

5. In mathematics the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attain the expected standards and a significant minority attain higher standards. They have a secure understanding of numbers, measures, shape and space and know how to use their knowledge to solve problems. In science, a high proportion of pupils reaches the expected standard at the end of both key stages and a significant minority does better. A good proportion of Year 2 pupils has a secure understanding that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a satisfactory grasp of the principle of fair testing but cannot confidently distinguish between a description and an evaluation of their investigation results. Across the school, pupils' progress in solving problems in science is inhibited by a lack of opportunities for them to make decisions about their work.
6. Across the school, the majority of pupils with special educational needs make steady and sometimes good progress and often achieve well in English, mathematics and science, taking account of their special needs. However, the few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties sometimes do not achieve as well as they should. When compared with higher attaining pupils from similar schools, the brighter pupils are also not achieving as well in English, mathematics and science; and this is supported by inspection findings.
7. In geography pupils across the school are achieving standards that are too low. This is due to the uneven development of their geographical skills. In information technology, religious education and all other subjects, pupils are making broadly satisfactory progress and most achieve standards that are satisfactory for their ages.
8. The school has set targets in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2, based on the pupils' performance at the end of Key Stage 1 and on the non-statutory tests taken in Years 3,4 and 5. Most pupils achieved the expected standards in 1999. The school recognises that target setting is still at early stages and needs further development to include other subjects and to identify any pupils who are underachieving.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Children under five are keen and eager to attend school and their personal and social development is good. In both key stages, the vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully to their teachers and to other adults who work with them. However, pupils' concentration sometimes wanes when the pace of lessons is slow. When given the opportunity, pupils participate well in class discussions and work responsibly in pairs, in groups or by themselves. The vast majority persevere with their tasks and work hard to present their work well. They support one another and share resources amicably, for example, in information technology, when working in pairs using a computer or in a small group programming a floor robot. Pupils take care of property, respect their own environment and show care and concern about the wider world.
10. Behaviour is generally good and has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning. Pupils are aware of the moral principles and values promoted by the school, understand the difference between right and wrong and abide by the school's rules. There is no evidence of bullying. In lessons, assemblies, the dining hall and playground, pupils conduct themselves in a sensible manner and show respect for others. Relationships are good and the positive ethos established in 'circle time' encourages pupils to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Pupils' self esteem is

good and they often confidently make suggestions or answer questions. There has been one exclusion in the last year. There is a small minority of boys in the Years 5 and 6 class whose behaviour in some lessons is unsatisfactory and this sometimes affects the quality of learning for other pupils.

11. As they progress through the school, pupils take increasing responsibility for classroom and school duties, and they undertake these willingly and reliably. Some older pupils act as house captains, while the duties undertaken by others include setting up the hall for assemblies, caring for the school's plants and animals, being responsible for the library, and helping younger pupils on the school bus or during wet playtimes. However, in a significant proportion of lessons, pupils have few opportunities to show initiative or to take responsibility for their own learning.
12. Attendance at the school is good. Registers are correctly completed. Pupils come to school in good time and sessions start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. All the teaching observed in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, teaching varied from very good, to unsatisfactory, but was satisfactory overall. Across the school, the quality of teaching was sound, or better in 92 percent of all lessons seen; and good or very good teaching was demonstrated in one in six lessons taught by teachers in the school. The teaching of visiting instructors is good. The last OFSTED report (November 1994) found that teaching ranged from excellent to unsatisfactory, but there is no breakdown of the proportion to make a comparison.
14. In English, the quality of teaching is sound across both key stages, with some good teaching seen in Years 3 and 4. Teachers in Key Stage 1 give their pupils a thorough grounding in initial literacy. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented successfully. The introductory sessions are used well to revise learning that has gone before and to establish the main teaching points. The main weakness, in both key stages, lies in the activities planned for pupils in the literacy hour. Too often, these are designed to meet the learning needs of the middle range of pupils. They take insufficient account the needs of the brighter pupils, who are sometimes given work that lacks appropriate challenge and, as a consequence, make slower progress than they should. The school is aware that more time is needed to develop pupils' writing skills and has begun to build this into the timetable. The teaching of writing in Key Stage 2 requires more attention to the extended writing skills of planning, drafting and editing work. The teaching of library skills also requires more attention.
15. In mathematics, the key skill of numeracy is taught satisfactorily across the school. Pupils in the co-ordinator's set benefit from very good teaching. Teachers plan and teach according to the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and tasks are mainly well matched to pupils' capabilities. However, more able pupils are sometimes given work which is too easy, and their progress suffers as a result.
16. Insufficient teaching was observed in science to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, evidence from the lessons seen, analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' completed work, suggests that teaching is broadly satisfactory. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, but there is a tendency to provide pupils with ready answers, and overall they are given too few opportunities to hypothesise and test their own ideas. As a consequence, pupils make slower progress than expected in solving problems. In the mixed age classes of Year 3 and 4 pupils and of Year 5 and 6 pupils, there is usually little difference in

the tasks set across the two year age range, and this sometimes inhibits the progress of the more advanced learners in science.

17. Insufficient teaching of information technology took place during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. In the best lessons, teachers introduce new programmes in whole class sessions. A volunteer parent provides good teaching support in information technology skills to pupils in both key stages.
18. No teaching of religious education was seen in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is mainly sound, with good teaching in the co-ordinator's lessons. The quality of teaching in art, music and physical education is satisfactory across the school. In design and technology, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Insufficient lessons were seen in design and technology in Key Stage 2 and in geography and history across the school so that it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, there are weaknesses in the planning for geography, and this affects the progressive development of pupils' geographical enquiry skills.
19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall, and is often good when pupils are withdrawn to work in small groups with learning support assistants. Teachers draw up individual education plans for each pupil and, where necessary, modified or different resources are provided. Good use is made of the 'Additional Literacy Support' materials. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the achievement the pupils make. The strategies for the management of the few pupils identified as having behavioural difficulties are not always effective in controlling their behaviour and this affects their progress in some lessons. The school has identified a small number of pupils as 'more able'. There is now a need to provide more challenging work to enable these pupils to make better progress, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
20. Teachers plan appropriate levels of work for the less able, but do not always challenge the more able

Across the school, the common strengths of the teaching observed include:

- a) the positive relationships between teachers and pupils;
- b) teachers explain tasks clearly and, in the best lessons, use questioning skilfully;
- c) the learning objectives for lessons are usually clearly identified in planning and resources well prepared;
- d) learning support assistants are carefully deployed and well briefed.

The weaknesses in teaching, observed in a number of lessons, lie mainly in:

- a) the lack of suitably differentiated work in English and science across mixed year groups;
- b) undemanding work given to the higher attaining pupils;
- a) the lack of opportunities given for pupils to discuss and formulate their own ideas and solutions and to make informed choices.

Other specific strengths and weaknesses are mentioned elsewhere in this section.

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

21. The curriculum provides a sound range of learning opportunities for children who

are under five years old, and planning is broadly satisfactory. However, insufficient attention is taken of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's 'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning', and the curriculum is consequently better matched to the needs of those who are ready to start the statutory curriculum than to those who are not. While the curriculum provides some opportunities for children to learn through well focused play activities, these should be increased for the younger and less advanced learners. There is no secure outside play area for reception children, and this inhibits their physical development. Overall, however, the curriculum is satisfactory for children who are under five, and provides a sound foundation for the curriculum in Key Stage 1.

22. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced, and statutory requirements are met. The school allocates sufficient time for the development of literacy and numeracy. However, the length of the school week is well below the recommended minimum period for Key Stage 2, and this limits the amount of time available for some subjects. For example, opportunities for pupils to develop their geographical skills and knowledge are limited; and pupils make unsatisfactory progress in geography, as a result. Across the school, the curriculum for more able pupils does not always meet their needs, and they sometimes mark time when given unchallenging tasks. Insufficient opportunities are provided for all pupils to discuss and formulate their own ideas, to use initiative and to solve problems, in both key stages, and this is a weakness in the curriculum.
23. There are satisfactory arrangements for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and the provision made for them is mainly good. They are given additional adult support in English and mathematics to help them achieve the targets identified in the individual education plans. The plans are clearly written and progress is monitored by regular reviews. The arrangements for assessments and reviews follow the recommendations in the Code of Practice.
24. The school provides some lunchtime clubs which give pupils opportunities to play board games and to undertake craft activities. A satisfactory range of educational visits also enhances pupils' learning. However, there are currently no after-school clubs, including for sporting activities or music. At the parents' meeting, and in their questionnaire returns, parents' responses reflected a lack of extra-curricular provision. The school has provided a range of after school clubs, and strives to continue this provision. However, in spite of strenuous efforts there are sometimes difficulties in recruiting adult help.
25. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Multicultural themes are promoted, particularly in art.
26. The school ensures that health education is satisfactorily addressed in the curriculum, and this is particularly evident in teachers' planning for science. Sound use is also made of commercially produced materials to support pupils' personal, social and health education, and of 'circle time' to encourage pupils to discuss relevant issues. Provision for sex education is sound, and pupils' drugs awareness is promoted through the help of talks from the local police, who also raise awareness of road safety.
27. The school has established good links with local pre-schools and joins with another primary school for residential trips. Pupils also have the opportunity to mix with others in sporting fixtures. There are good links with the local secondary schools and the transfer arrangements ensure pupils have a smooth transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

28. The school is outward looking and makes good use of community resources, particularly in curriculum focus weeks. Business and education partnership sponsorship has been used to support projects in science and technology. Pupils visit the church and manor house grounds as part of their studies in religious education and the environment. They have also been encouraged to contribute to millennium projects on the Internet and to design a millennium flower bed using bulbs donated by the children. The school has a regular programme of visitors who contribute to assemblies and other school events and encourages participation in village events. Together, these make a positive contribution to broadening pupils' horizons.
29. The personal and social development of children who are under five are successfully fostered in the reception class. The children are encouraged to take turns and share resources; and to respect and care for each other. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development, and sound provision for their social and cultural development.
30. Pupils' spiritual development is strongly fostered by well planned acts of collective worship which fully comply with statutory requirements, and were also identified as a strength in the last OFSTED inspection. A range of visitors, including the local vicar, regularly lead assemblies; and there are well chosen stories and opportunities for quiet reflection. Religious education lessons promote spiritual development, and pupils are successfully encouraged to appreciate the wonder of the world through work in science and art.
31. The school has a strong moral ethos. Honesty and fairness are strongly promoted and pupils are taught the principles which distinguish right from wrong. Care and concern for others are encouraged in the daily routines, and these attitudes contribute to the good relationships in the school. The staff set a good example by valuing pupils' achievements and fostering positive attitudes. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively, and to take responsibility for a range of school duties. However, the curriculum provides limited opportunities for most pupils to work independently, or with others, to solve problems or demonstrate initiative in their classwork.
32. Pupils' cultural development is soundly promoted through work in religious education, art and music; and Year 3 and 4 pupils have developed their awareness of art work from a range of cultures when studying different interpretations of the image of Jesus. The lack of after-school extra-curricular opportunities, is a weakness in the overall provision for cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Aldermaston School is a caring and happy community that is sensitive in meeting the personal needs of all its pupils. All adults in the school know the pupils well and respond to their needs in a supportive way. The recent introduction of circle time further contributes to the ethos of valuing each child and this encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to school. The school plans well to meet the particular needs of traveller pupils and to encourage their regular attendance.
34. The school is an orderly environment where safe practice and awareness of others is fostered. There is a planned programme of safety education for pupils, which is further supplemented in curriculum focus weeks, for example, the 'wet week' had speakers on water safety. Pupils learn about healthy eating as part of the science curriculum, and sex and drugs education are appropriately planned for in personal and social education.
35. All staff are aware of child protection issues and the school has sound procedures to address these. The school's comprehensive health and safety policy, together with supporting risk assessments, ensure that there are established procedures for proper supervision, security and emergencies. The school has particularly well written guidelines for medicines and first aid, and maintains appropriate records of accidents and incidents.
36. The school has reviewed its behaviour policy, in consultation with parents and pupils. Its implementation is closely monitored by the headteacher to ensure that respect for others and praise for good behaviour are strongly promoted. Pupils know what behaviour is expected and are confident to raise any matters of concern. Consequently, instances of bullying or harassment are rare and effectively dealt with. However, the management of the behaviour of a small minority of Year 5 and 6 boys, some of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties, needs closer monitoring. The school routinely monitors pupils' attendance and discourages parents from taking their children out of school unnecessarily.
37. Appropriate use is made of outside specialists to support pupils with special educational needs; and there is good liaison with the county traveller support teachers who provide helpful guidance and support to the staff and pupils. The school is careful to ensure that support is provided where necessary, for individual pupils to participate in visits and residential trips.
38. The last inspection found that effective systems for the assessment of pupils' academic achievements and needs were not used consistently by all teachers. The school has made sound progress in rectifying this weakness. Common assessment procedures are used which are generally satisfactory and have a beneficial effect on pupils' progress. The school makes sound use of assessments to inform early planning for the youngest children and to set a baseline for their future achievements. Satisfactory use is made of the SATs results to assess the standards reached and to influence future planning; and sensible targets are generally set for pupils in English and mathematics. Teachers know their pupils well and, in the best lessons, make effective use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to judge their learning requirements. Teachers keep pertinent notes about the significant achievements and needs of individual pupils, and these are useful for future planning. However, teachers sometimes underestimate the potential of the more able pupils in their classes, and this results in these pupils marking time in some lessons.
39. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational

needs, which fully comply with the recommendations in the Code of Practice. There is a good policy for special educational needs. Achievable targets are set for pupils and regularly reviewed. Pupils are encouraged to take part in reviewing their own progress and setting targets. This is good practice. Parents and, where appropriate, outside agencies are involved in assessments and reviews, and statutory requirements for reporting are met. The school monitors the progress of all pupils, taking account of ethnic background, gender or age in the school year.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents are generally satisfied with the teaching their children receive and the progress they make. They support the attitudes and values the school promotes and feel that pupils' behaviour is good. Inspection judgements support these positive views. Although the school has recently extended the number of lunch time clubs, the majority of parents feel that the school provides very few opportunities for extra curricular activities; and this view is supported by inspection evidence. Parents also suggest that the amount of information they receive about the curriculum is limited. This view is accepted by the school, and there are plans to give parents a summary of main topics to be studied each term and to consider other ways to help parents know what is being taught.
41. Parents have several opportunities through the year to discuss their children's progress with teachers, and the annual reports provide parents with a good summary of their children's achievements. The headteacher and staff are generally available after school should parents wish to raise any matters of concern. The headteacher maintains links by phone with parents whose children come by school bus. Neither the parents' concerns about lack of information about their children's progress, nor about finding the school unapproachable, were supported by inspection findings.
42. Parents are kept well informed through frequent newsletters about school activities and are consulted from time-to-time about reviewing policies and practice, such as arrangements for swimming and the revised behaviour policy. The home/school agreement is in place but the school does not yet have a homework policy setting out expectations about the frequency or type of homework to be set. Sound use is made of the home/school diaries for sharing comments from teachers and parents about pupils' work. New parents are given useful information on school routines and helpful guidance on how they can support their children's learning at home.
43. The school welcomes parents to help in school and some are able to share their expertise, particularly in ICT and during the curriculum focus weeks. Parents also make positive contributions to the active and well supported Parents' Association, which raises funds for extra resources at school, and parents, willingly join working parties to help improve the school's environment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The headteacher is a strong and positive presence in the school. She has good management skills and provides determined leadership, which gives a firm steer to the work of the school. She is conscientious and analyses the performance of the school carefully. She has developed constructive relationships with staff and governors, with whom she works effectively. Through her own significant teaching commitment, she provides a very good role model for teaching. She is well supported by the senior teacher. The headteacher, governors and staff have

worked together to create the school improvement plan. The present plan is providing a clear direction for the work of the school. It is used well by staff and governors to establish priorities for improvement. The curriculum focus sensibly limits the number of subjects in any one year. The plan would be further improved if it included an outline of subjects and aspects for development beyond the current year. However, it is a clear improvement on the plan which was in place when the school was last inspected in 1994.

45. The governing body, which is well led, makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school and fully carries out its statutory responsibilities, with the exception of teacher appraisal. Governors have established appropriate committees that meet frequently and report back to full governors' meetings. Governors attend a good range of courses to keep themselves informed of current educational issues. The governing body fulfils its role as a critical friend to the school. Governors take a keen interest in the school's performance. They discuss test results each year and look at the trends over time, acknowledging that the small cohorts of pupils can distort outcomes. The staff and governors track pupils across the school to evaluate progress. A governor visits each month on a rota basis, and some governors also gain valuable insights and demonstrate their strong commitment by visiting more frequently, sometimes to help in classes. However, there should be more visits that are clearly focused on the evaluation of specific aspects of the school's work, in order to develop the monitoring role of the governors.
46. The headteacher and teachers have recently undertaken specific training in monitoring and, as a result, have introduced good monitoring strategies. However, these are at the early stages and are not yet having a significant impact on standards in most subjects. The school recognises this, and has a good programme for the further development of the co-ordinators' monitoring role. The headteacher, who is the mathematics co-ordinator, has conducted a thorough audit of teaching and learning in the subject. She has a good overview of mathematics and has established priorities for development. The English co-ordinator has also undertaken a thorough audit of the subject and has identified strengths and areas for further development. In both English and mathematics, the co-ordinators and other teachers have undertaken a thorough analysis of the statutory test and task results and set appropriate targets for improvement. However, the headteacher's leadership of the whole curriculum requires more focus through the monitoring of teaching and learning; and a more rigorous analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' work, to identify strengths and weaknesses and to check that work is consistently matched to the needs of all pupils.
47. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed by the headteacher and the special educational needs co-ordinator. Documentation is kept up-to-date and regular reviews of pupils' progress are arranged. There is good liaison with outside agencies and with parents. The funding allocated to the SEN provision is carefully monitored by the governors and the governor with responsibility for SEN takes a keen interest.
48. The lack of an equal opportunities policy was identified as a weakness in the last OFSTED report. Staff and governors jointly worked on the formulation of a policy, which now effectively underpins much of the school's work in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and the small minority of pupils from ethnic minorities including traveller children. However, the policy is not effective in addressing the needs of talented or gifted pupils. Overall, the writing of the policy has been a useful tool to raise staff awareness.
49. The finance committee of the governors provides good support for the management

of the school. The budget is carefully analysed and the staffing costs carefully monitored when the school roll varies. Care is taken to obtain value for money when purchasing educational equipment, and governors evaluate a range of estimates for the maintenance and repairs of the school building. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the school improvement plan. The school has an above average income per pupil and, overall, provides satisfactory value for money.

50. The school has enough teachers and they are appropriately qualified. Teachers have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Their subject knowledge is secure and they are well informed about teaching English and mathematics. Learning support assistants who work in classrooms are well briefed by teachers, develop very positive relationships with pupils and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
51. Procedures for the recruitment and selection of staff are good and governors are appropriately involved in appointments. Teachers and support staff willingly attend a sound range of in-service training. However, procedures for the regular appraisal of teachers are not currently in place, and the school is not meeting statutory requirements as a consequence.
52. The last OFSTED report found that spending on resources was well below the national average. Since then, spending on resources has increased and the school has satisfactory resources in most subjects. However, the resources for religious education and geography require improvement. Resources are carefully stored, accessible and are well used. Library stock is in good condition and most books are up-to-date. However, having weeded out unsuitable books, the quantity and range of books is currently a little thin.
53. The school is in good decorative order and well maintained. It is well designed to meet the needs of disabled pupils. There is a spacious hall, which is well used for physical education, music, dining and teaching groups. The playground is attractive and provides a good space for games and athletics. The library is inviting and books are attractively displayed. However, it is usually in use for teaching groups and, as a result, pupils' library skills are generally underdeveloped. The accommodation is tight, and this places some limitations on the teaching. For most of the school day, every corner of the school is occupied. The staff and governors have given careful consideration as to how the space can be best used. Some recent adaptations have been made to teaching areas, and this has allowed for more whole class teaching, as required by the literacy and numeracy strategies. It is too early to measure the effectiveness of these alterations, but teachers report a significant improvement to pupils' concentration. The smaller rooms put a further strain on the space available, this restricts pupils' movement and sometimes their independence in using resources. Overall, the school makes good use of its cramped accommodation.
54. The day-to-day administration of the school is efficiently carried out by the administrative officers, who provide good support for the smooth running of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve pupils' standards and achievements, and the quality of teaching, the school should include in its post inspection action plan the following issues for action.

(1) Extend the monitoring procedures by the headteacher and co-ordinators by implementing the procedures recently introduced, so that:

- more use is made of work sampling to monitor pupils' attainment and progress;
- teachers' plans are monitored with sufficient rigour to ensure there is continuity and progression in subjects, and tasks are sufficiently differentiated to meet the age range and achievement of all pupils;
- the headteacher's monitoring of teaching is sufficiently focused to inform the work of the co-ordinators and through support, improve the quality of teaching.

(2) Give pupils greater opportunities to develop their ideas and become more involved in their own learning by:

- providing appropriate training for teachers, to extend their ideas and raise awareness of possibilities;
- ensuring such opportunities are identified in teachers' lesson plans;
- providing greater opportunities for pupils to discuss issues as a whole class, in groups or in pairs;
- conscientiously making efforts to ask open ended questions;
- providing more opportunities for pupils to solve problems;
- planning open ended tasks and activities that allow for more individual and imaginative responses by pupils.

(3) Further raise the standards attained by more able pupils in English, mathematics and science by:

- further developing the start already made to identify more able pupils and establishing a policy for identification and provision;
- raising teachers' and pupils' expectations of the quality and quantity of work pupils do;
- providing pupils with more challenging work;
- ensuring pupils do not unnecessarily repeat work or do work that is too easy for them;
- involving pupils in some appropriate decisions about their learning.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

1. Develop the monitoring role of the governing body through some visits that are clearly focused on the evaluation of specific aspects of the school's work.
2. Provide more opportunities for children under five to learn through structured play and improve the provision for their physical development by providing a secure outside play area.
3. Improve standards in geography by developing a scheme of work which promotes continuity and progression in the subject.
4. Extend the length of the school day in Key Stage 2 to meet the recommended teaching time.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7.1	14.3	71.4	7.1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	104
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	7	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	16	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (100)	95 (94)	95 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	18	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (100)	95 (100)	95 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	12	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	6	9
	Girls	9	9	11
	Total	14	15	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66.5 (100)	71.5 (70)	95 (90)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	10	9	11
	Total	16	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (90)	71.5 (90)	86 (100)
	National	67 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	96
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	24.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	4

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998
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	£
Total income	200,428
Total expenditure	192,483
Expenditure per pupil	1719
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,807
Balance carried forward to next year	24,752

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	104
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	41	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	58	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	50	4	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	63	13	4	0
The teaching is good.	52	39	9	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	48	28	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	41	20	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	47	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	49	20	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	38	11	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	50	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	10	30	43	18	0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. Children are admitted to the reception class, which also includes Year 1 pupils, at the beginning of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were four children under five and four who had recently become five. Induction arrangements are well organised and attendance is initially on a part-time basis. The classroom for children under five is of average size. Overall, the curriculum for the under fives, provides a secure foundation for the statutory curriculum. The teacher and teaching assistants plan effectively together and provide a broad range of activities. However, current planning does not sufficiently reflect the nationally agreed areas of learning and desirable learning outcomes for children under five. As a consequence, there are insufficient planned opportunities provided for the youngest children to learn through a programme of structured play. No reference was made to the provision for children under five in the last inspection report.

Teaching

56. The teaching of children under five is sound. The teacher has attended appropriate training and the school has invested in specific support, for teaching this age group, from the local authority. Satisfactory use is made of the available space and resources are well prepared. Teaching assistants are well briefed and used, and make useful contributions to the on-going assessments of individual children. The classroom routines are well established and provide stability for the children and also ensure time is well used. Staff understand the needs of young children and the tasks which are set usually provide sufficient challenge. However, although planning is satisfactory, overall, it should be more closely linked to the nationally agreed areas of learning for children of this age and provide greater opportunities for children to make choices and decisions and show initiative in their learning.

Personal and social development

57. Most children enter school having had pre-school experience at local nurseries. The school makes mainly good provision for their personal and social development. The children settle well into classroom routines, which they follow confidently. The adults in the reception class have good relationships with the children. They listen to them, praise them and show patience and understanding and consequently, give the children confidence in their learning. Most children listen attentively to adults, when required to do so, and all respond particularly well to activities which offer them choice. However, provision for this aspect of their personal development requires improvement. Children relate very well to each other and to adults, they work co-operatively, share resources sensibly and willingly take turns. They know what is expected of them and understand the difference between right and wrong. Their behaviour is good whether they are working in a group or as a whole class; and they take good care of their environment and equipment.

Language and literacy

58. On entry to the reception class, the children's early literacy skills are a little higher than average. The children listen carefully and enjoy engaging in conversation, for example when discussing a sea scene. Most children have an extensive vocabulary and good general knowledge, mentioning the Titanic, a mermaid and treasure. They also confidently ask questions and are eager to answer questions asked by others. The children can recognise and write their own name and most

can form letters correctly and read the alphabet. They make good progress when word processing their writing and have produced some appealing little books about animal noises. They make sound progress in learning to read, understand the relationship between letter shapes and sounds and can identify initial sounds. They thoroughly enjoy listening to stories and are eager to discuss the events and the pictures. They are well prepared for the more formal learning when they enter Key Stage 1 and are already beginning to understand the key skills of literacy.

Mathematics

59. The majority of children make sound progress in developing their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding. By the time they are five, their attainment is a little above that expected for their age. They are beginning to understand capacity and measures through exploring sand, and occasionally water; and make sound progress in using mathematical language. They make satisfactory progress in understanding numbers through sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing and counting using either everyday objects or mathematical resources such as 'compare bears'. Most children recognise the numerals 1 to 9 and can use the number names, in order, in familiar contexts. They effectively consolidate this knowledge through learning number rhymes and songs and when playing counting games. The quality of teaching in mathematics is sound and an adequate range of practical activities is provided to promote children's mathematical development. However, children's learning would benefit from more regular access to water play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. In this area of learning, children make sound progress and, at the age of five, most attain the standard expected. They make satisfactory progress in developing an understanding of the wider world; and learn to use simple geographical terms through visits made around the school, its grounds and to the local church. They are encouraged to make observations that enable them to develop an understanding of change, for example, in the weather and the seasons or in the way people live now compared with the past. Children use computers with increasing confidence and make sound progress in developing information technology skills. They learn to control a floor robot, create musical sounds and develop simple word processing skills. Children make sound progress when learning to identify a range of different living things. They make satisfactory gains when learning to use scissors and glue, and demonstrate sound skills when making models from recycled materials.

Creative

61. Children make sound progress when drawing from direct observation, and achieve satisfactory standards when making simple pots and sculptures using plasticine. Their standards in painting are broadly satisfactory, but they require more regular opportunities to choose to paint. Children are keen to join in the simple songs included in their music broadcasts, and have learned a satisfactory range of songs by heart.

Physical development

62. Children handle pencils, scissors, paint brushes and small objects with increasing control and their manipulative skills meet the desirable outcomes by the time they are five. It is not possible to make a judgement about children's skills of climbing or balancing as these aspects of their physical development are catered for only through physical education lessons in the school hall and were not observed during

the inspection. There is no access to a secure outside area and, as a consequence, children do not have regular opportunities to play with large toys and equipment, in order to develop their physical skills.

ENGLISH

63. Most pupils entering Key Stage 1 demonstrate standards which are a little above average for their age in speaking and listening and in early literacy skills
64. In the 1999 SATs, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils in the school, who reached the expected standards for reading was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils who exceeded these standards was well above the national average. However, results are below average when compared with the performance of pupils from similar schools. Results in writing show that a higher than average percentage of pupils reached and exceeded the expected standards. These results are close to the average when compared with those achieved by pupils from similar schools. Inspection findings broadly reflect these standards. Overall, pupils attain standards which are higher than average in reading and writing.
65. The present Year 6 pupils' performance was above average in both reading and writing in 1996, when they took the SATs at the end of Key Stage 1, and inspection findings broadly reflect these results in their present standards in English which are above average. Since 1996, Key Stage 1 results have varied considerably. In 1997, results dropped significantly, reflecting the very small cohort of pupils in that year. Since then, they have improved steadily each year. Over the four years, the performance of girls has been above average in reading and well above average in writing. The performance of boys has been average in reading and above average in writing. When the school was last inspected, standards in English were found to be above average in both key stages, and the school has generally sustained these standards.
66. At the end of Key Stage 2, the performance of pupils in English in the 1999 SATs tests was above the national average, but below average in comparison with similar schools. A lower than average percentage of pupils reached the expected standards, but the percentage of pupils exceeding these standards was above the national average. Over the last four years, the performance of boys and girls, in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2, has been well above the national average. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their learning and achieve standards commensurate with their abilities. The pupils who have English as an additional language are fluent English speakers and require no specific provision. However, in Key Stage 2, the significant minority of talented and more able pupils is not achieving as well as they should in lessons. Overall, most pupils who fall into this category attain high standards in reading, but their standards in writing lag behind their reading and in this aspect of English they are generally underachieving.
67. Pupils in Key Stage 1, speak well and fluently and most listen attentively to their teachers and to each other. They usually answer question in full sentences and they confidently use their extensive vocabulary. During plenary sessions, they present their work enthusiastically, demonstrating a good understanding of audience. Throughout the key stage, pupils develop a firm foundation in initial literacy. Most Year 2 pupils have legible, joined handwriting and use simple punctuation correctly. Brighter pupils write using well-structured sentences and they confidently use their wide vocabulary. Most pupils can spell simple and commonly

used words correctly. A higher than average proportion of pupils read fluently and confidently. Most pupils can recall the events of stories they hear or read and their descriptions of the characters shows good insights into the hidden meanings in stories. Brighter pupils are beginning to predict what might happen next, as they read. All pupils enjoy reading and use an appropriate range of strategies to help them read. However, their knowledge of authors is generally poor and their strategies for choosing both fiction and non-fiction books and their library skills, are underdeveloped.

68. Across Key Stage 2, pupils speak fluently and clearly, using Standard English when presenting work or answering questions, adapting their language to match the different circumstances. Most pupils listen well, but a small minority of pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class does not always pay attention when others are speaking. At the end of Key Stage 2, an above average proportion of pupils attains high standards in reading. In Year 6, pupils' knowledge of authors is generally good, reflecting their enthusiasm for the books they encounter in the literacy hour. They enjoy talking about the books they have read and about their favourite authors, often referring to books their teacher has recommended. They know how to retrieve information from reference books. However, only the brighter pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5 can name more than one or two authors, or talk about their preferences. This suggests that most pupils do not talk enough in lessons about the books they read. Throughout the key stage, most pupils make steady progress in developing their writing skills in the literacy hour lessons. The presentation of their work is satisfactory, but often pupils make spelling errors that indicate they have not understood spelling rules. The writing of brighter pupils often shows they are influenced by the styles of writing they read; and also what they have been taught about language. However, the majority of pupils does not always transfer the skills learned in lessons to their own writing. They are unsure of the purpose of drafting and editing work, confusing this with planning. The highest attaining pupils in Year 6 display a mature grasp of structure and style, experimenting with ideas from their reading. Overall, most pupils are not writing for a wide enough range of purposes and have too little experience of extended writing. This was also mentioned in the last report and has not been adequately addressed. As a consequence, there are weaknesses in the grammatical structure and general organisation of pupils' work.
69. Pupils, in both key stages, show an interest in the literacy hour and the vast majority is eager to participate in the question and answer sessions. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in lessons. However, a small minority of pupils in the Years 5 and 6 class does not have positive attitudes to work and occasionally their behaviour distracts others and is unsatisfactory. Throughout the school, pupils take pride in presenting their work well. They collaborate well when given the opportunity. They have very positive attitudes to reading and most enjoy opportunities to speak to the class or a group. When given opportunities, the pupils show they can work independently and purposefully in groups, whether an adult is with them or they are on their own.
70. The quality of teaching is sound across both key stages, with some good teaching in Years 3 and 4. The literacy hour has been successfully introduced and, in both key stages, medium term planning based on a published scheme provides a satisfactory framework to support teachers' lesson plans. In teachers' daily and weekly plans, learning objectives are clearly identified. Resources are always well prepared. The new 'Additional Literacy Support ' materials are being effectively used with SEN and lower attaining pupils in some lessons. Learning support assistants are well briefed and provide good support when working with groups of pupils. In the best lessons, the teachers are enthusiastic and their lively

presentations are infectious. As a result, pupils in these lessons are fully engaged and enjoying learning. The introductory sessions are used well, to revise learning that has gone before and to establish the main teaching points. When the balance between pupil and the adult talking is carefully structured in favour of the pupils, their contributions are thoughtful and pertinent. Some teachers are particularly skilled at accepting pupils' suggestions and, in these lessons, pupils are more willing to make suggestions. Other strengths include skilful questioning which enables teachers to make spontaneous assessments of what pupils have learned. There are examples of good use being made of pupils' work, often in the plenary sessions, to demonstrate and reinforce the main teaching points.

71. The main weakness identified in teaching, lies in the tasks planned for pupils in the literacy hour. Too often, these are aimed to meet the learning needs of the middle range of pupils and take insufficient account of the age and ability range in these mixed age classes. Learning support assistants give extra help to SEN pupils and, for this group, suitably differentiated work is often provided. However, brighter and higher attaining pupils are expected to complete the work more quickly or to do more of it, when the task itself is often insufficiently challenging to meet their needs. As a consequence, this group often achieves work of a lower standard than they are capable. In a small minority of lessons, some of these pupils become bored and restless. In some lessons, teachers ask good questions but do not allow sufficient time for pupils to answer fully. In others, a range of suggestions from pupils is sought, and the teacher decides which is the best, without either telling the pupils why, or engaging them in deciding. This lack of decision making and full engagement in their own learning is a feature to some extent in most English lessons. As a result, opportunities are sometimes lost for pupils to consolidate and to build on their existing knowledge and understanding. Overall, teachers need to be more vigilant about ensuring that pupils use the skills they have learned in the literacy hour lessons across the curriculum. This particularly requires reinforcement in writing. The extended writing sessions, recently introduced, should be encouraging pupils to understand the purposes of planning, drafting and editing writing, in order to improve the grammatical structure and general organisation of their work.
72. The co-ordinator is well qualified to lead English. She has worked successfully with the headteacher and staff to introduce the implementation of the literacy strategy and has undertaken some monitoring of teaching, when the literacy hour was first introduced. She has supported teachers in deciding the levels of pupils' writing. The school is aware that monitoring of the subject currently lacks rigour and should be improved. However, spelling and punctuation have rightly been identified as areas needing further attention. Summative assessment procedures are well developed through the careful analysis of the end of key stage SATs and the optional SATs in Years 3, 4 and 5. From this analysis targets are set for the expected levels to be achieved by each pupil. The use of day to day assessment to plan appropriately challenging work for pupils is less well developed. Resources are satisfactory. A commercially produced scheme has been carefully selected for the literacy hour and there is a sound range of fiction. Occasionally, extra copies of books used in the literacy hour are made available for pupils to read. This is popular with pupils who indicated during the inspection that they would like to have copies of more of these books. Space in the school is scarce and the library is often in use for group work. This has an impact on younger pupils' library skills. Computers are used to support English in some lessons, although there is scope for more use to be made, particularly for composing directly on to the screen.

MATHEMATICS

73. On entry to Key Stage 1, the attainment of most pupils in mathematics is a little above average. The results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 SATs indicate that the vast majority of pupils reached the standard expected and that the proportion of pupils exceeding this level was close to the national average. Overall, these results were broadly in line with the national average but below those achieved by pupils in similar schools.
74. Inspection findings indicate that all Key Stage 1 pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in the key learning objectives for this age group. They have a secure understanding of numbers and calculations and satisfactorily apply this knowledge to solve problems. Pupils also make sound progress, across the key stage, in developing their understanding of measures, shape and space. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils reach the nationally expected standard in mathematics and a significant minority achieve higher standards.
75. In the 1999 Key Stage 2 SATs, the percentage of pupils achieving the standard expected was close to the national average but the proportion exceeding this level was above average. Overall, these results were above the national average and in line with those achieved by pupils in similar schools. The performance of pupils from 1996 to 1999 shows they have consistently achieved standards higher than the national average, and achieved very high standards in 1997. Since then, standards have fallen a little, while the national trend has risen. However, the school's cohorts are small each year, accounting for the variations. Inspection findings reflect the 1999 results. At the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils achieve the nationally expected standard and a significant minority demonstrate higher attainment. These findings show that the school has sustained pupil's standards in mathematics since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be above the national average in both key stages. They make mainly satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in the key learning objectives for Key Stage 2. Good progress in learning is more evident in the set taught by the mathematics co-ordinator. At the end of the key stage, most pupils have a sound understanding of the number system and of measures, shape and space and can handle and interpret data. They make satisfactory progress in learning to apply these mathematical skills to solve problems. However, more able pupils in both key stages mark time in some lessons and, overall, they make just adequate progress in their learning.
76. Throughout the school, pupils show an interest in the subject and they respond particularly well when encouraged to make regular contributions to lessons. The majority take a pride in their work and it is usually well presented. Behaviour in mathematics lessons is good. However, when the pace of the lesson is slow a small minority of pupils find it difficult to listen attentively and to sustain their concentration. In some lessons, pupils' have limited opportunities to demonstrate initiative or to take responsibility for organising their work.
77. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, teaching is mainly sound but pupils in the co-ordinators set benefit from very good teaching. Throughout the school, teachers plan conscientiously using formats based on the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Learning objectives are clearly defined and these are appropriately shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons. Teachers make effective use of assessment to inform their planning and tasks are mainly well matched to pupils' capabilities. Resources are well prepared and appropriate, and instructions and teaching points are clearly explained. Satisfactory use is made of homework to support pupils' learning in school.

78. All teachers have implemented the recommended three stage numeracy lesson which includes an introduction consisting of a variety of short oral and mental activities. In the more effective lessons, this is well paced and teachers use skilful, differentiated questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. Lessons also include a plenary session, although there is some variation in the effective use of this time to summarise key ideas and vocabulary. In less effective lessons, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to make decisions, to demonstrate, or to explain their thinking. Time is not always used efficiently in these lessons and more able pupils in particular are insufficiently challenged. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they should.
79. The subject is effectively co-ordinated by the headteacher who has attended appropriate training, including that for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. She has conducted a very thorough audit of mathematics in order to establish priorities for development and maintains a good overview of the subject. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning; and has observed the introductory mental activities of the numeracy hour in both key stages, and provided valuable feedback for teachers. Test results are scrutinised to identify weaknesses in pupils' learning and the progress which they are making across the school is carefully monitored. Appropriate staff training for the numeracy strategy has taken place and plans are being made for teachers to visit other classrooms to observe good practice. Parents have been kept well informed about the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.
80. The school is aware that the current policy for mathematics requires review following the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and that planning will need to be carefully monitored and adjusted as the strategy is progressively implemented. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and are being improved to meet the demands of the numeracy strategy. An audit of equipment has been carried out and additional funding, some provided by the parents association, has appropriately been allocated to purchase new resources.

SCIENCE

81. On entry to the school, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils are a little above average. The results of the 1999 statutory teacher assessments, at the end of Key Stage 1, were above the national average and above average when compared to the results achieved by schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The results of the 1999 statutory tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, were above the national average and in line with the results achieved by similar schools. The school has maintained broadly similar results in the science tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, since 1996, but the trend is below that for schools nationally.
82. Inspection findings confirm that standards are above average at the end of both key stages, as they were in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1994. A high proportion of pupils reach the nationally expected standard in Year 2 and Year 6, and a significant minority do better. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning in the subject. However, the achievements of more able pupils are only just adequate, overall, and they mark time in some lessons when their work is too easy and their teachers' expectations are too low.
83. In Year 1, pupils know that sound comes from a variety of sources and can name

some of those sources. They make satisfactory progress when making simple telephones, using string and paper cups, and some begin to understand that sound is carried by vibration. In Year 2, pupils make sensible predictions about the outcomes of simple experiments, for example, whether cress seeds will grow well in light and dark conditions. They can create simple electrical circuits; and know that some objects allow light to pass through them while others do not. They are able to identify a range of common materials and know about some of their properties. A good proportion of Year 2 pupils has a secure understanding that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes. In Years 3 and 4, pupils understand the basic functions of the roots, stems and leaves of plants, and most make sound progress when carrying out experiments to discover whether plant growth is affected by the amount of water provided. Most achieve well when learning that feeding relationships exist between plants and animals in a habitat, and are able to describe those relationships using food chains and terms such as predator and prey. In Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrate a satisfactory grasp of the principle of fair testing. However, most pupils are not able to distinguish, adequately, between a description and an evaluation of the results of their investigations. Pupils can name the main organs of plants, and make sound progress when learning about their functions. They can describe differences between the properties of different materials, and explain how these differences are used to classify substances into solids, liquids and gases. In the mixed age classes of Year 3 and 4 pupils and of Year 5 and 6 pupils, there is usually little difference in the tasks set across the two year age range, and this sometimes inhibits the progress of the more advanced learners. In general, the younger age group make better progress than the older pupils in these classes; and more able pupils sometimes require more difficult work in order to achieve well. Across the school, pupils' progress in solving problems in science is inhibited by a lack of opportunities for them to make decisions about their work.

84. In both key stages, pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. In the lessons observed, they behaved well and persevered with their tasks. Relationships between pupils are constructive, and they work together co-operatively.
85. There was only the opportunity to observe one science lesson in each key stage during the inspection, so it is not possible to make a firm judgement about the overall quality of teaching in the subject. However, evidence from the lessons seen, analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' completed work, suggests that teaching is broadly satisfactory in the subject. In the lessons observed, teachers explained tasks clearly and organised their lessons efficiently. They used sound questioning skills to probe pupils' understanding and demonstrated secure subject knowledge, introducing pupils to appropriate scientific terms. The weaknesses present in the lessons observed are also evident in teachers' planning, across the school, and in examples of pupils' completed work. These are weaknesses in the assessment of the needs and capabilities of more able pupils, and the tendency to provide pupils with ready answers when they would benefit from more opportunities to discuss, hypothesise and test their own ideas.
86. There is a satisfactory science policy and the school has recently introduced the good scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The science co-ordinator recognises that procedures for monitoring the subject require further development, including more rigorous analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' work samples to check that work is consistently matched to the needs of all pupils. Science resources are well organised, and are satisfactory.

ART

87. Across the school, pupils make generally sound, though sometimes uneven, progress in their learning in the subject; and their standards are mainly satisfactory for their ages. When compared with the results of the last inspection, current standards are similar in Key Stage 1, but a little lower in Key Stage 2.
88. In Year 1, pupils make sound progress when learning to create simple prints, and demonstrate satisfactory standards in their bold paintings. Their observational drawings of plants are a little above average, and they make sound progress when creating collage pictures. In Year 2, pupils make sound progress when drawing and painting bicycles from direct observation, and achieve standards which are mainly satisfactory, but sometimes good, for their ages.
89. In Years 3 and 4, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding about art by studying different interpretations of Jesus, as represented by artists from a range of different cultures. Pupils enjoy this work, and it enables them to make sound progress in developing their awareness of the work of artists. Their copies of the artists' pictures demonstrate mainly satisfactory painting skills, and good work is achieved by some pupils who create vibrant copies of African art. Pupils have also made careful copies of a primitive sculpture showing the crucifixion, using clay. While this copied work enables pupils to develop their technical skills, it provides little opportunity for them to use their creative talents. Their overall progress would be improved if they were encouraged to reflect elements of the work of the artists in their own work, rather than to make direct copies. When studying the work of William Morris, for example, Year 3 and 4 pupils are making very limited progress in their learning when they colour in reproductions of his wallpaper designs, on worksheets. They achieve satisfactory standards when drawing self-portraits and achieve well when using clay to create masks. In Years 5 and 6, pupils make satisfactory progress when painting self-portraits, and their observational drawings and print making are satisfactory for their ages.
90. From discussions with pupils and observation in lessons, it is clear that pupils have positive attitudes and enjoy art. In the lessons seen, their behaviour was good and they concentrated and persevered with their tasks. Relationships with pupils are constructive, and they share resources amicably.
91. Overall, the quality of art teaching is satisfactory, across the school. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, prepare resources carefully and provide pupils with opportunities to use a range of mediums. The school encourages artists to help in the school and the work pupils achieved last year, when working with a visiting potter, is of a high standard. Teachers' planning is mainly satisfactory for individual lessons, but there is a lack of long term planning to ensure that pupils' key skills are progressively developed in the subject. This weakness results in pupils making uneven progress, for example, in the development of their colour mixing skills, as they move through the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

92. Overall, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in design and technology, and most achieve standards which are satisfactory for their ages. However, the making skills of Year 6 pupils require improvement. Current standards are broadly similar to those found in the last inspection.
93. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress when learning to use scissors and a variety of methods for joining paper and card. They demonstrate sound

achievement when creating cardboard teddy bears which incorporate simple methods to allow them to stand. In Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress when using construction kits to make models; and demonstrate sound standards when making vehicles with simple axles, using recycled materials and doweling. They have basic sewing skills, and make sound progress when designing and making new coats for Joseph.

94. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make satisfactory designs for photograph holders, list the equipment they will need and carry out sensible evaluations of their completed work. The frames, which incorporate simple stands, demonstrate making skills which are broadly average. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have designed and made musical instruments, using recycled materials. Their designs demonstrate sound creative ideas, but often make insufficient reference to the making process, particularly to solve problems in joining materials. The completed instruments demonstrate broadly satisfactory standards for Year 5 pupils, but show making skills which are a little below average for older pupils.
95. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject, and this is evident from discussions with pupils and from lesson observations. In the lessons seen, in Key Stage 1, pupils were enthusiastic, persevered with their work and behaved well.
96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, prepare resources carefully and organise their lessons efficiently. Classroom assistants and parent helpers are well briefed and provide valuable support. No design and technology lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, so it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the overall quality of teaching in the subject. However, evidence suggests that expectations need to be raised for the potential achievements of the oldest pupils. Overall, the quality of teachers' planning is satisfactory in both key stages, and the school is making sound use of the good scheme of work, provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

GEOGRAPHY

97. As a result of timetabling arrangements, no geography lessons were observed during the inspection. Judgements are made on evidence gathered from teachers' planning, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and from discussions with staff and pupils.
98. The progressive development of pupils' geographical skills is uneven across the school and is mainly unsatisfactory. This is due to insufficient opportunities for them to ask and answer geographical questions, to analyse evidence, and to communicate their conclusions, through the study of a suitable range of places and through fieldwork. Across the school, the standards achieved by the majority of pupils are low. This is in contrast to the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be better in both key stages.
99. In Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in extending their knowledge of the school grounds and immediate area. They make simple maps and undertake some geographical observations, for example, when visiting the local church. In Year 2, pupils increase their general knowledge of the local area, Great Britain and the wider world through topics such as 'festivals' and 'journeys' but make insufficient progress in developing enquiry skills, and in their learning about the geographical features of their locality.
100. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make mainly unsatisfactory progress in their learning and in acquiring geographical skills. Pupils increase their understanding of

environmental issues through work undertaken in the school grounds in Years 3 and 4 and when studying the world's rain forests in Years 5 and 6. Older pupils also make some gains in extending their knowledge and understanding of the weather and rivers. However, insufficient work undertaken in this key stage has a clear geographical focus and pupils have few opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of their own region and of contrasting localities. In addition, there is some evidence that the same tasks are set for pupils from different year groups who are in the same class. As a consequence, the work for the older and, in particular, more able pupils is sometimes too easy.

101. It is not possible to make a judgement about pupils' attitudes and behaviour or the quality of teaching in this subject. Across the school, however, weaknesses in long and medium term planning mean that the progressive development of pupils' geographical enquiry skills is insecure. The geographical focus in topic work is often not well defined and, although some use is made of the local area, it is currently underused to support the study of geographical features in the landscape. The school has appropriately begun to incorporate elements of the helpful scheme of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, but this has yet to have a significant impact on planning. Evidence suggests that teachers would benefit from in-service training to increase their confidence and knowledge in the subject.
102. The co-ordinator has attended appropriate training and recognises the need to improve progression in the development of pupils' geographical skills across the school. The monitoring of standards in the subject is not well established. Resources for geography are barely adequate and should be audited and improved.

HISTORY

103. As a result of timetabling arrangements, only one history lesson was observed during the inspection. Evidence was gathered from teachers' planning, from a scrutiny of pupils' work and from discussions with teachers and pupils. In both key stages, pupils have maintained the satisfactory standards they reached when the school was last inspected.
104. In Key Stage 1, pupils make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress in their learning when exploring simple differences between the past and the present. In Year 1, for example, they bring to school pictures of favourite childhood toys from the past, drawn by adults at home, and compare these with modern toys. Pupils can also use words relating to the passage of time when describing the features and ages of family teddy bears. Across the key stage, pupils develop a sound understanding of how things have changed and are beginning to develop a sense of chronology. In Year 2, they satisfactorily extend their knowledge and understanding of important historical events, for example, the Great Fire of London; and of famous people such as Samuel Pepys, Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale.
105. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress through their studies of various periods of history. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory gains in their learning through their studies of, for example, Roman Britain and life in Victorian times. As they progress across the key stage, they are increasing their knowledge of the similarities and differences in various periods of history; and their understanding of people and of change. In Years 5 and 6, pupils achieve broadly satisfactory standards when studying local history and

make sound progress in their learning through their studies of the Tudors.

106. Evidence from discussions with pupils indicates that they have positive attitudes to the subject and that they enjoy history lessons.
107. Insufficient teaching of history was observed to make a judgement about the quality teaching in this subject. Teachers plan conscientiously and evidence suggests that they have secure, and sometimes good, subject knowledge. Visits are appropriately arranged, for example, to the Mary Rose Exhibition; and role play is used effectively to improve pupils' understanding of past events such as a Tudor banquet. Teachers also make effective use of books borrowed from the local authority loan service, of artefacts borrowed from the Reading Museum and of CD Roms to enable pupils to access historical information. However, there is some evidence of the same tasks being set for pupils from different year groups who are in the same class. As a consequence, the work for the older and, in particular, more able pupils is sometimes too easy.
108. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject and has appropriately encouraged the staff to improve planning for progression in pupils' learning by incorporating guidance published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The monitoring of standards in the subject is, however, not well established. Resources for history are satisfactory.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Pupils in both key stages make mainly sound, but sometimes good, progress in information technology. The majority demonstrate keyboard and computer mouse skills which are commensurate with their ages; and a minority, who often have access to a computer at home, have above average knowledge and skills. At the end of both key stages, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with that expected, apart from in control technology in Key Stage 2, where standards are low. A significant minority of pupils, in both key stages, achieve standards which are a little above average. Inspection findings are broadly similar to those identified in the last OFSTED report.
110. In Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils make sound progress in developing word processing skills when writing captions for their books about the sounds which animals make. In control technology, their progress is good as they work, with the support of a well informed parent, to program the school's floor robot. Their achievements in this strand of information technology are a little above those expected for their age. A group of Year 2 pupils also work with this parent during the literacy hour. They make satisfactory progress in developing editing skills while completing the story of 'Goldilocks'; and others in the class create an attractive invitation for Cinderella, as part of their work on traditional tales. Pupils in Year 2 also achieve sound standards in handling data. They collect and enter information, for example, about favourite colours, fruits, sports and sandwiches and print pictograms and bar charts to illustrate their findings.
111. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 effectively use a digital camera during their visit to Aldermaston Court. They make sound progress in their learning as they record the important features of their visit through photographs, and add brief captions using a word processing program. Pupils in this class make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of 'E-mail' when they learn to send messages to the home of a parent in preparation for making contact with pupils in a school in another area of England. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6, collect

data for the school's 2000 Bulb Project and achieve high standards when processing this information and printing bar charts, pie charts and line graphs to illustrate the quantity, flowering period, colour, height and cost of the bulbs. They also competently use the digital camera to make a record of the project; and enhance their word processed accounts by using attractive coloured fonts. Pupils in both key stages achieved high standards when taking part in a Millennium Internet Project organised by a national supermarket chain, and designed to create the world's biggest website for schools.

112. Insufficient teaching of information technology took place during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, the teachers of Years 1/2 and of Years 5/6, made good use of short whole class sessions to consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of specific programs before giving them an opportunity to work on these in pairs. The school makes very effective use of a volunteer parent, who has good information technology skills, and she provides good support for pupils in both key stages. Teachers have benefited from school based training organised by the co-ordinator and from local authority training on using the Internet.
113. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about the development of the subject. She provides sound support for teachers' planning and has promoted the use of a helpful scheme of work, published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, to improve progression in the development of pupils' information technology skills across the school. This has yet to be fully implemented and, as a consequence, is currently not reflected in the activities of all classes. The co-ordinator is beginning to collect samples of pupils' work from each key stage and, when organised and annotated, these will provide valuable evidence of pupils' achievements in each year group. Resources have been improved, mainly by using funding obtained through the National Grid for Learning, and are satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to acquire appropriate equipment to enable Key Stage 2 pupils to make better progress in control technology.

MUSIC

114. Pupils make sound progress overall in music, across the school, and achieve standards which are mainly satisfactory for their ages. Current standards are broadly similar to those found when the school was last inspected.
115. Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress when creating and playing their own musical instruments, made from recycled materials. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate average skills when learning to recognise simple rhythms, and to repeat them by clapping and using untuned percussion instruments. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently benefiting from specialist music teaching, provided as a pilot project by the Berkshire Young Musicians' Trust on a weekly basis. They make good progress in these lessons, as a result of effective teaching, and every pupil is able to learn basic skills in playing stringed instruments. Pupils also make good progress in rhythm work in these lessons, and when singing simple rounds. In Years 5 and 6, pupils demonstrate satisfactory listening and appraising skills, and their knowledge about notation is broadly average. Across the school, pupils' singing is mainly satisfactory for their ages, but Year 3 and 4 pupils sometimes achieve well when taught by visiting specialists.
116. Overall, pupils' attitudes to music are positive, and they generally concentrate and persevere well in lessons. Year 3 and 4 pupils are very strongly motivated by the

teaching they receive from the members of the Berkshire Young Musicians' Trust, and leave these lessons bubbling with enthusiasm.

117. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory in music. Most class teachers are not strongly confident when teaching the subject, but all make sensible use of radio, and sometimes television, broadcasts to support their work. Lessons are usually well organised, and resources are prepared carefully. While all teachers give encouragement and praise, they sometimes need to give more specific instruction to help pupils to improve. The visiting music teachers, who are working with the whole Year 3 and 4 class for two terms in this academic year, have very good subject knowledge, ensure that lessons move at a good pace and provide expert tuition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. During the inspection, gymnastics, swimming and games skills were observed. Overall, in both key stages, pupils have maintained the sound progress and average standards reported in the last OFSTED inspection. However, the standards pupils achieve in swimming are above average. At the end of Key Stage 2, all pupils achieve or exceed swimming the required 25 metres.
119. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make sound progress and attain average standards in gymnastics. Year 2 pupils co-operate well and are mindful of safety when moving apparatus. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 experiment with different ways of distributing their weight and some are very inventive when developing different ways of travelling across the floor. They have very positive attitudes, try hard to improve their performance and work well when required to work in pairs. In Years 5 and 6, girls make good progress and achieve good standards in refining their football skills of dribbling and passing. They work well together and they maintain positive attitudes to football. They co-operate well and helpfully collect and distribute resources. The small number of boys in Years 5 and 6 makes unsatisfactory progress in developing their football skills. They do not co-operate well, and a significant minority does not follow instructions. In swimming lessons, pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5 concentrate well when listening to instructions and follow them conscientiously. As a consequence of their very focused concentration, they make good progress. Most pupils are developing correct arm and leg movements and about a quarter of pupils in this group can swim confidently and breathe correctly, using crawl, breast stroke and back stroke. The very small proportion of the younger beginner pupils can all submerge and swim a little using water aids.
120. The quality of teaching is sound overall, in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit from good swimming instruction. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and explain clearly what they expect pupils to do. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Due attention is given to safety and lessons start with a brisk warm up. Teachers use encouragement and praise well. There are examples of good use being made of demonstration where pupils are encouraged to evaluate the performance of others. However, there is scope for this strategy to be more widely used in lessons. The school needs establish management strategies for the incidents of poor behaviour from some Years 5 and 6 boys, to ensure that their progress, and that of others, is not affected.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. As a result of time-tabling arrangements, there was insufficient evidence to make a

judgement about the standards in religious education in Key Stage 1

122. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve the standards required by the locally agreed syllabus. When compared with results of the last inspection, current standards in Key Stage 2 are a little lower. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are just beginning to learn about Judaism and are able to make the connections between their knowledge of Old Testament stories and the Jewish faith. Pupils have previously completed a topic studying Jesus through Art. From the work displayed and discussions with pupils, evidence shows this work was enjoyed by pupils and has strongly promoted their understanding of the different ways Christianity can be interpreted. By the end of the key stage, pupils have acquired an understanding of the principle religions represented in Britain. When studying the principles of Sikhism, pupils are able to make comparisons between these and the Ten Commandments. They make thoughtful contributions during class discussions. For example, some pupils think that while it is important to have rules and principles, these are often hard to abide by. To follow all principles would lead to perfection, says one pupil and no one is perfect.
123. Overall, pupils respond well and show a keen interest in religious education. They show empathy for others, respect those whose beliefs differ from their own and value the spiritual aspects of religion. Throughout the key stage, pupils are eager to ask and answer questions. However, some of the older pupils are less forthcoming when asked to put their thoughts in writing. While the majority of pupils diligently set about their tasks, demonstrating thoughtful and interesting ideas, other pupils who contribute well during discussions are unwilling to commit their thoughts to paper and waste time.
124. The teaching of religious education is mainly sound, with good teaching in the co-ordinator's lessons in Years 3 and 4. Teachers demonstrate satisfactory subject knowledge and present interesting, well prepared lessons. They ask searching questions which enable pupils to think and make connections between the ideas and practices of religions and circumstances in their own lives. They follow the agreed syllabus and plan well, ensuring that the skills and processes are presented to reflect respect and understanding. More attention needs to be given to the management of the behaviour of a small minority of pupils in Years 5 and 6.
125. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and has undertaken a number of useful courses. Since the last inspection, when it was judged that insufficient use was made of the works of artists and musicians to widen pupils' understanding of spiritual and cultural values, the school has responded very positively. The co-ordinator has introduced a programme of work to include art, music and dance, and the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision of suitable books for religious education has been improved but the school has a limited range of artefacts. However, to compensate for this, the school makes good use of the LEA lending library and museum service. Occasional visitors come to talk to pupils about their faiths and this, together with visits to the local church, helps to bring the subject alive to pupils. Overall, however, such events happen very infrequently and this is an aspect of the subject which the school recognises is underdeveloped.