

INSPECTION REPORT

**OAKLEY C OF E COMBINED PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Oakley, Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110448

Headteacher: Mrs Irene Dixon

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Edwards
13205

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th May 2000

Inspection number: 186004

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Worminghall Road Oakley Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP18 9QY
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Culmer
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Edwards	Registered inspector	Science Information technology Religious education	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs C Murray-Watson	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr H Protherough	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Miss J Elsley	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Under fives	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakley Voluntary controlled Church of England Combined Primary School is a small combined school in the county of Buckinghamshire with 105 pupils of predominantly white ethnicity on roll. It serves the village of Oakley and the surrounding area. The pupils come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. None of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is well below the national average. The profile of pupils' attainment when they start school varies from year to year. The school's baseline shows that the attainment of the current reception year is broadly average. All pupils may start school part-time in the term prior to that in which their fifth birthday occurs. At the time of the inspection there were 16 pupils in the reception class of whom 3 were still aged under-five. About one fifth of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs and this is below the national average. However the percentage of pupils with statements is above. Pupils are taught in four classes with two age ranges in each.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school because it has a strong headteacher with a clear vision for its future improvement and a strong commitment for raising standards and improving the quality of education. She receives effective support from her staff and governing body. The school provides a good quality of education, teaching is good overall and standards are secure. The leadership has brought about some significant improvements over a short period of time, and although its income per pupil is higher than usual the school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher and governing body are working well together with increasing effectiveness. Their school development plan sets out clearly a shared vision for future improvements and is a very useful working document.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, provide a good level of challenge and build systematically upon what the pupils have learnt previously. As a result the vast majority of pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons.
- By the end of their reception year, pupils are making good progress in most aspects of their learning. By the age of seven, pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are above the national average. Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 2 and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and offers a good range of interesting activities for all the pupils.
- Good assessment procedures support teachers and pupils, including those with special educational needs, in setting relevant and challenging targets which have a positive effect on improving standards.
- Arrangements for the induction of newly qualified teachers is a strength of the school and result in very good teaching in the Year 5/6 class, particularly in literacy, numeracy and science.

What could be improved

- Arrangements for the performance management of teachers.
- Arrangements for the setting and marking of homework, its use and the information given to parents about provision.
- Extension of the school day to meet the recommended Department for Education and Employment minimum teaching time in Key Stage 2.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected four years ago. It has since been in a state of flux with significant changes in headship until the appointment of the present headteacher in September 1998. Under the present leadership, some significant improvements have taken place over a short period of time. The headteacher, governing body and staff have made concerted and effective efforts to improve the quality of education provided, by addressing conscientiously the previous report. For example, standards have been improving steadily over the past four years, in line with the national trend. Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now fully in place addressing several issues highlighted in the last report. The information technology curriculum has benefited from considerable investment in new equipment and staff training. The teachers now make far more effective use of the school's computers with resulting improvement in pupils' standards.

Standards have risen because the teaching has improved. At the last inspection the teaching was generally satisfactory. Most of the teaching seen during the current inspection was good and often very good. This is partly as a result of the more effective use by the teachers of the assessment of the pupils' work. The headteacher has introduced a comprehensive system for monitoring pupils' achievements, a good range of data is collected for each child and used effectively in setting subsequent targets for individuals and cohorts.

The quality of planning has improved. Teachers now plan together, identifying differentiated activities to meet the needs of all pupils. The school effectively uses the national guidelines to support teachers in their planning and ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning.

The school's aims have broadened to include provision for spiritual development and provision is now good.

The School Development Plan (SDP) is now an informative and well considered document that sets out a brisk, but realistic programme of development. Decisions relating to expenditure are, whenever possible, closely linked to educational outcomes and are based firmly on best value principles. As a result, the school is well placed to sustain further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	C	E
mathematics	E	B	C	E
science	D	A	C	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds standards were average in English, mathematics and science. However, these results are less good when compared with those schools with a similar number of pupils

entitled to free school meals. This group contained a significant number of pupils with special educational needs within it. This is reflected in the results.

The results of the national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds show that attainment was in line with the national average in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were well above. While the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in reading remained close to the national average in writing and mathematics it was well above. When results are compared to similar schools they were well below average in reading, above average in writing and below average in mathematics.

The profile of the pupils' attainment when they start school varies from year to year in size, gender balance and attainment. The sizes of cohorts, their differing profiles of attainment and variation in the number of pupils with special educational needs is reflected in the fluctuating results in national tests. However, the improvement in standards over the last four years has matched the national trend.

The school reached the appropriate targets set for achievement in English and mathematics in 1999. Inspection findings indicate that the school will probably exceed those set for this year. Taking into account the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs in both last year's cohort and this year's, pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school.

The quality of pupils' work in the other areas of the curriculum is in line with that expected for their ages and they are making satisfactory progress through the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The vast majority of pupils in both key stages have a good attitude towards their learning and they are keen and eager to come to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The school is orderly and behaviour is good overall.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils relate well to their teachers, each other and visitors to the school.
Attendance	Good. There is no unauthorised absence.

The school is an orderly, tolerant and hard-working community that reflects the values set out in the school aims.

The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons. They listen well to teachers and apply themselves to their work. Relationships are good with most pupils showing respect for each other and their teachers. Older pupils show maturity in the way that they manage the responsibilities given to them. However, on occasion, there is a very small minority of older pupils who show a lack of respect for both the teacher and their peers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The teaching is consistently good across most of the school. During the course of the inspection, the teaching was very good or better in almost 23 per cent of lessons. It was good or better in two-thirds of the lessons seen and satisfactory or better in 94 per cent. About 6 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory (two lessons). In one of the lessons, the teacher's planning was not sufficiently clear about what the pupils were expected to learn. There was a lack of challenge and purpose for the pupils that led to a slow pace of work. The other lesson was well planned and initially well executed. However, as pupils moved into practical work a small minority became disruptive and showed a lack a respect for both the teacher and their peers. Most lessons are effectively organised to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a particular strength because the teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan their lessons carefully. The quality of the planning has improved since the last inspection and the teachers are much clearer in their lesson plans about what the pupils need to learn. The teaching of information technology has recently improved with the acquisition of new computers and software. Since the previous inspection various initiatives have been taken that have improved the teachers' skills.

All teachers make effective assessments of the pupils' work. They interact effectively to strengthen the pupils' understanding and knowledge. They make effective use of these judgements to help the pupils to improve their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and reflects the current national priorities for literacy and numeracy. The school does not meet the Department for Education and Employment recommended teaching time at Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are effectively supported and make good progress in their work.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The arrangements for encouraging the pupils' spiritual development is much stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. There are now regular opportunities for the pupils to think deeply and reflect upon a range of moral, social and religious themes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school pays good attention to the pupils' welfare and ensures they are cared for very well.

The curriculum provided by the school meets the statutory requirements and is well organised. There is a strong emphasis on English and mathematics and the school effectively incorporates all aspects of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies within its teaching programmes. The school is successful in providing a broad curriculum. The curriculum for the youngest pupils is carefully planned to provide a wide range of opportunities to meet the early learning goals of the foundation curriculum. The school works well with the vast majority of parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and effectively managed. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction. Curriculum co-ordinators have appropriate roles and responsibilities which they implement successfully.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and alongside the headteacher are fulfilling their key responsibilities by steering the school through a period of considerable improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Comprehensive analysis of the pupils' performance and effective monitoring of the teaching is used to identify strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. A significant budget deficit has been avoided by making difficult decisions and the school is now placed on a secure financial footing.

The headteacher provides strong leadership so that the management of the school continues to improve. The school's clear aims underpin its work and are reflected in the school development plan which provides a very clear framework for the improvement of the school. The procedures for the induction and support of the newly qualified teacher are very good. However the procedures for appraisal of teachers are not in place. The governors work closely with the staff and are applying the principles of best value in all their budgetary decisions. The day-to-day financial management and administration are good. Teachers are effectively deployed to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. The school's teaching accommodation is spacious and generally well maintained. The administrative accommodation is cramped. Levels of educational resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • They are well taught and encouraged to work hard. • The school successfully promotes positive attitudes and values that are reflected in the children's good behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A closer partnership with the school with more information about how their children are getting on. • More, and clearer information about when and how homework is given. With a clearer greater level of information about what is expected from parents and their children. • A wider range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. They confirm the need for a more consistent approach to homework. The information given to parents is good and parents have many opportunities to talk to their children's teacher. The school is committed to improving links with parents and has introduced initiatives such as the mid year report. Lunchtime and after school activities, as well as residential and day visits are organised. These are good for a school of this size. They are well arranged and are a beneficial element of the pupils' education during the school day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds were broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with the schools where pupils come from similar backgrounds, that is eight percent or less of pupils entitled to free school meals, they were well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Twenty pupils were entered for last year's Key Stage 2 tests. Normally there are far fewer. This group of pupils contained a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. This is reflected in the results.
2. The results of the national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds in 1999 show that the pupils achieved average standards in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were well above the national average. While the proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels in reading remained close to the national average, in writing and mathematics it was well above. When results are compared to similar schools, they were well below average in reading, above average in writing and below average in mathematics.
3. The profile of the pupils' attainment when they start school varies from year to year in size, gender balance and attainment. Some age groups contain a wide range of abilities. Analysis of the school's baseline assessment for the current intake shows attainment to be clustered around the average. Analysis of the school's special educational needs register shows that the distribution of pupils who need additional support, is uneven. The sizes of cohorts, their differing profiles of attainment and variation in the number of pupils with special educational needs is reflected in the fluctuating results in national tests. However the improvement in standards over the last four years has matched the national trend.
4. Analysis of results over a period of four years shows that when the pupils leave school the boys are achieving better than girls. The school is monitoring the performance of boys and girls in great detail. However, inspection findings support the view that this discrepancy reflects an imbalance in the levels of pupils' prior attainment rather than any gender bias within the teaching.
5. There are 16 pupils in this year's reception class of whom 3 were still under five during the week of the inspection. The current intake of reception pupils is well taught, making good progress and most are already competent in skills relevant to the early stages of the National Curriculum. Most of the reception pupils reach the national targets for the foundation stage and exceed them by the time they are five. From the time they enter the school at the age of four plus, the pupils begin to concentrate fully and nearly all sit still listening to stories and instruction well. They quickly build up their concentration. Many can recognise simple words and letter sounds and can explain the order of number up to 20. The pupils successfully develop an appropriate knowledge of the world around them and their creative and physical achievements often exceed the expected level.
6. The school has undertaken increasingly effective analysis of its results and has focused on implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in order to raise standards. Inspection evidence indicates that the school has ensured that standards in literacy and numeracy are secure. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in literacy are above average. Pupils make good progress and by the age of seven, most are becoming confident, articulate speakers. They listen carefully to teachers reading stories, can follow instructions and listen to each other's views and

ideas. The pupils are enthusiastic readers and achieve standards that are generally above average. They write for a reasonable range of purposes such as stories, letters and instructions. However, there is an over reliance on the use of work sheets in Year 2 which inhibits opportunities for pupils to fully extend their skills in writing. By the age of eleven, most pupils are accomplished readers who possess a good range of skills that enable them to retrieve information from books or screen and to justify their opinions about what they have learnt by direct reference to the text. A similar progression is also evident in the development of their writing skills.

7. In mathematics, all pupils make good progress throughout the school and by the age of seven, almost all the pupils are working at the expected level for their age and a high proportion exceeds this. By the age of eleven the pupils' attainment is in line with that found nationally. However, it is clear from their work that a significant proportion of pupils are working well within the higher level. In both key stages, this is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be broadly in line with the national average. This is due largely to two factors, the high quality teaching across the school in mathematics and the impact of the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy.
8. Inspection findings in science indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above average. All pupils are working at the expected level and approximately half of the pupils attain beyond this. Pupils' investigational skills are well advanced and the standards they reach in their knowledge and understanding are in line with expectations and often better. At the age of eleven, attainment is average with the majority of pupils working at the expected levels. The curriculum is well planned and the teaching is mostly good or very good throughout the school. As a result the pupils make good progress.
9. There has been significant development in the increasing use of information technology. Standards have improved and the pupils' achievements at the end of both key stages are now in line with the expected levels. This is because, the necessary skills are being taught in discrete information technology lessons. Equally the teachers' own increasing confidence means that they are finding ways to use information technology in other subjects. They include, for instance, recording results of science experiments on pie charts and the use of programs such as Publisher to create their cover pages for their magazines.
10. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and the school's curriculum reflects the importance placed on religious education. The pupils have a good understanding of the key events and celebrations of Christianity as well as those of other important world faiths.
11. The quality of pupils' work in history, geography, art, design technology, music and physical education is in line with that expected for their ages and they are making satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The pupils with special educational needs are making good progress throughout the school. Their individual education plans have targets in English and mathematics that are specific and achievable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The previous inspection found that pupils' attitudes to learning, values and personal development were good. The current findings endorse this judgement. The relationships amongst pupils, including the youngest pupils and with all staff are very good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the majority of the pupils themselves have high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. Most parents are happy with the standards of good

behaviour consistently achieved by the school. All parents are fully aware of the strategies the school has put in place to deal with, and the action to be taken, when behavioural problems do occur.

13. The pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. From the youngest child to the majority of pupils in Year 6 they set about their work confidently, listen carefully to their teachers, ask and answer questions, willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. They are very interested in all the activities provided and are capable of sustaining long periods of time on their tasks. This is particularly evident where the very good quality teaching in the literacy and numeracy sessions has led to better concentration and attitudes to work at all key stages. Pupils enjoy their lessons and a high proportion of the pupils takes part in an extensive range of extracurricular activities both in the lunch hour and after school.
14. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils, including the youngest pupils, is good around the school and in most of the lessons. Their conduct in the classrooms is consistently good. They play happily together and recognise the fundamental rule that unkind behaviour towards anyone is neither expected nor tolerated. However in a physical education lesson a small minority of boys in the Year 5/6 class showed a lack of respect for their teacher and their peers and resorted to silly and frivolous behaviour. As a consequence of their action, the well-planned lesson disintegrated. Their behaviour had an adverse effect on the learning of the pupils involved and others. This was followed up by the headteacher at once and the school's behaviour and discipline policy put into action in an appropriate way. Pupils behave well at breaks and lunchtimes and there were no signs of either bullying or isolation of individual pupils. To date, there have been no exclusions of any kind at the school.
15. The school works hard to promote co-operative attitudes amongst pupils, including the few who at times have found it hard to sustain a positive relationship. Overall, the relationships in the school are very good. Pupils of all ages are polite and courteous. Good manners are central to the very good ethos of the school. This is very evident in the way in which pupils relate to visitors and the respect they have for all staff, governors and parents who play an invaluable part in supporting the work of the school. Pupils collaborate well when working in groups or paired work. They share resources, take turns and listen well to the views of others. During assemblies they show a great respect for the contributions of their peers when performing or sharing their ideas and opinions. They show a sympathetic attitude and tolerance when obvious errors occur. The pupils have a great respect for their environment, and there is no deliberate damage to resources or school property.
16. The pupils' personal development is good. From a very early age they are learning a good range of social skills, which is helping them to become all-rounded individuals. Their capacity for independence and personal study is developed well in lessons across the curriculum and through homework. There are frequent examples of pupils taking work home to finish. For example, in Year 5/6 most pupils recorded willingly and enthusiastically their thoughts and feelings on what it would be like to reach the summit of Mount Everest. All pupils can evaluate and consider their own progress. They take a pride in setting themselves three targets a term across a wide range of curriculum issues in order to improve their performance. Pupils of all ages willingly and cheerfully assist the smooth running of the school. They take responsibility for a number of routine tasks, including sorting and tidying school equipment and resources. Older pupils take great pride in helping and caring for the younger pupils at lunchtimes. They carry out their tasks diligently with minimal reliance on adults. The pupils support local and national charities and make appropriate visits into the community.

17. Levels of attendance are good and are above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school. They greet their friends and their teachers, and there is a purposeful and prompt start to the school day. Lessons start on time, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly. There is no unauthorised absence. Parents are very supportive in maintaining very good attendance levels.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The overall quality of the teaching is good. The level of good or better teaching has improved since the last inspection when approximately half of the teaching seen was good. During the course of the inspection, the teaching was satisfactory or better in 94 per cent of lessons. More than two thirds of the lessons were of a good or better quality with almost one quarter being very good or excellent. About 6 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of lessons are effectively organised to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
19. This high quality of teaching has a good impact upon the standards that the pupils reach and upon their attitudes to their learning. The major strengths of the teaching are evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, and in the manner in which investigative science has been developed. Consequently, the pupils are provided with activities that build on their previous learning and opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills at a good pace. For example, in a series of science lessons in Year 2, where pupils were investigating the reasons for plant growth, the teacher built clearly on the previous good work and extended the pupils' scientific thinking within an interesting and meaningful setting.
20. All the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach to the pupils in their classes. They have gained competence in their teaching skills and techniques from the literacy and numeracy training where teachers have undertaken considerable development work to establish common approaches to teaching. They are confident with the contents of the schemes for these subjects. The previous report was critical of the teachers' subject knowledge in information technology. The recently adopted scheme of work for this subject has helped teachers to become more familiar with the demands and intentions of the subject. Their commitment to improving their own subject knowledge is paying dividends in the promotion of the pupils' learning and teachers are making increasingly good use of the new resources.
21. Teaching for the children under five is good with the teacher effectively building on her good understanding of how young children learn best. This ensures that the children receive a carefully planned learning programme which matches and develops their individual needs in an interesting and exciting way. Children make good progress and by the end of the reception year most meet or exceed the national goals for learning. The teacher's planning for the use of structured play as a medium for learning for both the indoor and outdoor learning environment is good. This planning incorporates good activities that involves for example, valuable scientific and mathematical learning. However, more teacher interaction in the play activities would challenge the children to higher levels of enquiry, exploration and discovery in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding, for example, through the construction, shop, home corner activities, and sand and water play. **This is an area the school may wish to consider for development.**
22. Teachers in Key Stage 1 then build effectively on these achievements and by the time the pupils are seven, they make good progress across all the subjects. They achieve standards that are above the national average for their age. This is because the leadership has developed some well-considered strategies to support improvements in the teaching. For instance, the appointment of an additional part-time teacher and the considerable teaching commitment of the headteacher ensures that pupils

in Key Stage 1 are taught in year groups for literacy, numeracy, science and information technology. This reduces the numbers of pupils in each teaching group and enables the teachers to match the work more closely to pupils' needs. Another significant factor is the very good quality of teaching provided consistently by the headteacher. This is having a significant impact on the standards attained by all pupils at this key stage.

23. As the pupils move into Key Stage 2 the expectations of all the staff continue to be high and the quality of the teaching remains good. The teachers also ensure that the tasks planned build upon the pupils' prior learning. They plan activities effectively taking into account the needs of the lower and higher attaining pupils and match tasks appropriately to the pupils with special educational needs. For example, the very effective strategy of grouping pupils into year groups for science and information technology enables teachers to focus more clearly on pupils needs in much smaller groups for these demanding subjects. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning in these subjects.
24. The quality of the planning has improved across the school. The teachers emphasise the teaching of skills, knowledge, and understanding very effectively in their lesson plans. They work closely together when planning their half term plans to ensure that the tasks become increasingly more demanding as the pupils move through the key stage. For example, in the teaching of science throughout the school the pupils have very good opportunities to investigate and to plan their own experiments. In all classes, the teachers write the objectives for the lesson on the board and this helps the pupils to understand the focus for their learning. This is an appropriate strategy and has a positive impact upon the rate at which the pupils learn.
25. The ethos in each classroom signals to the pupils that the teachers expect them to work hard, to sustain their concentration and to do the best that they can. The pace of the work in the lessons is brisk and in nearly all lessons, the amount of work completed by each pupil is good. The teachers use a wide variety of teaching styles ranging from whole class sessions to group work and individual tasks. This is appropriate and enhances the quality of learning effectively. In challenging all pupils at appropriate levels the teachers use questioning very effectively. For instance in a very good Year 5 science lesson, where pupils were planning a science investigation about the effects that exercise has on their heart rates, the teacher targeted pupils with different needs, using questioning to focus pupils on their learning and extend their ideas. This led to all pupils being challenged appropriately and all made very good progress in their understanding and skills development. The teachers and the learning support assistant for the pupils who need help, plan additional support effectively. This has a good impact upon raising their standards.
26. The small amount of teaching judged to be unsatisfactory amounted to two lessons in total. In one of the lessons the teacher's planning was not sufficiently clear about what the pupils were expected to learn. There was a lack of challenge and purpose for the pupils that led to a slower pace of work. Consequently, pupils were not on task. The other lesson was well planned and initially well executed. However as pupils moved into practical work a small minority of pupils became disruptive. Their behaviour was totally inappropriate. All attempts by the teacher to manage the situation were ineffective as the pupil showed a lack a respect for both the teacher and their peers.
27. The on-going assessments used by the teachers during the lessons are accurate. All teachers carry out this type of assessment very well. They interact effectively to strengthen the pupils' understanding and knowledge. They make effective use of these judgements to help the pupils to improve their work through regular and helpful feedback to the pupils. A strength of the teachers' assessment of pupils' work lies in the way that their judgements are focused into a series of brief

targets for improvement that are shared with pupils and parents. These targets are regularly reviewed and updated.

28. The school has a clear homework policy that reflects the recent guidance given to schools. However, a significant number of parents are not happy with the current homework arrangements. This is because the teachers inconsistently apply the homework policy. **This is a key issue for action.**

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

29. The school provides all of its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education as well as offering a good range other interesting and worthwhile experiences. The school has improved dramatically its provision for information technology. The next step is for teachers to ensure more frequent opportunities for pupils to practice the use of technology as a means of control. Aspects of personal and social education such as ‘circle time’ to discuss personal attitudes, behaviour and feelings are now in evidence in some classrooms. However, the school has yet to devise a coherent programme for teaching this subject. The science curriculum enables teachers to make adequate provision for sex education and for raising pupils’ awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
30. Over the past two years the school has successfully introduced both national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan these lessons conscientiously and set out clearly what they expect the pupils to learn. As a result, the pupils' confidence and competence in these fundamental skills is increasing steadily throughout the school. Other subjects are enhanced by the good range of educational visits organised both locally, such as the recent trip to the Boarstall duck decoy, and further afield. In particular, the pupils in the top class benefit from a residential experience each year, most recently to an activity centre in Shropshire. Teachers and parents make good provision for extracurricular activities. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils get the chance to compete regularly in a number of different sports, such as soccer, netball and athletics. Effective links with a small number of other local village schools have resulted in a series of events that run over each school year. The pupils value these competitions and take pride in their achievements, the results of which are recorded diligently by the co-ordinator for physical education.
31. The curriculum for the youngest pupils under the age of five is planned effectively to ensure full coverage of the nationally agreed Areas of Learning, although the arrangements for the pupils’ creative development are not so strong as those for other areas. The teacher plans skilfully to ensure that the pupils move swiftly onto the early stages of the National Curriculum because most reach the national targets for five-year-olds soon after they start school. For instance, the current class is already making good progress in literacy and numeracy because the teacher has introduced these national strategies appropriately, taking care to prepare the pupils for this type of work further up the school next year. The teacher’s planning for the use of structured play as a medium for learning for both the indoor and outdoor learning environment is good. This planning incorporates good activities that involves for example, valuable scientific and mathematical learning. However, more teacher interaction in the play activities would challenge the children to higher levels of enquiry, exploration and discovery in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding, for example, through the construction, shop, home corner activities, and sand and water play. **This is an area the school may wish to consider for development.**

32. Conversations with the teachers reveal that many are concerned about the pressure of time upon the school's curriculum. They find it increasingly difficult to fit together all those important aspects such as music, art and drama that do so much to bring young pupils' learning alive. One way of providing additional leeway would be for the school to increase the length of its day for the pupils in Key Stage 2. At the moment, these pupils attend school for one hour a week less than the minimum recommended by the Department for Education and Employment. **This is a key issue for action.**
33. The school's arrangements for preparing pupils for the next stage of education are very strong. A few pupils pass the eleven plus examination and go on to grammar school. However, the vast majority transfers to a comprehensive school in a neighbouring local authority. As well as the usual pattern of visits and preparatory meetings for pupils and their parents, the primary and secondary teachers linked with this school often work together closely on a range of curriculum initiatives. Learning assistants attend training events at the school and the head of physical education has been involved in a programme of visits to all local primary schools to take lessons and provide advice. A major strength of the school's provision in this area lies in the strong commitment to ensuring a smooth transfer for those pupils with special educational needs. A good example of this is the way that the regular review meetings involving parents, teachers and support agencies begin to discuss the future educational setting for pupils with particular needs at a stage well before the year of transfer. All aspects of special educational needs provision are managed very efficiently by the special educational needs co-ordinator. She receives strong support from the learning support assistant and other staff. As a result the school succeeds in ensuring that all the pupils on the special educational needs register are fully involved in the life of the school and make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans.
34. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The arrangements for encouraging the pupils' spiritual development are much stronger than at the time of the last inspection. The act of worship provides a good focus for the staff and pupils to come together and establish a sense of belonging to the school 'family.' Furthermore there are now regular opportunities for the pupils to think deeply and reflect upon a range of moral, social and religious themes in response to the well-considered material offered by the teachers. A further significant improvement is the way that each class returns to its classroom to consider and evaluate the daily act of worship before going out to mid-morning break. Teachers are much more aware of the need to provide occasional opportunities for quiet reflection in their lessons and to highlight occasions when pupils demonstrate a spontaneous sense of awe and wonder about their learning. For example, when studying the range of snails and other creatures, brought in from Oxford Brookes University to support a recent study of mini-beasts.
35. The pupils' moral and social development is strongly nurtured through the positive example and high expectations of the school staff. The school's aims and aspirations are set out clearly within the prospectus and the home school agreement made with each family. All the adults work hard to ensure that they live up to these expectations in their work with the pupils. There is a useful code of conduct that rewards good behaviour and sets out clearly what is considered to be unacceptable. As a result, the school is generally well disciplined and orderly. On those very few occasions when a tiny minority is disruptive to learning the leadership takes strong and decisive action to explain what is wrong about their behaviour and how this should be improved. Pupils are frequently encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on the lives of others. This is often achieved through the effective use of stories during literacy hour. For instance, the Year 3 and 4 pupils talked seriously about the dilemma facing a little girl when her pet cat 'Tuffi' kept bringing her presents of dead mice and birds. Elsewhere pupils are frequently encouraged to take increasing responsibility as they grow older. A committee of pupils from Year 6 runs the editorial board of the

school newspaper. They select articles, edit the copy and present the final version for printing. They sell copies and put the proceeds in to a bank account. As a result of this entrepreneurial approach they were able to decide to contribute 50 per cent of the proceeds to a charity working in Africa earlier this year.

36. The provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. The pupils have a secure grasp of their own Christian culture, the key festivals and other secular events. Classrooms and corridors reveal a range of interesting artwork reflecting recent study of Western European artists such as Monet, Cezanne and Van Gogh. One class is studying the Benin and the teacher's own collection of African artefacts is providing a useful stimulus for the pupils' observational drawings. Elsewhere Years 5 and 6 are learning about Northern India and especially Nepal in their work in geography. The school's policy for multicultural education shows the leadership is alert to the importance of broadening the pupils' awareness of the cultural diversity of Britain in the twenty-first century, hence the regular educational trips to locations beyond the immediate village. Similarly, the placement of a student teacher of Indian ethnic origin enriched many aspects of the school's curriculum, as she told stories, brought in clothing such as saris and added new dimensions to the art curriculum. There are regular opportunities for the pupils to make music by learning instruments such as recorder or violin and a successful poetry club encourages those who wish to express themselves through language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils. All staff receive training in first aid, for example, and instances were seen during the inspection where pupils were treated for minor injuries with care and sympathy. Regular inspections take place to monitor the safety of the premises and due attention is paid to the promotion of safe practice. In addition to the provision made by the staff for the care of individual pupils, the older pupils are encouraged to look after the younger ones, at break times for example. In this way, the school fosters a sense of community where each pupil has a part to play in the welfare of others. Satisfactory procedures are in place for child protection and all staff are advised of these. The school liaises with outside agencies as required.
38. Class teachers know individual pupils well. There are effective procedures in place to monitor what each child knows and to ensure that work is set at an appropriate level. These include the regular testing of pupils so that class teachers can form an accurate picture of the progress being made. The provision made by the school in this area has improved since the last inspection. Similar attention is paid to pupils' personal development, with class teachers providing good classroom management and making clear the high standards of behaviour and general conduct that they expect from all pupils. Due note is taken of areas where individuals have performed especially well, whether academically or, for example, by being especially helpful in class, and such achievements are celebrated.
39. Based on the good procedures that are in place to assess what pupils know and can do, class teachers set appropriate targets for each pupil. These are clearly understood by the pupils concerned. The setting of such targets has a positive impact on the standards being achieved and helps pupils to gauge the progress they are making. The way pupils are grouped in class, with the work set to challenge each level of ability, is another factor in the generally good progress being made throughout the school. The school provides strong support for pupils with special educational needs and helps them to make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. The good use made of the learning support assistant has a positive impact upon the progress these pupils make.

40. The school makes due provision for social and health education, which includes visits from outside agencies such as the community police service. Some teachers place emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education, but this is not consistent as there is no coherent programme in place. **This is an area which the school may wish to consider for development.**
41. Children who are under five are well supported on their entry to the school and make good progress in most aspects of their learning. The arrangements that are made for the children from the pre school playgroup to visit the school prior to entry assist their smooth transition to primary education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The great majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. They feel that there have been considerable improvements made, following a period of instability, and that the school is working hard both to raise standards and to improve communication with parents. Whilst a small minority have concerns about the level of information provided on pupils' progress, find the school difficult to approach and feel that the partnership between the school and parents is not strong, many others commented on the improvements that the school has made in these areas and expressed considerable satisfaction with the partnership that is being established. For example, many parents feel that it is easy to come into school and that teachers will listen to any concerns. The inspectors agreed with the parents' views that the use of homework across the school is not consistent and that more information needs to be given on the amounts to be done and when it is due to be completed. The school acknowledges this concern and already has plans to improve provision in this area. Those parents who have pupils with special educational needs commented very favourably on the care and support provided by the school and feel that their pupils make good progress.
43. The school has established good links with parents, informed by the good provision made to inform parents on pupils' progress and the nature of the work being undertaken. For example, the annual reports provide clear information on what is being achieved, particularly in English, mathematics and science, and a newly introduced half yearly report on pupils' attitudes and behaviour is further extending the level of information provided. Frequent letters are sent to parents on activities within the school and an annual 'Open Day', together with parents' evenings, give ample opportunity for parents and carers to see what the school is achieving. Parents commented favourably on the prompt contact made with them if the school has any concerns about their pupils.
44. The involvement of parents, carers and other members of the local community with the work of the school makes a very positive contribution to the school's day-to-day life and to the standards that pupils attain. A significant number are involved in helping with craft activities, reading, swimming and extracurricular clubs which helps to extend the curriculum the school can offer. Considerable time and effort has recently been given by parents to decorate the school entrance hall and library, making it a stimulating and attractive area in which to enjoy books. There is a very active 'Friends' association, which organises social events and raises valuable funds for the school. This willingness to become involved with the school and to share a range of skills with pupils and staff is an important element in the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The increasing effectiveness of this school is a direct result of the good leadership of its headteacher supported by the staff and the governing body. The governing body is very committed, enthusiastic in its support of the school and plays a very active and effective role in its running and

organisation. The headteacher has given the deputy headteacher, staff, the pupils and governors a very clear direction for the work of the school. All staff and pupils have been involved in setting targets. The school's aims are clearly reflected in a school that is welcoming, orderly and very conscientious in its pursuit of good quality education for all pupils.

46. The headteacher provides clear direction and good management for the work of the school. She leads the teaching through her own very good practice. She motivates and encourages all staff in their quest for curriculum improvement and higher standards of attainment and recognises the importance of a united and effective staff team. Each member of staff has a clear and specific job description that outlines precisely their duties and responsibilities. This is supported by the gathering of sound evidence on the effectiveness of each teacher, acquired by monitoring of the quality of lessons across the school in subjects such as, literacy and science. Governors are also enabled to monitor the work in the classrooms. There are effective criteria in place to ensure that there is a clear focus for classroom observations. However, at present, there is no formal appraisal of teachers. There is a need to establish this in order to ensure that the Performance Management of Teachers is in place. **This is a key issue.**
47. The school works as a cohesive unit and the staff are growing in confidence to share ideas and plans with each other. The headteacher has rapidly assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the school and these have been communicated to staff and governors. In order to achieve this she has gathered a wide range of data that has successfully informed both school policy and the development plan. For example, she analyses the results of national tests and other assessments to produce a detailed breakdown of the performance of each cohort of pupils in the school. As a result of this clear-sighted approach, developments at the school are frequently successful because decisions about actions are based firmly upon reliable evidence. There is now a secure focus upon raising standards throughout the school.
48. The governors work hard on the behalf of the school and local community. They are well led by the chair and vice-chair. They have a keen appreciation of the work of the school and understand the successes that can be celebrated and the issues that need to be faced. Many governors have only recently taken up their positions and are keen to learn about the responsibilities of the governing body. At present, these new governors rely upon the established members of the governing body and the wealth of their experiences to guide them through decision-making processes. However, the governing body as a whole is competent, has a clear understanding of its role, and fulfils its statutory responsibilities effectively. It faces up to difficult decisions and has made important decisions about staffing and finance issues. The governing body uses the reliable information given by the headteacher and the local education authority to make informed decisions. The governors are instrumental in shaping the future of the school and perform their tasks with commitment and dedication.
49. Since the previous inspection, the school has significantly improved the quality of the school development plan. The headteacher in consultation with the governors and staff has produced a well-considered plan for the future development of the school which is now being used as a very effective working document, enabling the school to make good use of the resources at its disposal. This document benefits from a simple format that is easy to understand. It provides a helpful synthesis of the priorities for improvement agreed amongst all parties involved with the school. The detail of what is to be achieved is summarised clearly along with details of the cost, time scales for action, those responsible and a helpful summary of the criteria against which successful completion might be judged.

50. The teachers and learning support assistant have a clear commitment to raising standards and it is clear that they have a good capacity to succeed in making these improvements. The teachers share their plans for each half term to ensure that learning objectives become more demanding for the older pupils in the key stage. The subject co-ordinators are encouraged to assume much greater responsibility by checking standards, monitoring the teachers' planning and observing lessons. This has been particularly successful in English, science, information technology and physical education where teachers have worked closely to produce a coherent view of the current state of these subjects across the school. Standards have improved and the teachers know how to improve them further.
51. A strength of the school is in the way that a newly qualified teacher has been inducted into the profession. She receives very effective support from the headteacher and deputy headteacher who is her mentor. Her in-service training is based on her own record of professional development and the priorities in the school development plan. She receives regular non-contact time that is used effectively for consultation, planning and review of progress. As a result, she is enjoying her new job and teaching very effectively.
52. The additional funds provided for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately and to very good effect. The management of the provision for the pupils with special educational needs is good. The annual reviews for each pupil are administered regularly and outside agencies are used effectively to help the teachers set targets for individual pupils.
53. As a result of the governors' strategic financial planning, the school benefits from good levels of educational resources. There has been a significant improvement in the provision of computers and software, as well as increases in the range of books for teaching literacy and numeracy. The school has very good financial controls and is applying the principles of best value to judge its performance by. All recommendations in the latest authority audit have been acted upon. The governing body is kept well informed by its headteacher and the resources committee, which meets regularly. The headteacher and administrative staff control day-to-day spending very efficiently and ensure that the administration functions well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. **The Governors, headteacher and staff should continue to build upon the procedures already established to improve the quality of education by;**
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher together should establish procedures for the performance management of teachers. (Paragraph 46)
 - Improve the arrangements for the setting and marking of homework, its use and the information given to parents about provision. (Paragraph 28, 42, 85)
 - Extend the school day to meet the recommended Department for Education and Employment minimum teaching time in Key Stage 2. (Paragraph 32)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- ◊ Develop the use of play with the pupils at the Foundation Stage in order to improve still further the pupils' skills and understanding across all the national targets for the foundation stage of education (Paragraph 21, 31, 60).

- ◇ Establish a coherent programme for the establishment of pupils' personal, social, health education which builds on the good practice already in place. (Paragraph 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	20%	43%	29%	6%	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	105
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	22

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0%

National comparative data	5.4%
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National comparative data	0.5%
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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	10	5	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	3	4	3
	Total	11	12	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (86)	80 (93)	73 (84)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	8
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (81)	73 (85)	73 (86)
	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	7	13	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	5	7
	Girls	9	10	10
	Total	15	15	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (79)	75 (71)	85 (79)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	14	13	15
Percentage of pupils	School	70 (65)	65 (65)	75 (71)

at NC level 4 or above	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)
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Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	93
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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)	5.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17:1
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
	£
Total income	207,513
Total expenditure	202,191
Expenditure per pupil	1,926
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,999
Balance carried forward to next year	22,321

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	105
Number of questionnaires returned	47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58%	35%	6%	0%	0%
My child is making good progress in school.	45%	45%	9%	0%	2%
Behaviour in the school is good.	38%	49%	4%	0%	9%
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32%	40%	19%	0%	9%
The teaching is good.	49%	35%	6%	0%	10%
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34%	43%	23%	0%	0%
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52%	33%	13%	2%	0%
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60%	36%	2%	0%	2%
The school works closely with parents.	30%	45%	19%	4%	2%
The school is well led and managed.	47%	33%	12%	0%	8%
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47%	36%	13%	0%	4%
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32%	26%	28%	0%	15%

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR PUPILS IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. All children are able to start school part-time in the term prior to the one in which their fifth birthday falls. At the time of the inspection there were sixteen children of whom three are still aged under-five in the foundation stage. A significant majority of the children have had some pre-school playgroup experience. In the current cohort, there are no children identified with specific educational needs. The results of the assessment tasks that the children did on entry to the reception class show that the attainment of the current cohort is broadly average when compared to that of children of similar ages in other schools in the county.

Personal and social development

56. Pupils have a very good start to their life in school. The overall achievement in children's personal and social development is above that expected of children of similar ages. This is because the teacher's major focus has been on fostering the children's personal and social skills. Through the well-planned curriculum and daily routines, the staff demonstrate a strong commitment to developing children's own sense of responsibility. For example, all children can dress and undress themselves independently for physical exercise or make the decision as to whether they need coats when involved in outdoor play activities. The children have established very good relationships with adults outside their family and gained experience of learning to work and share tools and equipment with other children in a group. They have learnt to listen to each other, for example, when giving answers to the adults' questions at group time. They listen carefully to each other's responses. They share amicably and ask politely, for example, if they may have a turn with a magnifying glass when looking closely at a snail. The organisation of most activities allows children time to explore, enquire and discover for themselves the world around them and to gain independence in their learning. For example, through talking and listening to each other, children were given good opportunities to observe and make comparisons of which snail could move the fastest, and why. They observed the giant African snail, the water snail and the garden snails, respected the views and comments made by all involved. Their concentration did not waver at all during the forty-five minute activity. They were interested and enthusiastic in their learning. Exciting comments such as 'Oh look, it's moving, it's leaving a silvery trail all over my hand' were heard to be said by one child who then had everyone, led by the teacher, talking about why this happens. This opportunity helped to reinforce socially acceptable behaviour.

Language and literacy

57. The majority of the children are making good progress in the development of their linguistic and literacy skills. Most are on course to achieve targets which are above the national guidelines by the time they reach their fifth birthday. Most can speak clearly and confidently to each other and to adults when involved in group discussions. The teachers' skilful and sensitive approach to questioning children in group activities such as the reading time during the literacy session, is fostering and encouraging children to give extended responses. As a result they are participating readily and confidently in class discussions. For example, the teacher provides a good role model when reading text and children show that they have understood the key points and relate closely to the central character. As the teacher continues reading, both boys and girls are eager to call out the missing words and phrases. Very effective use is made of small chalkboards to help pupils practise rhyming words later from the story, such as, chop/fox/box. Many have learnt the punch

line at the end of the story and are eager to join in, for example they all know what happens to the 'Hungry Caterpillar'. The teacher introduces new activities very clearly. Learning points are suitably highlighted, enabling all children to share in the adults' explanations and extend their knowledge, for example, when they were engaged in the subsequent work on 'initial sounds', such as, 'fl,' showing that all are learning to grasp the initial letter sounds and word blendings. Early attempts at writing are confident and many children are beginning to understand that marks, letters and words convey meaning. One child had written about her visit to church and then had drawn a bookmark and written on it 'Trust in the Lord'. The written response of the teacher was sensitive and demonstrated how she valued the work of the individual child. The teacher places emphasis on handwriting and the correct formation of letters. For example, attention is given to the size of both upper and lower case letters and their appropriate use. This shows that the work taught in the formal handwriting sessions is being transferred across to other activities, such as, in writing a book about creepy crawly mini-beasts.

Mathematics

58. Mathematics is developed as children learn to match, sort and handle objects. The planned activities provided enable them to make good progress in their understanding of number. Most children are beyond the levels described in the foundation curriculum by the age of five. The oral sessions are well paced and involve all the children in, for example, recognising numbers to twenty drawn on a snake. Well-prepared visual materials were provided to enable them to understand the new learning taking place and this enabled them to quickly grasp the concept of long and short. Children love these games, and as a result can recognise individual numbers as well as their sequence. They can also say which number was odd and which was even, one less than 20 or double 10 is 20. As a result of the good rapport between the teacher and the children their responses were quick, enthusiastic and confident. The good use of mathematical terminology by the teacher in its appropriate context allowed the children to acquire the vocabulary naturally and use the words 'long' and 'short' for example, in everyday situations as well as to the specific tasks they are engaged in. The higher attaining children are recording simple addition and subtraction of numbers to ten and this work is completed with an adult to ensure that they not only form the numbers correctly but that they have understood accurately how to add or subtract the numbers together. They know the hour on the clock and have understood the concept of 'heavy' and 'light'. Most children tackle mathematical tasks confidently and competently with sustained concentration. This can be seen for example, when engaged in role-play, the handling of money for buying and selling in the shop, using the coins to match the prices on the items for sale. When tasks are finished both boys and girls tidy away before going on to the next task. There are no significant differences in gender response due to the high quality adult support.

Knowledge and understanding

59. Good foundations are being laid in science and computer technology. The teacher provides stimulating materials and resources for the activities which enable the children to explore the world around them. In one lesson observed the teacher used good questioning skills to extend and assess children's investigative skills when looking at the different parts of a snail. She fostered the use of scientific terms such as 'body', 'eye', 'tentacle', 'foot' and 'shell' well. The children could identify the different parts and by the end of the session they were naturally using the terms when talking about the snail. The outdoor learning environment has been used well to support the learning. Children could talk animatedly about where they had found a spider's eggs, describe the size, shape and colour well. Children are encouraged to look at reference books as they work. This is helping them to understand the importance of skimming and scanning pictures to develop their research skill. This work exceeds the expected outcomes of the foundation stage of learning and most are

working well within Level 1 of the National Curriculum for scientific investigation. Early keyboard skills and the control of the 'mouse' are very well taught to support learning. Children follow the computer instructions and carry out the tasks well, using their knowledge of and the functions of the keyboard, confidently and competently. They can print their own work. Higher attaining children know how to use a program that allows them to enter information confidently on to a database. For example, they were looking at the pictures on the screen and making decisions for themselves as to which relevant facts about the habitat of an individual mini-beast needed to be entered into the record.

Creative development

60. Children are making satisfactory progress in creative activities such as, art, design technology and music and their achievements are in line with those learning outcomes described in the foundation curriculum. They have gained confidence in the use of tools and materials and know how to use equipment safely. This is because the adults are teaching the early skills well and they are becoming firmly embedded and built upon when tackling new experiences such as, handling paints and brushes, cutting and sticking and playing a musical instrument. However, many of the activities are too teacher-directed and it is difficult to recognise the children's contribution. Children do not always have sufficient opportunity to use their own ideas and thoughts and make decisions for themselves. They are not given enough time to explore and experiment with materials such as clay in order to be more creative or imaginative in its use. Children enjoy their musical experiences. They sing rhythmically and remember words well. They can keep a steady body pulse when singing and performing action songs. They are suitably learning to distinguish between long and short movements when miming a song. The teacher's planning for the use of structured play as a medium for learning for both the indoor and outdoor learning environment is good. This planning incorporates good activities that involves for example, valuable scientific and mathematical learning. However, more teacher interaction in the play activities would challenge the children to higher levels of enquiry, exploration and discovery in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding, for example, through the construction, shop, home corner activities, and sand and water play. **This is an area the school may wish to consider for development.**

Physical development

61. Most of the children's physical skills are well developed and their achievements are exceeding those expected by the end of the foundation stage. They are using a range of small apparatus for example, they handle the tools, manage construction, have been taught to hold a pencil correctly. They use malleable materials safely and with good control. Both boys and girls enjoy setting themselves challenges and show pleasure in their achievements for example, when playing games, running through an obstacle course, or when using the scissors to cut out their designs. They behave very sensibly and are aware of the need for safety.
62. The school has a strong commitment to providing an appropriate curriculum for young children. This area is well led and managed. The assessment of their personal and social development and their academic achievements is very good. All children's needs are identified quickly at the time of the assessment on entry to school and given support by both teacher and parents to help them meet their individual targets. Parents and grandparents and other visitors are welcomed and given opportunities to become involved with the school, and this helps to promote their children's learning.

ENGLISH

63. Those pupils taking the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 achieved results that were broadly in line with the national average, but well below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. At the end of Key Stage 1 the pupils' results in reading were also similar to the national average, and well below those achieved by pupils at similar schools. However, their performance in writing was well above the national average and above average in comparison with similar schools.
64. Although there were twenty pupils entered for last year's Key Stage 2 tests, normally there are far fewer. The school also has a significant number of pupils with special educational needs that leads to some apparently dramatic swings in the performance as each small cohort moves through the school. For example, the target for the number of eleven-year-old pupils the school anticipates will achieve the expected level in English this year is sixty-three per cent. Although this is much lower than the national average, it nevertheless, reflects a realistic target for this cohort which contains some pupils with significant special educational needs.
65. A far fairer picture of the school's improvement can be gained by analysing the trend in results over a four-year period. This suggests that despite some fluctuations in performance, the school's results are improving at a rate similar to the national trend. By the time they leave the school the pupils are, on average, almost a term ahead of the expected level for their age. However, at the end of both key stages, the performance of the boys has generally been much better than that of the girls.
66. Inspection findings indicate that the school will probably exceed its target for eleven-year-olds this year. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level is broadly in line with the national average, but few pupils will reach the higher level 5. Although the current Year 6 cohort contains about a quarter of pupils with some significant special educational needs, the analysis of the pupils' work shows that their achievements are good. There has been some significant improvement in the quality of the pupils' work in the past twelve months. The inspection evidence reveals little difference in the achievements of the boys and girls and teaching shows no evidence of gender bias.
67. The results of the pupils taking this year's national tests for seven-year-olds look promising. They all reached at least the expected level in reading and writing and about a quarter exceeded this. Standards of literacy at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average.
68. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in acquiring the skills of speaking and listening because the teachers encourage conversation, discussion and debate. In Key Stage 1 the pupils are eager to share news and information about their lives at home or their views on the daily act of worship. By the age of seven many talk confidently about their experiments in science and explain that a saturated plant is unlikely to dry in a fridge without warmth, "...because it's like me coming out of the shower, feeling cold before the water has the chance to evaporate." Similarly, the regular effective use of drama in religious education helps the pupils develop their listening skills as they learn to respond to the views of others expressed by teachers acting 'in role'.
69. In Key Stage 2, the teachers build effectively on this good start encouraging pupils to take a lead in daily worship and through carefully managed classroom discussion. A particular strength is the way that the pupils are encouraged to recognise that people may differ in their views and that this is quite acceptable. For instance in one lesson an older pupil said, "I think the opposite to X because..." and went on to explain her viewpoint. The rest of the class listened politely and subsequently went on to raise other ideas and responses. The editorial board of the school magazine also provides a good example of the way that, by the time they leave the school, the pupils are well prepared to talk and listen confidently in a wide range of contexts. For instance they are

used to organising a formal meeting with the headteacher where important decisions have to be taken about what is to be included in their magazine.

70. The pupils are enthusiastic readers and achieve standards that are generally above average at the end of both key stages. The successful introduction of the national strategy for teaching literacy has had a positive impact on reading because the teachers are sharing regularly with the pupils many interesting texts across a wide range of story genres. The pupils are always eager to read along with the teacher and there is always a host of hands ready to predict what might happen next. The recent purchase of sets of reading scheme books and younger fiction effectively supports group reading. Observation of these activities shows that by the age of seven most pupils are already quite sophisticated readers. They are able to tackle unfamiliar text with confidence because they have a variety of techniques to draw on. For instance, they have a secure knowledge of the sounds of letters and can make full use of the context of the story to help them work out unknown words. Many pupils are already using their depth of reading experience to help them work out possible meanings beyond the literal. For instance, one group reading the start of a fantasy story suggested that the fantasy might be set in a desert because the central characters had been completing a jigsaw of a camel.
71. At Key Stage 2 the pupils start to read more demanding texts and are encouraged in this by the way that the teachers use extracts from books like 'The Hobbit' as a basis for study during the literacy hour. The individual reading records show that most pupils are reading widely on a daily basis and that the overwhelming majority enjoys the regular support of a parent or helper each night at home. Many of the oldest pupils are deriving great pleasure in their confident reading of the Harry Potter stories of J K Rowling. Other favourite authors include Jacqueline Wilson and Dick King-Smith. These pupils are also increasingly confident in using computers to retrieve electronically stored information on CD Rom as a means of supporting independent research.
72. The results of the national tests show that standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average. The analysis of the pupils' work show that the pupils write for a reasonable range of purposes such as stories, letters and instructions. However, the volume of this work is small in comparison with the large amount of worksheets and exercises generated by the commercially published scheme used by the school. Although these activities sometimes serve a useful purpose they are not always necessary when pupils are skilled and highly motivated. A good example of this is the young girl who copied out her ten spellings that had to be learnt for homework. She was next supposed to incorporate each word within a sentence, but instead opted to try to create a story that would eventually use all ten words.
73. In Key Stage 2 the range of opportunities for writing increases considerably. It is evident that in Year 6 the pupils have made good progress over the course of the year, even though the proportion achieving the expected levels is at best in line with the national average. At the start of the year the higher attaining pupils were producing about a page of neat writing with sentences such as, "...there were little shops. It was like a little village hidden away. There were little houses..." By May, the same author is writing about a character from 'The Lottie Project' and demonstrates a far wider range of vocabulary, "Miss Beckworth has beady eyes that stare at you the moment you step a centimetre out of line." Handwriting is joined, fluent and the choice of language is increasingly adventurous. Other pupils were writing far less in September and a significant number were still printing their letters. The quality and quantity of their work has also improved considerably. The response of one such pupil to a Betsy Byars story shows considerable imagination in their selection of language and use of metaphor; "When he had finished his letter to Petie he looked out to the field and a black fox came running up to him. He sat as still as a rock."

74. Standards of literacy at the school are secure because English is well taught. Almost all of the lessons observed during the inspection were of good quality and in Key Stage 2 occasionally very good. The literacy framework is helping the teachers to plan thoroughly so that they are clear about what they expect the pupils to learn in each lesson. The teachers have a secure technical knowledge of English, so that in Key Stage 1 there is an appropriate focus on the development of knowledge of the sounds of letters, whilst in Key Stage 2 they are confident when introducing the syllabic structure of a poem form such as haiku. Throughout the school the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject leads to a brisk pace of learning because they question pupils carefully to check how much they understand. Teachers are equally assiduous in ensuring that written work is promptly marked. However, practice varies around the school. Whilst some teachers make careful notes and suggest how a child might improve their work, others simply mark with a tick and an encouraging comment.
75. Throughout the school the support for the pupils with special educational needs is effective and these pupils make good progress towards the helpful targets identified on their individual education plans. A significant aspect of this support is the effective deployment of a well-trained and qualified learning support assistant. In English she delivers the additional literacy support programme for those pupils who find it difficult to master the skills of reading and writing. The programme is well managed and the learning assistant receives good support and advice from the teachers. As a result her teaching is successful and is helping the pupils to catch up. The co-ordinator and her colleagues make very good use of the results of tests and other assessments in order to set each child personal targets for each term. In order to raise standards still further, the next challenge is to ensure more regular, systematic monitoring of the pupils' work and the quality of teaching in lessons.

MATHEMATICS

76. In the national tests for mathematics in 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' standards are in line with the national average in comparison with all schools. This is an improvement on the tests in 1998. When compared to schools of similar type, then the standards are below the average.
77. At the end of Key Stage 2, the results in the national tests in 1999 show that the pupils' standards are in line with the national average for all schools. However, a significant number of pupils did not reach the expected level 4, so the results overall were well below the average when compared with schools of similar type. The test results were skewed by a significant number of pupils with special educational needs within the small cohort.
78. Over the past three years, the results show that at the end of Key Stage 2 they fluctuate considerably year-on-year. The cohorts are small and even though the test results in 1999 were lower than in 1998 they are still considerably better than in 1996 and 1997. Over this period of time the trend appears to be that the boys perform better than the girls. This is because there was a marked imbalance of boys and girls within each cohort.
79. These results at Key Stage 2 are confirmed by the scrutiny of the pupils' work that was carried out during the inspection. Overall, standards are in line with those found nationally. However, it is clear from their work that a significant proportion of pupils is working well within the higher level 5. At Key Stage 1, the proportion on course to reach the expected level 2 and level 3 is above the national average. In both key stages, this is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be broadly in line with the national average. This is due largely to two factors: the high quality teaching across the school in mathematics and the impact of the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy. The Numeracy Strategy has clearly addressed the issues

raised in the previous report in relation to teachers' planning, and ensuring a systematic approach to the pupils' learning across the age phases within each class.

80. The teachers throughout the school, under the good guidance of the co-ordinator have raised standards in numeracy significantly. They have had very good in-service training over the course of the last eighteen months in the teaching of mathematics and as a result they have established the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy effectively. A great emphasis has been placed on mental mathematics at the beginning of each session. This is very sharply focused and has a good brisk pace and rigour. For example, the pupils in a Year 2 class were observed competently calculating in their heads the addition of two digit numbers. They confidently explained how they could break down the numbers in different ways to make an easy calculation. They showed an agility of mind in the quick and accurate responses that allowed the teacher to give them a far greater challenge beyond that planned. The rapport between the teachers and the pupils is very good and this helps the pupils to remain alert and interested in their learning. It is a strong feature in all mathematics lessons.
81. The pupils steadily build upon their previous learning and the amount of work completed over the course of this year is good. The quality of teaching, throughout Key Stage 1, is very good or excellent and because of this almost all the pupils are making good or very good progress. Pupils can recognise numbers and place them in the correct order, counting forwards and backwards. They recognise repeating patterns and understand place value up to hundreds, tens and units by the time they are seven; that they can sequence numbers up to a hundred and can double and halve numbers accurately. Numbers from an early age are accurately formed and written. The teaching also makes certain that most pupils know their two, and three-dimensional shapes. Practical activities, using real money, enabled the pupils to understand the combination of, and the different ways in which change from 10p could be given when buying items priced for example, 1, 2, or 8p from the shopping cards. The teacher's clear explanation of the learning objectives and the use of the mathematical vocabulary in its appropriate context enabled the pupils to acquire the terminology and use it in a natural way when working on the tasks.
82. The pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress because of the good quality teaching. Most of the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 make rapid calculations and many, for example, in Years 5 and 6 can say what facts they can find out for example, from $3 \times 4 = 12$. They all had a clear understanding that there are many ways to arrive at a correct answer. They used approximations, halving and doubling well. In this case, the teacher encouraged the pupils to answer and as a result, they were all willing to contribute and not feel undervalued by giving an incorrect answer. The higher attaining pupils in Year 3/4, for example, can recognise the differences between grams and kilograms when measuring a mass of objects, estimate and then make a chart to show the relationships between grams and kilograms using the terminology well. Although they were noisy, all pupils, including the lower attaining pupils who worked with an adult, were on task and focused in the practical activities, showing a determination, enjoyment and a high level of collaborative skill. The plenary sessions were of a high calibre, because time was very well deployed by the teachers. Their skilful questioning supported the pupils in their explanation of their findings and ensured that they had acquired the learning objective of the lesson. The school is using information technology well to support mathematical learning across all areas of the curriculum. For example, good use is made of pie charts and graphs in science.
83. The arrangements made for pupils with special educational needs are good. Their progress is monitored well and they are making good progress in their learning in line with their capability. They are well supported in class and teachers take care to prepare work that is suited to their needs.

84. Pupils enjoy mathematics and this enhances the quality of their learning. They work enthusiastically. The behaviour in all mathematics lessons observed was good. The pupils sustain high levels of concentration. They work well together, share and support each other constructively when for example, engaged in collaborative activities such as, mathematical games, as seen in Year 1 and 2 sessions. Older pupils particularly demonstrate very high levels of perseverance when working on the set tasks. In Year 5/6 for example, some pupils, with the support of their teacher, had set themselves targets such as, a better understanding of the purpose and use of fractions and percentages, to be achieved by the end of this term. They were able to demonstrate in discussion, their real determination to succeed. Standards of presentation are good and most pupils take pride in the appearance of their work.
85. The subject is very well managed. The planning for the teaching of mathematics is good. It is consistent, well applied and ensures that pupils make steady progress in their learning and understanding of mathematical concepts across the whole school. As a result of this methodical planning, all staff, including classroom assistants, are clear in what they want pupils to do, know and understand by the end of each session. The tasks are appropriate, and well structured. Pupils work is regularly assessed, targets set and the work is marked constructively. Homework is given on a regular basis. However, there is an inconsistent approach to homework across the whole school. **This is a key issue for development.** The monitoring of the teachers' plans is in place but as yet, the school's monitoring of the teaching of mathematics lessons remains informal. The school's development plan, which is a good working document, indicates that on its agenda monitoring of the teaching of the Numeracy Strategy is planned in the immediate future.

SCIENCE

86. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments for eleven-year-olds show that standards were close to the national average, but below that for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching higher standards than expected for eleven-year-olds is above the national average but below that for similar schools. These results reflect the fact that this cohort of pupils had a significant number of pupils with special educational needs.
87. Analysis of the national test results of the past four years shows that by the time the pupils leave school, the boys have been achieving levels almost two terms ahead of their age and the girls about one term. The school is monitoring the performance of boys and girls in detail. The inspection findings support the judgement that this discrepancy reflects an imbalance in the levels of pupils' prior attainment rather than any gender bias within the teaching.
88. The 1999 teacher assessment results, at the end of Key Stage 1, show that the percentage of pupils who reach the expected levels is well below the national average, and is very low in comparison with the average for schools that serve similar social areas. The proportion of pupils reaching higher standards than expected for seven-year-olds is very high in comparison with the national average and above the average for similar schools. Again there is a high proportion of pupils within this cohort who have special educational needs.
89. The inspection findings indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above average. A high proportion of the pupils is working at the expected level and a good proportion is attaining beyond that level. In Key Stage 2, standards are average with the majority of pupils on course to attain the expected level by the age of eleven. In the current very small Year 6 group, there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the results are unlikely to exceed those achieved last year.

90. The pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make good gains forward in their learning. They acquire a good body of knowledge that covers the key areas of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Much of their work is taught through investigations and the pupils have a good understanding of how these are carried out. They make good progress through the key stage in the development of the skills needed to carry out a fair test and record their findings in an organised way. They record their work in an appropriate variety of ways. For example, in their work on simple circuits, pupils in Year 2 transfer the skills they learn in literacy lessons to produce good quality writing in recording their investigations. They use drawings and tables to show growth of plants in their work on plant requirements to maintain healthy growth and, through these and the good quality discussions in lessons, they demonstrate very clear understanding about what a plant needs to remain healthy.
91. The pupils make steady gains in their learning as they move through Key Stage 2, and the majority display a secure knowledge across all aspects of science. For example, the pupils in Year 4 know which materials make good sound insulators in their work on sound. They understand the factors needed to change water, for example, when it evaporates or freezes. They dissolve substances in water and investigate the best ways of separating out mixtures. Pupils in Year 6 use different sized Newton meters accurately to match objects and to determine the force needed to pull them. They understand and describe the effect of force on movement. As a result of practical experience, they can predict the level of pull needed to drag an object up inclines of different degrees of steepness. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand how plants and animals in an ecosystem are dependent on each other. They are able to debate well and use their prior knowledge to develop their arguments and thoughts in a focused way.
92. The pupils' application of their literacy skills in science is good, and they use scientific vocabulary and terms with increasing precision. Their descriptive and explanatory writing is developed well. Their use of numeracy skills to support learning in science are also good. In their investigations, many opportunities are planned for pupils to observe, measure and represent their results in the form of tables and graphs. At present, information technology is used infrequently to record and extend science work.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall. There is very good teaching in both key stages. Because of this almost all the pupils are making good progress. The pupils steadily build upon their previous learning and the amount of work completed over the course of this year is good. The teachers' clear explanation of the learning objectives and the use of scientific vocabulary in its appropriate context enabled the pupils to acquire the terminology and use it in a natural way when working on the tasks.
94. The teachers use a range of appropriate teaching styles, balancing theoretical and practical sessions well. They provide interesting and relevant experiences that match the purpose of the lessons and pupils' interests. The teachers are skilful in their use of questioning to find out what the pupils know, and how their thinking is developing. They use this to gauge the pace and pitch of lessons. The pupils gain some idea of their own attainment and progress through teachers' questions and discussions. In Year 2, the teacher ensures that all pupils evaluate their performance and achievements prior to the lesson ending. This is a practice which the school would benefit from extending into all classes. In the one unsatisfactory lesson in Key Stage 2, the teacher's planning was not sufficiently clear about what she expected the pupils to learn. There was a lack of challenge and purpose for the pupils that led to a slower pace of work. Consequently pupils were not on task and did not make sufficient progress in their learning.

95. The management of science is good. The science curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The teachers base their medium-term plans effectively upon the national guidelines for science and their own very well researched scheme of work. These provide a good structure to the plans and ensure that the tasks become more demanding as the pupils gain more knowledge and understanding. The teachers work closely together across the whole school to ensure that the learning objectives become more demanding in the older age groups. This co-operation works well and is a significant factor in raising standards throughout the school. Assessment procedures are firmly in place and pupils' attainment is assessed at the end of teaching units. This information is used very effectively to set targets and ensure that the curriculum provided challenges all pupils appropriately. The monitoring of the teachers' plans is in place but as yet, the school's monitoring of the teaching of science lessons remains informal.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Although few lessons were scheduled during the inspection, it is clear from conversations with the pupils and the analysis of displays, photographs and folders around the school that the pupils enjoy these subjects. They try hard and take a pride in their work so that by the ages of seven and eleven they are generally achieving standards in line with those expected nationally.
97. Since the last inspection the school has made improvements to the curriculum of both subjects. As a result there is a far better balance of activities and the levels of challenge build more steadily than before as the pupils move through the school. For example the youngest pupils learn to print using sponges, and by the time they reach class 4 they are using a range of objects to make attractive repeat print patterns combining contrasting shapes and colour. These careful pieces of work find subsequent use as covers for their design folders.
98. These improvements have come about because the co-ordinator thinks hard about her subject and is always on the look-out for help and assistance. For example, the latest curriculum framework was devised with the support of a student teacher in her final year of training who wanted to experience some of the responsibilities associated with curriculum management. The student was of Indian ethnic origin and she helped considerably in broadening the range of cultural references within the school's curriculum. For instance in the use of different techniques of fabric design such as tie-dye and batik.
99. The strength of the pupils' current work in art lies in steady development of the skills of drawing and sketching from life. In Key Stage 1, the pupils use pencil and crayon to draw impressions of the mini-beasts such as slugs and wood lice that they have found in the school grounds. The pupils are encouraged to look closely at what they draw and to practice the techniques of shading with soft pencils or further up the school, 'smudging' when using pastels. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils become immersed in their work and concentrate very hard when attempting to recreate the designs of African masks and other artefacts. The teacher makes helpful comments and demonstrates some simple techniques herself. Further up the school the ten and eleven-year-olds are sketching baskets of fruit. Although the quality of their work is reasonable, the pace of work is slower. Simple modifications to teaching such as the use of sketch boards would enable pupils to spread out to find a suitable vantage point and settle more swiftly to work, rather than fussing with rearranging the fruits to be drawn.
100. Throughout the school the use of parents and other volunteers makes a significant contribution to the quality of work in both subjects. For instance, whilst the teacher focuses on the art, a parent may be guiding a group of pupils working on a design task. A good example of this was observed in Years 5 and 6. Some of the pupils had drawn good quality designs of a musical instrument. These

drawings were labelled neatly, indicated the types of materials to be used and suggested a means of construction. The teacher had marked these preliminary drawings carefully and several books showed evidence of the pupils amending their designs in the light of teacher comment. A parent supervised the pupils as they began to construct their instruments. She offered help and advice when required, otherwise she concentrated on ensuring that the pupils worked safely; for instance, when a group was fixing metal bottle-tops with nails to their 'rattle-stick.' As a result each small group made good progress towards the realisation of their designs.

101. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have good opportunities to learn how cut out, stick and fix simple materials such as paper and card. A display of different types of transport such as submarines and sea-planes shows that these pupils can make imaginative use of waste materials when constructing their designs.
102. Several parents are regularly involved in helping pupils learn to make artistic use of fabric and threads through activities such as appliqué and designing and making quilts and banners. Last year the school designed an attractive panel for the 'Millennium Patchwork.' Since then groups of pupils have made their own simple quilts on themes such as 'memories', that hang in the school hall.
103. The youngest pupils aged five and six have recently used clay to make simple models of snails but there is only limited evidence of this medium being used elsewhere in the school. Similarly future development in art might usefully increase the opportunities for pupils to consider artists working in three dimensions and to have a go themselves.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

104. Geography and history are taught in alternative terms throughout the year and on a two yearly cycle to cover the mixed age range classes and full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. This issue, along with lesson planning to ensure that pupils make steady gains in their learning has been very clearly addressed since the previous inspection. No lessons were observed during the inspection. A scrutiny of the pupils' work throughout the school shows that the quality of work in both subjects at the end of each key stage is in line with the expected levels.
105. The teachers' detailed planning of the subjects now ensures that the knowledge and skills are being taught through a series of themes which become more challenging as the pupils move up the school. The teaching focuses effectively upon the geographical and historical skills that the pupils need to master. For example, the pupils at Key Stage 1 use the school environment to develop their mapping skills and use the relevant keys and symbols. They have also started to look at the village and contrast it with the City of Oxford. Many pupils can express and articulate some of the similarities and differences that can be found. The well-structured lessons with very clear learning objectives ensure that pupils, for example, in history develop a sound understanding of the nature, causes and process of historical change over time. In geography for example, the use of, and support of, information technology to research facts and figures and other types of information is well used by Year 5/6 pupils. Most pupils interpret these facts using data-handling procedures well. They are able to express their feelings of empathy towards situations facing for example, a mountaineer. One child had written 'my hand is numb, it's difficult to breathe at this height, I've got to keep going...'. Another wrote 'I looked up at the summit and thought how nice if my mum was here to share the view with me'. This is a direct result of the impact of enthusiastic teaching, which fired all the pupils' imagination, interest and enjoyment of the subject. At the upper end of Key Stage 1 and into Key Stage 2 there is an over reliance on worksheets which does not allow or give pupils the opportunity to use and apply more appropriately their literacy skills acquired in other areas of the curriculum. Handwriting and presentation of work are generally untidy. When pupils are

given good opportunities to be creative and more imaginative, the quality of work in Year 3/4 is good. For example, one child during the project on water, had written a poem and in it she had been reflective and shared her thoughts 'Water is, an African riverbed with no water left to give'.

106. The co-ordinator has begun to review the school's curriculum for both history and geography in light of the recently revised National Curriculum Orders. As yet, there are no formal procedures in place for monitoring the teaching of either geography or history.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

107. The school's provision for information technology has been significantly improved since the last inspection, when attainment was below the national expectation and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. The teachers then lacked sufficient knowledge and understanding of the uses and application of technology. While the level of the pupils' attainment overall has still to rise, it is satisfactory, and the progress being made towards improving standards further is emphatic.
108. The school has spent a significant sum of money updating its resources. It now has a suite of computers within the Year 5/6 classroom that provides for half-class work on a regular basis, for pupils in Key Stage 2. Other computers, laptops and Alpha-Smarts also provide effective access to all pupils including those in Key Stage 1 and Reception. Teachers are using this good resource to promote the pupils' skills, and their own. A policy for the subject has been written and a supportive scheme of work, based on national guidelines, has been devised. A clear development plan for the period to the year 2002 has been put into operation. The coordinator for the subject has consulted staff and teachers in both key stages with the object of providing continuity in learning and monitoring the pupils' progress and supporting the teachers. A portfolio of work has been developed that provides examples of the pupils' achievements and progress across the school. This helps to provide teachers with information about what the pupils can do, and what they need to improve. The governors have been fully involved with this good development, by ensuring funds are available, and helping with the planning and set-up of the computer base.
109. The coordinator is well supported by other members of staff, who have, themselves, a commitment to learning. In the information technology lessons seen during the inspection the teaching was good. The teachers set out clearly for the pupils the objectives of their lessons, so that everyone is working towards the same goal. In Year 3/4 for example, the tasks to be done were clearly explained to the pupils before they began their activities, so that time actually using the 'Roamers' was maximised. Good use is made of the support staff and the volunteer helpers to ensure that pupils of differing abilities are effectively supported, and make progress. Lessons are well organised and brisk, and the pupils are given opportunities to explore the technology. Higher attaining pupils have opportunities to extend their work, but this is not always part of the planned work. Nevertheless, pupils of all abilities make good progress because of their eagerness and enthusiasm, teachers' positive attitudes, and the good opportunities the new resources provide.
110. All pupils in the school have sent and received e-mail. The pupils in Year 1 can create colourful images by using the keyboard and mouse, selecting drawing or painting styles to match their own ideas. Some can sign their pictures by using the draw facility to write their names. At Year 2 the use of this facility is extended in design work. Some pupils show verve in their ability to manipulate images using the available tools. They can use the various tools to erase, overlay, re-design and then print the images they create. The use of Alpha -Smarts is very effective in developing the word-processing and keyboard skills throughout the school. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils use reference sources. They can self-correct when using the computer to support their work in English and mathematics, and are rapidly increasing their independence in the use of technology. Most are

now able to use the program Publisher to design and layout front pages for their papers. They adjust the size and style of font, edit, apply colour to text, and modify spacing to provide dramatic visual effects in their own carefully developed written compositions. The pupils are gaining a range of skills at a rapid pace, and increasing their knowledge and understanding of the use of technology appropriately at all stages. Their new skills are being firmly established as part of the information technology scheme of work, but they are not yet applying them across the range of the curriculum, and the provision for handling data and control activities remains inadequate.

111. The pupils of all ages enjoy their work in information technology, and show evident excitement over the levels of challenge and success that it provides. They work well together, sharing, helping each other. Attitudes are positive all round. The longer-term development plan includes use of the Internet, and pupils' and teachers' personal filing systems. The prospects for development are very positive following the recent initiatives in this subject.

MUSIC

112. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 and only one lesson at Key Stage 1. Judgements are therefore based on the examination of teachers' planning, discussions with staff, music tuition with peripatetic instructors, and pupils' performance in assembly.
113. Overall, standards are broadly those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 1, pupils received a broad and balanced programme which included singing, performing and listening to a piece of music. This lesson had been well planned by the teacher with clear learning objectives, which she shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. The vast majority responded well to the vocal warm-up session when singing a new song. They picked up the general contour of the melody, words and rhythm of the song quickly. The pupils identified accurately and played with reasonable competence a wide range of percussion instruments and responded promptly to the rhythmic beat given by the teacher. However, in both cases, there was insufficient opportunity and time given for the pupils to improve either their pitch accuracy or the quality of the instrumental playing. Good listening skills are being appropriately developed because the staff are using suitable questioning techniques that are directly related to what can be heard in a piece of music. As a result, the pupils listened very carefully to Duke Ellington's 'Take the A Train' and immediately recognised the sound of the trumpet and the saxophone. They could distinguish some of the differences in the dynamics as the music progressed and explained some of the different textures within the music, such as, smooth and jerky patterns. Most pupils demonstrated their enjoyment and interest in the music through their body movement response as the piece progressed. Others sat quietly and simply listened. Behaviour was satisfactory because the staff provided a good variety of musical activities to maintain pupils' interest and involvement.
114. Teachers' half-termly and weekly planning for music at Key Stage 2 demonstrates that pupils have a balanced musical experience that broadly meets the National Curriculum requirements. In assemblies, pupils' singing is tuneful and although at times pitch and rhythm falter, they are confident at performing. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in extracurricular activities such as music festivals, and recorder group ensembles. Both boys and girls play the recorders. They perform competently demonstrating that they have been taught to hold the instrument correctly, master techniques such as 'tonguing and slurring' where appropriate and read notation from the stave. There is good quality peripatetic provision and this enhances provision and contributes very well to pupils' progress in the subject. The specialist teaching involved in this provision is good and consequently enhances the pupil's learning and progress in the mastery of the instrument and their basic knowledge of musical skills and understanding of basic rules and principles of music.

115. The issue raised in the previous inspection report has been addressed and the pupils now experience an appropriate range of music from other cultures through, for example, their current project in Year3/4 on Africa and a previous project on India. The music co-ordinator has begun to review the school's scheme of work in the light of the new National Curriculum and provide more specific guidelines to help and support the classroom teacher in the delivery of the music curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Despite some appalling, unseasonable weather during the course of the inspection the teachers demonstrated flexibility and resolve to ensure that the pupils had the opportunity to exercise vigorously, albeit all too often within the constraints of the small school hall. The teachers set a good example for the pupils. They always get changed into tracksuit and trainers and often try to help the pupils by demonstrating a specific skill or technique.
117. By the age of seven, the pupils' skills in gymnastics are broadly in line with the expected level. Most have mastered a good range of techniques for travelling including striding, rolling and jumping. They have started to add variety by incorporating a twist or change of body shape. At the moment they are attempting to link two or three separate movements into a sequence. However, to make faster progress the teacher needs to be clearer about what she expects the pupil to learn. In order to do this she should consider improving the quality of each movement in greater detail before getting the pupils to join them into a sequence.
118. The teaching of ball skills in the lower part of Key Stage 2 is successful because the teacher has established a genuine rapport with her class. It would have been very easy for her to cancel the lesson because hall space was extremely tight, instead of which she set about a modified version of her original plan with gusto. The pupils were kept busy from the outset and the level of challenge in throwing, catching and striking increased steadily as the lesson progressed. Most of these pupils are well co-ordinated and are developing a good eye for a ball. They throw and catch with increasing accuracy. A further strength was the way that the teacher dealt with the pupils' behaviour. They had been cooped up all day in their classroom because of incessant rain. They were eager to let off steam. Thus although a few did not always listen to instructions as carefully as they might normally have done, the teacher did not waste time on fussy control or nagging. She recognised the pupils' needs and as long as they worked safely and enthusiastically she did her best to make sure that they got maximum value from their time in the hall.
119. In contrast, the poor behaviour of a tiny minority of pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoilt a potentially constructive and enjoyable athletics lesson on the school field. The teacher had planned thoroughly an appropriately challenging lesson and set out carefully what she expected the pupils to do. Although the majority worked hard and successfully practised standing long jump and high jump, a few disrupted this by cheating and repeated silly, unsafe behaviour. The teacher did her best to keep going and to draw the lesson to a successful conclusion, but the results claimed by those who had cheated meant that even this part of the lesson was subverted.
120. This type of behaviour is the exception, not the rule. Most pupils thoroughly enjoy their physical education lessons and a large number of the oldest pupils compete enthusiastically in the local sports tournaments organised by the local cluster of village schools. They take part in soccer, netball, cross-country and athletics matches. In the winter many work towards nationally recognised gymnastic awards. The school makes effective use of its small swimming pool so that the pupils learn to swim from an early age. By the time they leave the school they can all swim a minimum of

twenty-five metres and a good number swim much further. Many have gained awards for their skills of watermanship and personal survival.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. The pupils make steady progress, at both key stages, in acquiring knowledge and understanding about religion across a broad spectrum and achieve standards that are in line with those required by the locally agreed syllabus. The pupils' written work, including that of pupils with special educational needs, demonstrates a wide coverage of Bible stories, celebrations, events and other faiths. The work is well presented and shows that the pupils are learning to have respect for, and an understanding of, the values and beliefs of other world religions as well as Christianity. The pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in lessons and make sound progress in their learning.
122. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils learn about special places. They are beginning to understand that churches and other places of worship are important to the people whose religions they represent. The pupils share their feelings about places that are special to them. They also learn about Christian festivals and patron saints such as St Patrick and St David. They study the symbols of different faiths and are able to find similarities within the faiths.
123. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils deepen their understanding of Christianity through their study of Christian festivals such as baptism and the use of water for special occasions. In Years 5 and 6 they explore the Life of Jesus and who Jesus was. By the end of Key Stage 2 they are able to discuss and debate the lives of religious leaders, exploring the qualities of these people and what made or makes them special. For example they examined the impact that leaders such as Mother Theresa had in India. They also talked about the special people in their lives.
124. The pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages. Pupils listen carefully to the ideas of their teachers and of others, and show respect for different faiths. They happily volunteer answers to questions to demonstrate what they know and share in the discussions about how we protect our precious world. Pupils act out stories with moral messages and share their thoughts about how our actions impact on others.
125. The limited amount of teaching seen during the inspection was of a satisfactory or good standard. The teachers' planning is appropriately based in the local syllabus, and various teaching approaches are used to stimulate the pupils' interest. For example younger pupils benefit from the experience of role play and as a result are developing good skills of reflection.
126. Since the last inspection, the standards attained by the pupils have been maintained. The teachers assess the pupils' understanding and knowledge through their effective questioning. The guidance document, based on the agreed syllabus that effectively supports the teachers in their planning and provision. It gives opportunities for the pupils to build on their prior knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator effectively manages the subject. She is able to monitor the provision through the teachers' planning and evaluation sheets.