

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOK FIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Swindon

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 126283

Headteacher: Roger Nicholas

Reporting inspector: John Lilly
12487

Dates of inspection: March 6 – 10 March 2000

Inspection number: 186288

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cartwright Drive
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr M Dean

Date of previous inspection: 11 – 14 December 1995

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		English as an additional language	Leadership and management	
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			Care and welfare of pupils	
			Partnership with parents	
John Burt	Team inspector	Science		
		Information technology		
		Geography		
		Physical education		
Aileen King	Team inspector	Mathematics		
		Design and technology		
Norma Myers	Team inspector	English (Key Stage 1)		Curriculum
		Under – fives		
		Special educational needs		
Anice Patterson	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	Curriculum (Personal development)	
		English (Key Stage 2)		
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brook Field is a much larger than average infant and junior school with 489 girls and boys on roll between the ages of 4 and 11 years. As a community school it plays a significant role within the community. The school serves a rapidly developing area of Swindon. Most but not all pupils come from homes that are more favoured economically and socially than is the average nationally, and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the average for primary schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with Statements of Special Educational Need is smaller than the average for primary schools nationally, as is the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority cultures. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is higher than average; most of these pupils speak Japanese at home. The attainment of children when they join the school is, in most cases, higher than the national average. The school's aims stress the need to provide a rounded education, and the current school improvement plan focuses on literacy, numeracy and information technology.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a caring and positive community in which to teach and learn. It is trying hard to improve, trying in the right ways and has many strengths. Teaching is good, and the governors, headteacher and deputy headteachers drive the improvement plan with determination. There is a very effective partnership with parents and the pupils have good attitudes to the school and their work. These strengths underpin rising achievement. However, since the last inspection standards of attainment have not improved. In some subjects they have remained the same, and in some subjects they have declined. Just over a year ago, governors, managers and teachers realised this was not acceptable and more recently have acted with commitment and determination to put matters right. The inspection team finds that standards are now rising but, as yet, not quickly enough. Effective policy and practice are now in place as a foundation for increasing success. However, there is still much to do, and a need to do it quickly. Cost per pupil is broadly average and the school now offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides strong leadership for staff and pupils, and is expertly supported by the two deputies.
- The governors bring expertise and a businesslike determination to the leadership and management of the school.
- Teaching is good.
- Pupils learn effectively.
- Pupils behave very well, and their relationships and attitude to school are good.
- Attendance is good.
- Provision for children under-five is very good.
- Provision for moral and social development is good.
- Provision for pupils' welfare is very good.
- The partnership with parents is very good, and this makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The school does not promote a sufficiently challenging culture of high achievement. Consequently, attainment overall is too low, and standards are improving too slowly.
- Attainment is unsatisfactory in English at the end of Key Stage 1, and in information technology and religious education at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Overall, the most able pupils do not achieve sufficiently high standards.
- The curriculum is unbalanced and not managed sufficiently effectively.

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

This inspection finds that standards are improving, but that, until recently, the school did not perform as well as the ability of the pupils and the basically good teaching might lead one to expect. Many of the required elements of an improving school are now in place, but governors and staff need to find further and better ways to increase success and catch up the ground they have lost.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection was in the week of 11 December 1995. The key issue at that inspection was the maintenance of high standards. The school has failed to maintain sufficiently high standards of attainment. However, standards of care for pupils, partnership with parents and the behaviour and personal development of pupils remain high. The curriculum was balanced at the last inspection, but the ways the school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies has caused it to become unbalanced. Leadership and management were judged strong by the previous inspection. In terms of expertise and commitment this remains the case. Governors and senior management realised they neither monitored standards sufficiently, nor made raising attainment a sufficiently high priority, and consequently, they allowed standards to decline. They are now applying their expertise in better ways and standards are rising. Even so, overall, improvement has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

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

Children join the reception classes with higher-than-average attainment. The results above show that the school takes too little advantage of this good foundation, and give a valid picture of the way standards have declined. Even though standards in all three subjects show an improving trend over four years, this improvement was insufficiently rapid. As a result, attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, that was once above national averages, declined to just above. This meant that attainment overall was lower than the average for similarly favoured

schools. Results in national tests are compared with schools judged to have broadly equivalent intakes. At Key Stage 1 over the same period, the decline is more marked. Standards in reading and writing dropped from in line with national averages to below, and well below standards in truly similar schools. In mathematics, although standards remained in line with the national average, they fell to below the average for similar schools. At both key stages, a factor is the underachievement of the most able pupils. Governors agree that the pupils should achieve attainment that is above the average for similar schools. This is a challenging but appropriate target.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils are keen to come to school and they have a good attitude to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave very well, although there is a little silly behaviour at play times. A small group of boys in Year 6 are disruptive, but the headteacher deals with them firmly.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils develop as perceptive and caring individuals, willing and able to take responsibility. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

The school provides a secure, caring, family ethos with firm values. It is a school where pupils develop as charming and thoughtful young people. This is a significant strength of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is a strength of the school. Most teaching is good or better, and 25per cent is very good or excellent. There is very little unsatisfactory teaching. Most teachers manage their lessons well and have good subject knowledge. Most lessons have good pace, but this not always the case. In lessons that are too long, the learning slows and pupils lose track of what they need to achieve. Teachers plan almost all lessons with appropriate work for different levels of attainment. Pupils with English as an additional language are positively supported, but class teachers do not always have a good understanding of their learning needs. Numeracy is taught effectively, and in most cases this is also true for literacy. In most lessons learning is good. Pupils work hard, fast and with care, gaining clear enjoyment and pride in their achievements.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Literacy and numeracy have a very high priority and this tends to squeeze other subjects, leading to imbalance. Planning does not ensure learning progresses smoothly from year to year. Although the many community links enrich the learning, the range of clubs is limited, especially at Key Stage 1.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school successfully adapts the curriculum to enable these pupils to make consistently good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is limited but skilled additional teaching for these pupils, and a very limited number of hours for specialised assistants in the classrooms. Class teachers are keen to support these pupils, but do not have a good understanding of their especial learning needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral and social development is good and for spiritual and cultural development satisfactory. The absence of a closely monitored policy and programme misses opportunities to make this provision even better.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The day-to-day care for the pupils' welfare is very good. Personal development is closely monitored and actively guided. However, teachers are only beginning to use their assessment information to provide targets and focused support for pupils with their academic work, and practice is inconsistent across classes.

The partnership between home and school is very effective. It makes a very significant contribution to the pupils' learning. The curriculum is not sufficiently balanced. The very high time allowance for literacy tends to allow insufficient time for other subjects such as religious education. The planning for topics covers several subjects, but when the topic focus is, say, history, other subjects such as geography or design and technology are not always dealt with effectively, or given sufficient time. The senior management realise that they monitored the curriculum, but did not sufficiently evaluate the attainment it produced. With determined action by governors and staff, they are beginning to do so.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership both for pupils and staff, and is ably supported by expert and experienced deputies. However, management at this senior level was until recently too general and failed to focus sufficiently on improving academic standards. Most subject management is at least satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are businesslike, have a range of expertise and are determined to improve standards. Evidence of their commitment is the recent formation of a 'school effectiveness' sub-committee.
The school's evaluation of its performance	For a time the school did not evaluate their performance sufficiently, and standards slipped. Now, staff have a very self-critical approach to their work, but in their search for improvement are finding there is a lot to do and much to learn.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very efficient use of its financial and physical resources, both in the short and longer term. However, the way staff often say they are short of time results from less effective management of the time available in each day and week.

Staffing is good both in quantity and expertise. The skilled classroom assistants and administration staff are a strength of the school. The accommodation is good and used effectively. Resources are good in range, quality and accessibility. The senior management team recognise that they are only beginning to apply principles of best value. Within the governors' 'school effectiveness' sub-committee, governors and staff are now 'challenging' the way they do things, and they are 'consulting' with others as to the best way to drive improvement. They are beginning to consider how they can see a better way forward by comparing their own practice with the practice in more effective schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases most parents	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Children get the right amount of homework. • Teaching is good. • The school keeps them well informed as to their children's progress. • They find it easy to bring their concerns to staff. • Their children are expected to work hard. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • The staff help the children to grow in maturity. • There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Information on their children's progress. • A closer partnership between home and school. • More and better activities outside classes after school.

In the main, inspectors agree with the positive views of parents, but find progress is often too slow and attainment too low. Although there are a good range of visits and visitors to the school, the range of lunch-time and after-school clubs and activities is too limited, especially at Key Stage 1. Homework is set regularly and usually provides interesting and productive tasks. There is a very open and productive partnership between home and school, with daily opportunities to discuss the pupils' progress with teachers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Until recently Brook Field was a school that did not perform as well as it should. Consequently, standards declined or failed to improve. This meant the achievements of the school did not improve as fast as was the average for all schools nationally and fell behind the average achievements in truly similar schools. However, governors and senior management have realised this, and have taken determined action to put matters right. Standards are now improving, but the school has a lot of catching up to do before the pupils' attainment overall compares well with that in truly similar schools. They have chosen as their target that attainment will be better than in similar schools. This is an appropriate and achievable target.
2. When children join the school, their attainment is already higher than expected nationally, and by the age of five, this attainment is maintained or in many cases improved. In Year 1 this good progress continues, but it becomes much slower in Year 2 because of the lower expectations of teachers. As a consequence, standards overall at the end of Key Stage 1 are too low. In English, standards in reading match national expectations, but they are below this standard in writing; overall, standards are below national expectations. In mathematics and science, standards are in line with national expectations. Standards in design and technology, history, music, and physical education are in line with national expectations. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In art, geography, and information technology they are above national expectations.
3. These present standards show too slow progress between when children join the school and when they reach the end of Key Stage 1. In national tests and assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment has dropped over the three years up to 1999 from in line with national averages in English and mathematics to below the national average. In both subjects, attainment is well below the average in similar schools. Although attainment in science was maintained at a standard in line with national averages, it is below the average for similar schools.
4. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in English is in line with national expectations, and it is above these expectations in mathematics and science. In religious education, standards are below the standard expected by the current locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards are below national expectations in information technology. In design and technology, geography, music and physical education attainment is in line with national expectations. In art and history, attainment is above national expectations. This is a better picture than at the end of Key Stage 1, but is not good enough when children's above average standards when they join the school are considered.
5. In English, mathematics and science, attainment in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in the three years up to 1999 declined from well above national averages to below. Overall, this attainment was below the average attainment for similar schools.

6. This inspection finds that, in the main, the determined action by governors, senior management and staff has stopped the decline and standards are beginning to improve. However, management of the curriculum, and the use assessment to guide and improve planning and teaching, are not yet sufficiently rigorous and precise. Consequently, for example, class teachers' lack of expertise in music and religious education are both hindering progress. As one senior member of staff said, 'I am on a steep learning curve .. but I will get there'. Inspectors agree that because staff are equally determined to improve and learn ways of doing so, secure foundations for future improvements are being put in place. However, the school is only beginning to build a culture of high achievement, especially for the more able.
7. There are few significant differences between the achievements of girls and boys, and those that are apparent are being identified and addressed by staff. In the main, pupils of below and average attainment make sound progress. However, pupils of above average and very high attainment are too often insufficiently challenged, and consequently do not achieve the very high standards of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and often good progress at both key stages. Teachers take good account of their individual education plans and successfully adapt the curriculum to ensure full access to it. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Pupils for whom English is a new language receive limited but expert support from outside the school, but class teachers, in the main, do not have sufficient expertise to meet their learning needs. Consequently, the progress of these pupils varies considerably across classes, subjects and between individuals. Their progress is not always satisfactory.
8. Standards of literacy are sound overall. Standards of speaking and listening are good, and these support pupil's learning effectively across the curriculum. Similarly, satisfactory standards of numeracy underpin good learning in most subjects. Standards in information technology have only recently begun to improve, but already these information technologies are beginning to help the drive to improve standards overall.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' have a good attitude towards school and are keen and eager to work. They are enthusiastic about school, work hard, and co-operate with each other and their teachers. They make good use of their opportunities to learn. During lessons pupils are interested in their studies, motivated to learn and respond well when given challenging tasks. Most pupils settle quickly to written tasks. They sustain good levels of concentration. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups, actively encouraging and supporting each other. In many lessons, they offer support to each other when someone finds the work difficult, for example spelling words and sharing their expertise in practical tasks. Pupils in the reception classes help each other to get dressed after physical education lessons as a matter of course. Pupils talk confidently about their work; they readily answer questions and take their full part in discussions. Pupils are proud of their achievements and get personal satisfaction from their work and efforts. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the school community, valued by others and equally proud of what they achieve. In the social sense, this is also true of pupils for whom English is a new language.

10. Throughout the school pupils behave very well. This very good behaviour has a positive impact on their overall attainment and progress. There are clear expectations of good behaviour that pupils respect. The standard of behaviour in lessons is generally very good, but there is a small group of boys in Year 6 for whom this is not true; their attitudes to their work and other people hinder both their own progress and that of others. The school is an orderly community and pupils are courteous and welcoming towards visitors. Relationships are good between teachers and pupils and among pupils. From the pupils' earliest days in school, teachers encourage them to understand the impact of their actions on others. Any incidents of threatening behaviour that occur are brought to the notice of teaching staff. Teachers take these incidents seriously and deal with them effectively. There have been no pupils excluded from the school in the recent past.
11. The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils in Year 4 discuss articles in the daily newspapers at the beginning of the school day, extending their knowledge and understanding of worldwide current affairs. There are opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility and demonstrate initiative as they move through the school. Pupils in Year 6 perform a range of duties such as acting as librarians and helping with the monthly community tea. Some are representing the school in the West Swindon School's Shakespeare Festival, where they are performing Midsummer Nights' Dream. This gives them a high profile within the school and makes them good role models for younger pupils. Pupils in the Year 1 classes host the annual Grandparents' Tea. The extra-curricular activities provided for pupils are well supported, although they are rather limited, especially at Key Stage 1. There is a wide range of visits to enrich the curriculum. A strength of the school is the residential visits that take place for pupils in Key Stage 2. These opportunities contribute significantly to the development of pupils' ability to understand and respect the feelings, values and beliefs of a wider segment of society than is represented in their own personal experience.
12. The school recognises and celebrates pupils' achievements in lessons through displays, in 'sharing' assemblies and through 'Golden Time'. 'Golden Time' is a time when pupils can choose the work they do, and this opportunity must be earned by previous good work. Together, these features raise pupils' self-esteem and sense of individual worth. Even so, the school misses opportunities to make clear to pupils the standards that can and ought to be achieved by all and, especially, the highest-attaining pupils.
13. The attendance of pupils is good and above the national average for 1998/99. Unauthorised absence is below the national average for the same period. Good attendance is promoted effectively and, as a result, there has been an improvement in the level of attendance since the previous inspection. Almost all of the authorised absence is attributable to parents taking their children on holiday during term time, and the school warns parents of the harm this can cause. The school actively monitors attendance and, when appropriate, the education welfare service helps deal with any problems. Pupils arrive punctually for school at the start of the school day and lessons start promptly. The school complies with statutory requirements for the registration of pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The last inspection found that teaching was good and this remains the case. Almost all the teaching is at least satisfactory, and 70 per cent is good or better. More than

a quarter is very good or excellent. This gives an overall picture, but there are variations. Teaching in reception classes is always at least good, and more than half of the lessons are very good or excellent. Teaching is slightly less effective in Year 2 as compared with Year 1. This relates to two key features. The teaching in Year 2 is less challenging and the expectations the teachers have of the pupils are not as high as in Year 1. As a consequence, although the pupils are younger in Year 1 than in Year 2, their attainment is, on occasion, higher. This relates to the fact that teachers in Year 1 operate as a more effective team than the Year 2 team. The Year 2 team do not have a sufficiently clear idea of the standards pupils can and should achieve. Teaching in Years 3, 4 and 5 is always at least satisfactory, and three quarters is good, very good or excellent. However, teaching in Year 6 is not as strong, and is sometimes unsatisfactory. This is connected with, at times, the unsatisfactory management of a number of boys with poor attitudes to their work. The senior management have taken action to address this problem.

15. The good teaching results in effective learning. Pupils of all ages acquire knowledge quickly and remember what they learn. They usually work hard and with interest, although their concentration can wander if the planning of lessons means they are concerned with similar work for too long. When the teaching is challenging and tightly focused, pupils revel in that challenge and are determined to do their best; they are unafraid to get things wrong. This was very evident in an excellent history lesson in Year 5 when pupils confidently related work on the Olympic Games in Ancient Greece to the development of democracy and technology. Their knowledge and understanding was well above standards expected at this age. Similarly, in an excellent geography lesson, much younger pupils in Year 1 used specialised vocabulary with sophisticated understanding, relating this to map-work skills that showed attainment well above the standards expected at that age.
16. Slightly less good is pupils' ability to reflect upon and evaluate their learning. When teaching is very good, the teacher continually asks 'How well do you understand?', 'What have we learned?', 'Show me you understand?', 'How can we do better next time?' and 'Have we achieved what we set out to achieve?'. In these lessons there is a powerful partnership between teacher and learner. These teachers support this type of learning by careful advice when marking. The pupils keep reading logs where parents, teachers and pupils themselves comment on their reading; where these diaries are kept best, pupils learn to read quickest.
17. Across the school, literacy and numeracy are taught effectively, and teachers seek out ways to support this learning in other subjects. Where the teaching becomes less effective, the teachers do not apply their basic skills but are over-controlled by the format of, in particular, the literacy strategy. In these cases the lessons become too long and the teaching less responsive. When this is the case, where class management is not secure, the teaching becomes unsatisfactory. A strength of both literacy and numeracy teaching is the way teachers promote mental agility and 'thinking in the pupils' heads'. Similarly, most teachers effectively use questioning and answering to check the pupils' learning and then extend it. This promotes good speaking and listening skills, and deeply understood learning.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, and teachers are conscious of their needs. However, it is these pupils, in particular, who benefit from short sharp learning periods and continuous feedback on how they are doing. When these features of teaching are not present, their learning slows and concentration wanders. Pupils who are learning English as a new language make

variable progress. The best learning occurs in sessions with a specialist from outside the school on a one-to-one basis. However, this is a very limited resource. Overall, class teachers do not have a good understanding of the learning needs of these pupils. If the pupil has good language development in the language they speak at home, is well motivated and intellectually able, they make very good progress and learning is of high quality. However, when these preconditions are not in place, being taught, however caringly, in the same way as other pupils, leads these pupils to misunderstand.

19. Teaching in reception classes exemplifies all the qualities of very effective teaching. Teaching further up the school has many, but not all these qualities. Most teachers plan and manage their lessons well. They provide a good range of appropriate learning opportunities and, in most lessons, set suitable work for four levels of attainment. In most subjects, but not all, teachers have good subject knowledge and this makes planning precise and the learning rich in detail. For example, subject knowledge is high in history but low in religious education.
20. Teachers know their pupils well and are increasingly using assessment to guide their planning. This in turn leads to finding new and more effective ways to help the pupils learn, for example in drama. Teachers use the good resources to extend and illustrate the learning effectively, and this increases pupils' interest considerably. Most teachers use information technology sensibly to extend and support the learning, but this is a developing area. Homework is set regularly and usually appropriately. In most lessons there is a very good working relationship between teacher and classroom assistant; when the teacher is taking a class session, the assistant is taking notes and spotting where pupils' understanding is good or needs supporting.
21. Most lessons have a pace and urgency that excites and engages the pupils. However, when the same type of work continues for too long, pupils become bored or want a change. Their pace of work and concentration drop. Most teachers have short sharp sessions of literacy, numeracy and science and these are effective, as are the short but quiet sessions of individual reading. As part of the drive to improve attainment, staff are focusing on assessment and this is sensible as it will bring a clearer idea of where the pupils start and how fast and well they are learning. There is a need now for teachers to have a clearer idea of the very high standards these pupils can achieve.

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

22. The school provides a curriculum that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is an imbalance in curricular provision at both key stages. The amount of curricular time planned for English and mathematics is in excess of that recommended nationally. As a result, too little time is available for teaching other subjects. This has an adverse impact on pupils' learning in subjects such as religious education, geography, art and music. The school has implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, but has yet to focus and sufficiently refine the teaching in these subjects. This means that the amount planned for a session is sometimes spread over too great a time. Even so, these introductions have a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially at the lower end of Key Stage1.

23. The Early Years curriculum is very well planned to include all areas of learning, with clear links made to National Curriculum Programmes of Study. This section of the curriculum is tightly monitored and evaluated, and these processes drive continuous improvement. This is not the case from Years 1 to 6. Consequently, the school does not have a clear knowledge of exactly how much time is spent on each aspect of the curriculum, whether time is used effectively or is sufficient, and also whether topics are ordered in the most productive way. This leads to the same topic in religious education being covered in four different years. It was evident in the inspection that it was not equally suitable for all years. Similarly, Roman culture is studied before the pupils have studied the Greek culture from which it grew. This planning makes the learning of challenging ideas more difficult. The curricular planning for subjects other than English and mathematics pays too little attention to the need to build skills progressively and through constant practice. Teachers often say, 'Time is so short and subjects are squeezed', and yet the use of time is insufficiently evaluated.
24. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs in both key stages. Teachers write clear individual education plans, which successfully guide curriculum modifications. Good planning and resourcing ensure that the school fully complies with Statements of Special Educational Need and the Code of Practice. Although specialised and very effective teaching is provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language, it is not fully successful in providing these pupils with access to the general curriculum. In part this is due to the limited availability of specialised teaching. However, more significantly it is because support concentrates too closely on the planning for pupils who already speak English, and too little on building the higher-level language skills, especially speaking and listening, that pupils learning English need to acquire. Class teachers do not have sufficient understanding of how these pupils need to 'bridge' between understandings in their own language and ideas in their new language, English. The school is in the process of developing plans and policies to address the needs of higher attainers, but this initiative is, as yet, insufficiently implemented. In some areas of the curriculum, for example independent writing, such pupils are insufficiently challenged.
25. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, and contributes well to pupils' social and wider development. There are opportunities to take part in games activities, choir, information technology and art. A range of private musical tuition is available. Sports teams from the school have been successful in competitions and the emphasis is on skills and social development. There are no extra-curricular activities for Key Stage 1, and this is a very unsatisfactory situation. The early morning work time, when parents can work alongside their children, gives a secure and supportive start to the day's learning. The weekly 'Golden Time' in many classes effectively helps pupils evaluate their own learning, but this session is less effective for older pupils.
26. The school makes sound provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils clearly understand what is right and wrong. Through their work in science and food technology, they gain an understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and thus have the skills to make informed choices about their own lives. However, at present this overall provision is not sufficiently guided by a scheme of work. Consequently, it is difficult for managers to monitor and evaluate how effective the provision is, and identify ways it may be improved.

27. Staff visit all playgroups and nurseries, prior to children starting at Brook Field. Staff make home visits, where necessary, to make the transition to formal education positive and to support continuous learning. The school has developed good links with a local secondary school. Year 6 pupils are knowledgeable students, with a number joining the local library, actively searching for further background information. Visits made and visitors welcomed regularly enrich the planned curriculum at both key stages. The visit of a local poet not only enlivens pupils' awareness of the way words work, but also emphasises the positive advantages of a healthy lifestyle. Outstanding parental support for all school activities greatly enhances learning opportunities for pupils. For example, parents supervise the outside play of the under-fives until the new secure area becomes available and have been instrumental in developing the outside environment successfully.
28. Overall, the provision for promoting pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is good, and for spiritual and cultural development satisfactory. The aims of the school include reference to developing a sense of responsibility, fostering good social relationships and using creativity as a means of aiding self-confidence and a sense of personal worth. Assemblies, music and art make a particularly valuable contribution to meeting this aim. However, the planning for this provision is unstructured and relies too much on chance. Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved the provision for collective worship, but the provision overall for personal development has declined. Assemblies are now effectively managed and meet statutory requirements. They are a valuable aspect of school life.
29. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies promote spiritual development well. In one class assembly, pupils shared special things of value and discussed the difference between value and cost. In others on 'being special', the teachers used a candle, the chemical ingredients that make up a human being and a mirror to develop pupils' self-esteem in an outstandingly inventive and effective way. Singing and other music in assembly develops a reflective atmosphere that deepens the pupils' response. Assemblies are broadly Christian in character, although the festivals of other faiths are recognised. Prayer in these assemblies is taken reverently by both teachers and pupils, but does not provide sufficient opportunities for quiet and silent reflection.
30. In the curriculum, the provision for spiritual development is much thinner. This is because teachers do not have clear guidance. Even so, there are examples of very good practice. Rapt attention in a reception class resulted from intense concentration when learning to balance. The teacher used this to build the pupils' wonder at the nature of the human body. Similarly, telling a story about three owls helped these very young children share and express their feelings. A Year 2 class felt real visual excitement and a special moment when other Year 2 pupils discovered what happens when they melted chocolate in science. In a religious education lesson introducing a topic on Islam in Year 4, the pupils gained a real awareness of the way faith alters the way we live, and a similar lesson in Year 3 showed how faith and belief bring purpose and meaning to lives. An excellent history lesson in Year 5 helped pupils understand and explain why commitment to ideals is important. These provide good examples for others to emulate. Weaknesses in religious education lead to missed opportunities to promote spiritual development.

31. Provision for moral development is good. Teachers provide good role models in helping pupils to learn how to care for others and know what is right and wrong. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and there are 'golden rules' for behaviour on the walls of all classrooms. In one assembly, the teacher used humour and reflection sensitively to explore conflicts, and the need for support in times of crisis; this gave a very good moral lead. In a Year 4 class, the story of King Solomon led to a discussion about fairness. The pupils understand, value and consider fair the school's systems for rewards and sanctions.
32. Provision for pupils' social development is also good. The good working atmosphere of mutual respect in almost all classes develops collaboration and understanding of the needs of others. The school works well as a community and pupils learn the part they need to play. The pupils' work is beautifully displayed on boards and in folios, and this celebrates the pupils' part in the success of the school. However, the very best work loses itself amongst others, and this misses opportunities to celebrate excellence in achievement. Displays all over the school celebrate pupils' achievements, especially in art, and this builds their self-esteem. In a Year 4 English lesson, discussion of decisions made by newspapers about what might interest the general public greatly enhanced the pupils' understanding of societies and the world beyond Swindon. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility, for example when a group of guitar players accompanied the singing in assembly. Pupils are taking part in an art exhibition at the 'Dome' and then the town railway museum. In an Early Years class, the teacher encouraged a child to lead the class in singing and that developed their self-confidence. For similar reasons, Year 6 pupils help run the monthly 'community tea'. An important and very valuable opportunity is the residential trip to Wales.
33. Cultural development is patchy but satisfactory. Some pupils are involved with a joint schools Shakespearean performance project and are developing good insights through the study of the text. Good opportunities for the development of a cultural richness include the use of artefacts for projects on the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. Pupils in a Year 4 class use different languages to answer the register, and there are opportunities for some pupils to learn French. A local composer writes the school production and the religious education curriculum covers a range of major world religions. However, in some subjects, for example music, there are insufficient opportunities for the exploration of other cultures. There are music-making opportunities and excellent whole school theatrical productions. The achievements of pupils both in and out of school, for example sport, are recognised and celebrated.
34. Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved the provision for acts of collective worship, but the standard overall for personal development has declined. The curriculum as a whole provides a satisfactory foundation for progression to secondary school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and child protection are very good. The school provides a caring, supportive environment where there are good relationships between pupils and adults and among pupils themselves. The class teachers know their pupils well and are responsible for monitoring their personal development and academic progress. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and benefit from the specialist input of outside agencies who work in partnership with the school. Pupils

for whom English is an additional language are made very welcome and treated very caringly.

36. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. Teachers assess pupils regularly, using a range of tests, and senior managers analyse these, together with National Curriculum test results. These procedures identify how well the school succeeds with each pupil, and the governors consider this information in their 'school effectiveness' committee. This leads to the identification of some Key Stage 2 pupils who are given additional support through the supportive 'ARROW' project. In some classes, effective use is made of this assessment data to guide curricular planning and promote pupils' attainment by setting individual improvement targets. However, this use of assessment to guide pupils is not practiced consistently across the school. A deputy headteacher is addressing this need, and the effective use of assessment is improving rapidly. There is good use of information technology to support assessment and the school is moving towards individual target setting for all pupils in the core subjects. However, this type of assessment is not yet sufficiently developed throughout the school, and consequently there is unclear guidance for pupils on why they succeed or meet problems, and what they need to learn next. Pupils with special educational needs are swiftly identified, have effective individual education plans and their learning objectives are clearly defined. Annual reports to parents are good and give clear information about what progress children have made and the levels of attainment they have achieved. This was raised as an issue at the last inspection and there has been a significant improvement in the quality of reports to parents since that time.
37. The arrangements for child protection are very good. The child protection officer is well qualified and experienced. There are appropriate links with the external support agencies. Staff are clear about the procedures to follow. The procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are very good.
38. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating threatening behaviour are very good. There are clear expectations of good behaviour based on self-discipline and respect for others; these are well understood even by the youngest pupils. 'Golden Time' at the end of the week is a reward for good behaviour and attitudes. However, this time is not used as effectively in the upper years, and this has led to some disenchantment amongst older pupils. There is a consistent approach amongst the majority of staff towards behaviour management. In assemblies, teachers address threatening behaviour in the context of themes on the impact of actions on others and Christian values. Bullying is not an issue in this school and pupils confirm that teachers deal immediately and firmly with the few incidents of hostile behaviour that are brought to their notice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. Parents have a positive view of the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves, and this reflects the position at the last inspection. Parents are involved in all aspects of their child's education, and work in partnership with the school to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. Homework is given regularly and reading every night, and this gives parents an continuous view of what their children are learning and how they are progressing. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and home is very good. The school has an 'open door'

policy. A particular strength is the open access that parents have to teachers at the beginning of the day. Parents of younger children undertake activities with their children, such as playing games and reading. The parents of older children are able to have a discussion with the teacher while pupils undertake independent study. Parents feel they can approach the school if difficulties arise and their concerns are listened to and addressed. The Friends of the School Association actively supports the school and raises substantial funds through a range of activities. The governing body, staff and pupils appreciate their efforts.

40. Many parents help within the classroom with lessons, in the school library, and accompany school visits. The Environmental Day saw about 50 parents working on the school grounds. Parent governors take an active role in all the governors' and school's activities, and this makes their role very influential and effective. The school values and welcomes contributions from the extended family and grandparents. Other family members are invited into the school to share their experiences, for example what it was like to live through World War II. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. The community teas held once a month for parents and others are very well attended and highly valued.
41. The quality of information provided for parents by the school is good, although the governor's annual report to parents is not a very user-friendly document. Parents receive termly information about the curriculum their child will be following. There is a parents' notice board in the reception area of the school. Over the year, there are termly consultation meetings where parents can meet with their child's class teacher and view their child's work. Annual reports to parents are of a high standard and contain sufficient academic information for parents to assess what their children can do and what they need to do to raise their level of attainment. This was an issue at the previous inspection and there has been significant improvement in the reports to parents since then. The parents of children with special educational needs are appropriately involved with their annual reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The headteacher provides strong leadership, and management by the headteacher and deputy headteachers is satisfactory, with good features but some weaknesses. The headteacher, and deputy headteachers, provide fine role models for both staff and pupils. The previous inspection found the leadership and management of the school a strength, but after that time the senior staff allowed academic standards to decline or not improve sufficiently quickly. The underlying expertise, skills and commitment are still present. Because this is the case, the senior team realised standards were not as they should be and have acted with determination to put matters right. They have designed and implemented effective monitoring and evaluation systems, and now use this information, along with assessment data, to improve performance. They are rapidly putting in place key policies and procedures to underpin the performance of staff, and this review is needed. However, this is only a recent development, and in several areas, for example monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum as a whole, this aspect of management is not sufficiently extensive, systematic, rigorous and precise. Even so, a good start has been made to feeding back to teachers what works and what does not, and where and how improvement can be achieved. Teachers are given detailed feedback on the lessons observed.
43. The governing body is a strength of the school. They work hard and, as to statutory responsibilities, successfully. They have a range of expertise and experience and apply these through sub-committees with specific tasks. They are keen to raise standards and have formed an expert and determined 'school effectiveness sub-committee' that is examining rigorously where performance is not good enough and where action needs to take place. They work closely and productively with staff. As a result, the school improvement plan gives a strategic mission for the next three years, and actions to do in each year. However, this plan lacks sufficient focus and definition. This is because targets to be achieved are not yet fully in place. Discussion so far is that the attainment at the end of each key stage should be above the average for similar schools, and these targets are appropriate and fully within the capacity and capability of the school.
44. The school's aims are clear but general. They focus on the strong values that underpin the work of the school, and consequently the school's ethos is very supportive of the good personal development of the pupils. This creates a good community in which to teach and learn. However, these aims lack sufficient emphasis on high academic attainment and, consequently, the school does not achieve sufficiently high standards.
45. Staff share a team commitment to improvement. Subject co-ordinators take responsibility for leading and managing their subjects, and are given time away from lessons to follow up their work. However, the leadership and management of some subjects are more effective than others. The most effective co-ordinators track performance in their subject through from Year 1 to Year 6, and gain a good idea as to where improvements are needed. They are beginning to see that monitoring teaching, and not just planning, gives them the most valid view of the effectiveness of teaching and the curriculum. Because standards dropped and the school has only recently begun to address this weakness, staff are working very hard and fast to put matters right, and are finding they need to learn new skills quickly. This is inevitable, but this stress leads to inconsistencies and lack of coherence across

classes and years. Staff often say they do not have sufficient time, but this inspection finds that time in lessons is not always used effectively, and that the management of curricular time is not satisfactory.

46. Staff review and development procedures are in place and are increasingly effective. They lead to well planned staff development and at times full school training. However, where the management of staff development at a full school and subject level is less effective standards drop significantly, for example in religious education.
47. Newly qualified staff are inducted perceptively and expertly. As a consequence, teachers new to the profession taught some of the most effective lessons observed during the inspection. There is a sound staff development programme, but this tends to reflect too strongly the demands of the literacy and numeracy strategies. There is a growing awareness amongst staff that they cannot only learn from the success of others, but also from when lessons do not go well. There is strong evidence that staff discussion is to the point, reflective and self-evaluative, and leads to action by all members of the team. As a result, staff are beginning to seek further ways to see each other teach and share ideas. Teachers work as year teams, sharing planning and evaluation. The most effective teams produce the most effective teaching, highlighting the importance of good team leadership, for example in the reception classes.
48. The school has a strong team of teachers and classroom assistants. Overall they have good professional skills and knowledge. There are plenty of adults to meet the curriculum requirements and they are sensibly deployed. The parents who work in the school make a significant contribution to this resource.
49. The leadership of the school is beginning to apply the principles of 'best value'. This means they are:
 - challenging their present practice and finding better ways to achieve their aims,
 - applying testing criteria before investing in suppliers or products so that their suppliers must compete on quality and price,
 - beginning to compare their performance and ways of working with what happens in more effective schools,
 - beginning to consult experts from outside to advise and guide them.

At present, governors and senior management apply the 'challenge' and 'compete' elements more rigorously than the compare and consult aspects.

50. The financial control and management of resources are very good. The school receives funds that are broadly average for schools of this type, but makes very efficient use of what they have. Governors maintain a sensible balance to meet contingencies and necessary developments. However, they have yet to find the best ways of investing these funds to raise attainment. Funds the school receives for such as special educational needs are managed effectively and appropriately. Planning and management are tight, prudent and rigorous. This high quality runs from governors, senior staff, and administration assistants through to staff. As a consequence, resources for learning are good, and the accommodation has been developed very efficiently and effectively. The governors and staff, including the caretaker, drive up standards, look for improvements and consider risks that might threaten success. Balancing the good ethos of the school resulting in good

behaviour and sound personal development, the effective teaching, the high quality care for pupils and the very good partnership with parents, against academic standards that are too low but improving, the school offers satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. Brook Field is a school that is trying hard to improve, and is trying in the right ways. It has many strengths. However, management and staff have only recently begun to test systematically whether standards are sufficiently high and question whether what they do is sufficiently successful. Standards are beginning to improve, but not quickly enough. At present, management and staff have yet to find the most effective ways to build on their skills, and use resources, time and energy to best effect.
52. Attainment overall is not as good as the skills and commitment of the teachers, the good attitudes of the pupils, the supportive parental body, and the good resources and accommodation might lead one to expect; it is not as good as in truly similar schools. Attainment is below national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 in English, and in information technology by the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment in religious education is below the expectations of the current locally Agreed Syllabus by the end of Key Stage 2. In particular, the attainment of the more able is too low. The overall picture is that attainment has declined at Key Stage 1, and not improved quickly enough at Key Stage 2.
53. To raise attainment overall, and especially in English, information technology and religious education, governors and staff should:
 - (1) Create a culture of high achievement by:
 - reviewing the school's aims so that they include commitment to the highest standards of achievement; (paragraph 44)
 - agreeing and setting targets that challenge staff to find new and better ways to raise attainment; (paragraph 43)
 - comparing the school's performance with similar schools, considering how more effective schools work, and consulting others when deciding strategies for improvement; (paragraph 49)
 - deciding what works and what does not work in lessons, and sharing this expertise among teachers, not necessarily only within the same year; (paragraph 47)
 - ensuring that the school improvement plan emphasises the areas in most need of improvement and where improvement would bring most immediate benefit to pupils; (paragraph 43)
 - ensuring that monitoring information is rigorously evaluated, and leads to effective action to build on strengths and address weaknesses. For example, this should identify ways to build on the very good practice in reception classes, and address the need for all teachers to be equally accountable for meeting targets and conforming to policy. (paragraph 47)

(2) Improve the balance of the curriculum by:

- ensuring that senior managers and subject co-ordinators systematically monitor not just planning but also teaching and delivery. This should be carried out with sufficient rigour so that time spent on one subject is not to the detriment of others, and the time spent on each subject is used to best effect; (paragraphs 23, 24 and 65)
- monitoring and evaluating curriculum delivery from Reception to Year 6, ensuring that skills are built progressively, and one topic creates a foundation for the next; (paragraphs 22, 23, 36, 45 and 76)
- ensuring assessment information leads to improvements in curriculum planning and teaching, for example that teaching through each day and week provides an effective balance of learning activities and that each subject is allocated sufficient time. (paragraph 36 and 45)

(3) Improve provision for the most able by:

- planning further opportunities when teachers challenge these pupils to achieve the highest targets; (see in particular Part D sections on English and mathematics, but also paragraph 36)
- celebrating their particular success in clearer ways so that all pupils see what can be achieved. (paragraph 33)

When addressing these issues, governors and senior managers should:

Consider reviewing school policies and procedures so that they guide key areas of improvement, for example the way teachers use assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of planning and teaching and provide guidance for pupils. (paragraph 42)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	114
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	24	42	28	2	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	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	489
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	11

Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register (Stages 1-2 and 3-5)	56 / 18

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	77

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	47	47	94

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	32	36
	Girls	40	43	47
	Total	70	75	83
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (81)	79 (94)	87 (84)
	National	82 (77)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	37	41
	Girls	47	46	44
	Total	79	83	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (87)	87 (86)	89 (90)
	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	35	47	82

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	26	30
	Girls	38	36	41
	Total	65	62	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (77)	76 (72)	88 (90)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	28	28
	Girls	40	34	42
	Total	68	62	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (73)	76 (79)	85 (87)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	4
Indian	12
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	406
Any other minority ethnic group	19

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	238

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-9
	£
Total income	790197
Total expenditure	794470
Expenditure per pupil	1625
Balance brought forward from previous year	34577
Balance carried forward to next year	30304

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	489
Number of questionnaires returned	244

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	40	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	43	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	54	4	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	53	8	4	1
The teaching is good.	54	40	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	51	12	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	36	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	42	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	51	11	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	41	56	2	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	53	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	48	14	5	5

Other issues raised by parents

A significant number of parents feel the club activities at Key Stage 1 are too limited.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. The Early Years phase, consisting of two reception classes, is a strength of the school. Attainment on entry to the school is above average in the key areas of speaking, listening, numeracy and social development. Work is very well planned using the areas of learning and also, where appropriate, National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The curriculum followed is exciting, lively and very well matched to the age range. Pupils receive a flying start to their formal education. Progress is good, so that by the age of five most pupils are achieving above what is expected for their age.

Personal and social development

55. The quality of provision for children's personal and social development is very good. Children enter the reception classes with above expected levels of personal and social development. Staff build most successfully on this and ensure children's all round good progress so that by five they attain well above what is expected of children of this age. They respond positively to school rules and their behaviour is very good. They are confident in their approach to learning tasks and when talking to other children or adults. The secure and stimulating environment that the school provides fosters their curiosity and sense of wonder. Well-taught routines support an extremely independent approach, enabling children to develop good social skills. They demonstrate a well-developed sense of fairness and take turns without fuss. Most children understand the difference between right and wrong. They show respect for materials and property, and care for living things. Children with special educational needs are identified early and are included in all activities. Their needs are understood and met, and activities are well matched to their prior attainment. Children take responsibility for a range of duties including taking the register back to the office, tidying up at the end of sessions and for particular tasks, for example putting their names on the correct work.

Language and literacy

56. Teachers have an impressive understanding of the early developmental stages of language and literacy skills. They place appropriate and strong emphasis on the early acquisition of good speaking and listening skills. Attainment on entry is above average in both language and literacy. Children learn rapidly as a result of the well-planned curriculum. Some are working most successfully on National Curriculum Programmes of Study by the age of five. Children recite rhymes clearly and the majority speak confidently to the whole class. They talk and take roles confidently in exciting areas, such as McDonald's or when investigating stars in the science area. They listen carefully to their teachers and are beginning to express their own views. For example, one boy explained how you can 'feel the letter p' if you place your hand to your mouth. Children receive a flying start in reading and make good progress. By five, children know how books work and know that print conveys meaning, with most able to read many simple words; a significant number are already reading sentences. Children match letter names and letter sounds, with higher attainers using their early phonic knowledge when trying to read unfamiliar words. Children's progress is enhanced by the regular opportunities to read and develop phonic skills in the literacy hour programme. Under-fives are provided with a range of good quality,

well-organised books and thoroughly enjoy their many opportunities to read to adults and to each other. All children are encouraged to look at books on their own, in small groups and as a class. They take books home to share with their families. Writing standards are above expectation by five. Children make very good progress in their independent writing skills as a result of the wide-ranging well-matched activities planned by their teachers, for example shopping lists for cake-makers or 'thank you' letters for party-goers. Many are becoming confident writers and frequently spend lengthy periods of time at the writing table. They recognise the difference between capital and lower case letters and some remember some of the reasons for using them. Higher attainers are beginning to include full stops and capital letters appropriately. Their progress since September is impressive.

Mathematics

57. Children enter Reception with levels in numeracy that are above expectations for children of this age. By five, children exceed the 'desirable learning outcomes', with a significant number reaching the early levels of the National Curriculum. The quality of numeracy teaching is very good. As a result children make good progress. By five they can count to 20 and many can go beyond to very high numbers. They recognise number names and most can write them accurately. Many are beginning to understand simple number operations such as adding and subtracting. They begin to understand, as a direct consequence of very good teaching, what it means to estimate an answer, and more importantly that 'right' is relevant. Children undertake investigative work and solve problems practically, applying skills of measurement and knowledge of shape. They sort shapes according to shape, size and colour. The strong daily focus on the acquisition of number skills promotes learning effectively. Early morning work and the taking of registers reinforce mental agility in counting forwards and backwards accurately, and using mathematical vocabulary correctly. Specific times are set aside each day for numeracy and all children benefit from this structured pattern of learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. By the age of five, children's progress in knowledge and understanding of the world is good and they attain the desirable learning outcomes. They are able to talk about where they live and the people in their families. They are beginning to understand the pattern of the days of the week, months of the year and seasons. Early morning work on weather patterns is successful in widening their understanding of how weather affects people's lives; they wonder if they will be going out to play. From their stories and from talking about events that have taken place, under-fives understand aspects of the past in relation to themselves and their families and are beginning to distinguish between fact and fiction. They take part in school assemblies, showing the bread they have made, recalling the event with evident excitement. The quality of curricular planning is very good, with clear objectives promoting relevant learning for children. For example, the 'Ketchup on your cornflakes' topic enables this delicacy to be tasted, evaluated, and mathematical graphs to be produced showing how delicious it really is. Good teaching about the senses clearly informs the 'feely' approach to phonic learning. Children use information technology with confidence, choosing and loading their own program, usually working in amicable pairs taking turns to control the mouse.

Physical development

59. Children make good progress in their physical development. They change for physical education lessons independently and the majority take great care to fold clothes properly. They are confident in their use of space in the hall and display agility and dexterity when using beanbags and hoops. In their use of wheeled toys, under-fives judge space and distance, and ride, push, pull and balance with increasing skill. A secure outdoor area is planned. Strong parental support enables outdoor activities to be part of curricular provision at present. Skilled teachers plan and provide a very good range of activities to help children develop skills in handling simple tools, malleable materials and construction kits. Such activities support children's well-developed eye and hand co-ordination. In lessons, under-fives can follow simple safety rules and use equipment sensibly.

Creative development

60. Creative development is a strength of under-fives provision. Colourful and lively displays of artwork create a stimulating environment. Children can clearly explain every detail of hand printmaking. They use paint boldly in support of all areas of the curriculum, for example painting letters and numbers. They have a very independent approach, well supported by established routines for the care of resources. Children explore colour and texture using a variety of materials and can explain how things look and feel. They join in confidently when singing in assemblies and perform a wide range of number and nursery rhymes in their classrooms. Awareness of the structure and daily routines of life in reception classes is greatly enhanced for pupils by the regular use of singing to mark time passing or a change of activity. Children cut and paste adeptly and persevere until they are satisfied with their results. They have good opportunities to use very well planned role-play areas. They move confidently, play agreeably and respond very positively to the interest and attention of adults.

The quality of teaching

61. The quality of teaching in reception classes is very good. Teachers and support staff work closely as a united team to provide the best possible start for children. Exemplary curriculum planning ensures a smooth progression from areas of learning to National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Well-constructed assessment procedures inform curricular planning, so that higher attainers are already working well in advance of average national expectations. Continuity and progression in learning are guaranteed by careful planning that builds on what children know, understand and can do. The literacy and numeracy hours have been fully implemented and this is already having a significant impact on the development of skills. Staff establish very supportive relationships with all their children and know them well as individuals. Teachers create a high quality learning environment, have a secure understanding of the intellectual and pastoral needs of young children and thus ensure rapid progress for all pupils. Tasks planned are lively, interesting and well matched to the age and capabilities of the children.
62. Resources for learning are of good quality, easily accessible and well used. Staff are particularly successful at improving further on children's already good social skills and providing rich opportunities for under-fives to acquire self-discipline, autonomy and independence.

ENGLISH

63. Overall, standards in English are slightly below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Although reading standards are average when compared to national standards, they are below the average standard in similarly favoured schools. Standards in writing are slightly below national expectations. This picture of under-achievement results, in the main, from low expectations of the higher-attaining pupils. Too often teachers set these pupils writing tasks more appropriate for average attainers, and consequently standards are lower than they should be. At the time of the last inspection standards were good. The decline in standards relates to insufficient clarity as to what pupils at each level of attainment should achieve. Extensive monitoring of year-group planning and provision has ensured continuity across each year group, but has failed to monitor progress between year groups.
64. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in national tests in 1999 were below national averages for reading and writing. When compared with similar schools, results were well below average. In the last four years results have fluctuated considerably when compared to the gradually rising national trend, and have not matched the national improvement rate.
65. Pupils enter school with good speaking and listening skills and teaching builds successfully on this good start. All teachers maintain high expectations of effort and attention during discussion times. For example, in a numeracy lesson in a Reception class, pupils follow a clear spoken format when estimating, always beginning 'I estimate that ...'. Pupils speak confidently in whole class situations and teachers give adequate time for pupils to collect their thoughts before articulating ideas. There is no planned programme to ensure that pupils develop oral skills progressively in line with National Curriculum requirements, which means this good progress can not be assured..
66. The teaching of basic reading skills is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Parents, teachers and support staff work closely throughout the key stage to ensure that learning is progressive. Reading records are well kept and support a home/school reading partnership. Teachers have appropriate assessment procedures in place, and use them well to form ability-related reading groups. The teaching of phonics is well established and supports learning effectively. Information technology programs are an integral part of reading development, and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The school effectively uses a range of reading schemes, colour coded for progression. However, many books are old and require renewal. Guided reading, as outlined in the literacy strategy, is taught in addition to the literacy hour in Years 1 and 2. As a result, some young pupils are expected to concentrate on reading and writing for up to an hour and a half. These long lessons have an adverse impact on pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. This weakness is a symptom of inadequate curricular management. A review of the way staff implement the literacy hour is urgently required.
67. The quality of the teaching of writing is good in Reception and Year 1. All teachers are very clear about the stages of learning in handwriting, spelling and grammatical development. All classes have clear writing targets, as a result of good whole school initiatives to improve standards. Younger pupils learn more rapidly because their teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve. For example, in an extremely good guided writing session in Year 1, pupils wrote lengthy descriptions of fruit, and used a wide range of adjectives and then proof-read work for spelling mistakes. Teachers in Year 2 do not expect enough from pupils, especially those whom they know to be high attainers. Consequently, progress is too slow.

68. The quality of teaching is good overall at Key Stage 1. All teaching is at least satisfactory, and just over a half is good or better. However, teaching is less effective in Year 2, as compared with Reception and Year 1. All teachers have good class management skills and establish very good relationships with pupils. This has a positive impact on learning. The school decision to take guided reading out of the literacy hour gives a planning problem as to what should be done within the literacy hour. Too often time is spent on inappropriate copy writing exercises.
69. At the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils in English in national tests in 1999 was above the national average with 78 per cent reaching Level 4 or above and 30 per cent reaching Level 5 or above. These results are broadly in line with the average in similar schools and have improved at a rate close to but just below that of all schools nationally over the last four years. Boys have improved at a better rate than girls. The overall attainment of current pupils is still high, but not quite as high as the previous standards.
70. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good. They present themselves confidently, using a broad vocabulary and correct grammar, read aloud fluently, and by the age of 11 a high proportion are able to converse, discuss issues and develop arguments with clarity. In rehearsals for a performance of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, pupils used complex language from memory with understanding, humour and dramatic expression. Lower-attaining pupils in Year 3 presented a story clearly on tape for others to listen to and comment on. However, pupils generally have limited opportunities to present to different audiences, and drama skills involving physical control and mime are less well developed.
71. Pupils read well, both silently and aloud. They read effectively for meaning and use reference books to find information well for research purposes. They can follow written instructions, skim and scan text for key details and discuss the content of books they have read. Higher-attaining pupils read independently with commitment and often delight. Most pupils read with expression, sometimes with dramatic effect. Lower-attaining pupils use a range of strategies including phonics to help them and can discuss appropriately and in sequence the books they have read.
72. Attainment in writing is lower and not consistent across the key stage. In one Year 4 lesson on developing descriptive language through the use of similes, some higher-attaining pupils showed great flair and humour in presenting ideas derived from their reading. While there are some good examples of work adapted for the most able, overall the quality of their writing does not fully reflect their ability. The range and variety of pupils' writing is wide, with some very good extended and imaginative writing which creates pictures in the mind, as well as writing instructions, diary entries and letters.
73. The teaching of English at Key Stage 2 is good overall, with minimal unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils respond well to teachers' humour and challenge, are keen to share their work and talk it through with pride, contribute well in whole class activities and make good progress. In the best lessons, pupils respond well to the teacher's humour and challenge, planning is meticulous and includes the support assistant fully. Pupils' work is celebrated in an innovative way, there are frequent changes of focus to maintain interest, knowledge is accumulated in a logical manner and the teacher finds inventive ways of reinforcing learning.

74. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in all classes. Teachers write individual education plans which give clear guidance about the way they intend to adapt the curriculum to meet identified needs. These pupils make good progress. Teachers caringly support pupils for whom English is an additional language.
75. With the exception of a small group of boys in Year 6, pupils enjoy English and do their best. They work hard and behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils see literacy as important and realise it makes a significant contribution to learning in other subjects.
76. Planning for the teaching of English is most effective at year group level. The use of a detailed lesson-planning format leads to good time management and clarifies lesson objectives. Planning over the key stage for the careful progression of pupils' understanding is far less effective, as is the inappropriate use of whole-class activity for higher-attaining pupils. Teachers have a lot of assessment information about pupils and informal assessment within lessons is generally good. However, there is too little awareness of how to use assessment information to ensure that pupils' progress across year groups is sufficient. In some classes, time for literacy is immediately followed by other English activities and the lack of variety mitigates against pupils' motivation for the work in hand. Targets to raise the standard of boys' writing have been effective
77. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are beginning to raise standards, but they still lack sufficient coherence. Consequently, although provision is improving, it is improving too slowly. Resources for learning are mainly, but not always, good, with the small but well-used library making a significant contribution. Parents make a major contribution in this area. There are good links with the wider community, including a secondary school teacher working with older pupils and pupils' poetry being included in a town anthology. There is a strong reading home-school partnership, although this is stronger in some classes than others. As standards in information technology improve, this tool for learning is making an increasing contribution to pupils' learning.

MATHEMATICS

78. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations, although too few pupils exceed this standard; there is insufficient challenge for the ablest pupils. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment matches national expectations, with some pupils working towards higher levels of achievement. Teaching and the pupil's learning are satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good overall in Key Stage 2.
79. The pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average in each year from 1997 to 1999, but below the average for similar schools. At the end Key Stage 2, the pupils' attainment in these tests was well above the national average in 1997, and above in 1998 and 1999; these later results were below the average for similar schools.
80. The last inspection found attainment in mathematics to be in line with national expectations at each key stage, but that pupils of above average ability were not being challenged sufficiently in all lessons. This inspection finds the same situation, and there has been inadequate improvement. In Year 1, the pupils achieve at an appropriate level. They can count on in tens and are aware of the order of numbers

in a 'hundred square'. They have good recall of number facts involving addition and subtraction, and articulate their findings offering appropriate suggestions for calculating problems. In Year 2, attainment is satisfactory. Pupils cover work on place value, adding numbers with two-digits together and explaining their strategies. Although most pupils achieve the expected level, too few higher-attaining pupils achieve higher standards because teaching offers them too little challenge. Similarly, pupils of average ability, at times, complete their tasks very quickly, showing they are capable of tackling more demanding work. In Year 3, the pupils' attainment is satisfactory with some pupils achieving higher standards. Pupils add two and three-digit numbers and double and halve numbers accurately. They develop a good sense of number operations involving money, for example adding up simple bills and calculating change. In Year 4, attainment is good. The pupils calculate quickly and explain their strategies. They use basic mathematical vocabulary correctly, and are able to explain appropriate units, for example when measuring intervals of time. They understand place value, the importance of accurate presentation of this type of work and the principles of equal additions, inverse operations and estimation. In Year 5, the pupils' attainment is satisfactory, with some pupils achieving higher standards. Pupils are aware of the 24-hour clock and the difference between analogue and digital representations; and can interconvert them accurately. In Year 6, attainment is satisfactory with some, but not enough, pupils achieving above this standard. The pupils are able to offer reasonable suggestions for work on the 'mean score' and read a line-graph accurately. They are acquiring good knowledge of the appropriate mathematical vocabulary, for example data, mean, mode, average and pie chart. At times, able and articulate pupils are appropriately challenged, but this is not consistently the case.

81. The teaching is at least satisfactory and often good in each year group, with instances of very good teaching in Years 3 and 5. The pupils' learning in these year groups reflects the standard of teaching they receive. When the teaching has clear and challenging objectives, pupils rise to the challenge. When the activities vary and are well matched to each level of attainment, lessons have good pace and pupils are eager to learn. When this is not the case, learning slows considerably and loses direction. There are targets for each year-group to achieve, and this is bringing increased challenge to the pupils' learning. However, too few lessons offer sufficient challenge to ensure that pupils work to their capabilities, and to improve standards. Parents are made aware of the objectives for their children's learning during the year and in annual reports they are informed about the work covered and their children's attainment and progress. The provision for pupils who learn more slowly or are identified as having special educational needs is good, as is the support for pupils for whom English is a new language.
82. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to mathematics are good at both key stages. In each year group the pupils behave well and have a positive attitude to mathematics. They realise the importance of numeracy in other subjects and for life as a whole. This is particularly true in Years 2 and 4, but in Year 6 the attitude of some boys is unsatisfactory.
83. Leadership and management are strong, and beginning to raise standards. Resources for learning are good and used effectively. Staff have sound subject knowledge and understanding, and some teachers show high expertise. Both the curriculum and also assessment procedures to monitor progress are satisfactory. However, in marking, assessment does not make sufficiently clear why pupils have met problems and what they need to learn next. Assessment is a relatively new

- initiative and teachers use it inconsistently to inform planning, particularly in the short-term. Teaching and learning benefit where assessment is good, and when it guides the way the teacher teaches and the way pupils learn.
84. The school has implemented the numeracy hour appropriately, but some staff are too wary of challenging the more able pupils. The school adheres to the numeracy strategy framework, but has yet to adapt it to sufficient effect. Teachers use a commercially produced scheme for mathematics to bring sensible structure to the learning. Planning is monitored effectively against the framework, and the scheme of work plans for continuity across and between year groups. However, this is more effective when planning through each year than from year to year. The mathematics co-ordinator arranges in-service training for staff and they meet regularly with other numeracy specialists in a local education authority working party.
85. Monitoring of teaching is satisfactory, and the co-ordinator is well aware of the standards in each class, and the need to develop the use of assessments to inform future planning and teaching, especially in the short-term. She recognises the need to ensure more securely the consistent and sufficiently high expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Strengths and weaknesses have been identified in each year group, and it is the intention, through the monitoring process, to address these weaknesses, whilst maintaining strengths. The pupils' opinions have been sought, for example about resources for mathematics, and this approach has been used successfully to motivate the pupils and develop positive attitudes towards the subject. The staff are also offered opportunities to observe demonstration lessons, as well as to have their own teaching observed and commented upon. A member of the governing body has been given the responsibility for numeracy within the school; this has been tackled systematically and well. The governor is well informed and supportive of the staff. There are plans to provide a workshop for the parents on mathematics. Workshops of this type have been offered previously and have proved successful. The governor intends to liaise with other schools to gain insight into best practice and effectiveness.

SCIENCE

86. Attainment in science is good at Reception, satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, most pupils achieve broadly in line with national expectations, and a few achieve more highly. The school's results in the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessments for 1999 were in line with the national average, but they were well below the average for similar schools. Test results for 1999 at Key Stage 2 were above national average but were below the average for similar schools. Attainment seen in current lessons reflects this picture. Present pupils' attainment is above national expectations, but below that in similar schools.
87. In all classes, teachers meaningfully involve pupils in practical investigations. The majority of pupils understand the basic principles of experimentation. Pupils make careful observations, and are satisfactorily developing the ability to evaluate scientific evidence and to make predictions. Pupils record carefully in a variety of ways, and in ways appropriate for their age and ability. Year 1 pupils look at the properties of materials and gain a good understanding of the effect of different forces on various materials. At both key stages, most pupils are developing appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding about life and living processes, materials and properties and physical processes. Older pupils understand the need for 'fair testing' and apply this idea in their investigations, as seen in one Year 6 class designing an experiment on variations in pitch.
88. The time allocation for science is low but the planned work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. This lack of time has greatest impact on the higher-attaining pupils, giving them insufficient time to extend their learning to the full.
89. The quality of learning is very good in Reception, generally satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and mostly good at Key Stage 2. The rare unsatisfactory progress is linked mainly to the most able pupils being insufficiently challenged and extended. Most pupils draw well on previous knowledge and experience to develop skills and understanding in new situations. Some of the older pupils made perceptive links between science and other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress. Pupils for whom English is a new language make varying progress. At times, these pupils can use the right word but have little understanding of what it means.
90. Pupils are highly motivated, mainly well-behaved, show curiosity, listen attentively and are interested in their work. Throughout the school, pupils co-operate well with each other and contribute confidently to class discussions. They use apparatus safely and are aware of health and safety issues. All pupils show a natural and productive curiosity for science.
91. At Reception, the quality of teaching is very good and at Key Stages 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is generally good. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of all pupils, set a brisk the pace for the lesson, present clear and well-understood learning objectives, and advance learning by the skilful use of questioning. Teachers consistently emphasise the need to take a scientific approach to all enquiries. They take all available opportunities to involve pupils in practical investigations, as in an effective lesson in Year 5 on electrical circuits. All teachers establish good relationships with pupils and this helps promote positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers plan and prepare individual lessons effectively, and make

good use of a suitable range of resources, including the local and school environment.

92. The co-ordinator for the subject provides satisfactory leadership and management, and has made a first and sensible start on raising standards. However, monitoring and evaluation are, as yet, insufficiently systematic and rigorous. Consequently, staff do not have a clear perception as to where improvement is necessary, nor how they can make their teaching more effective. A school policy statement, long-term plan and scheme of work for science is useful and well designed; they help the planning to build learning step by step. The National Curriculum is covered, and learning in one year progresses smoothly to the next. A useful assessment system has recently been introduced in some year groups. There has been some drop in standards in science since the last inspection, but the school has realised this and is energetically addressing the issue. The factor that accounts for the under-performance in comparison with similar schools is that staff have only recently used assessment to ensure that pupils at each level of attainment, and especially the highest attainers, are sufficiently challenged. However, this use of assessment is not consistently implemented in all classes.

ART

93. Although few lessons could be seen, the extensive amount of pupils' previous work in portfolios and in excellent displays confirms that attainment at both key stages is above average. Pupils experience working with a very broad range of media and the standard of their three-dimensional work and modelling with dough is very accomplished. Pencil drawing and painting skills in observational work are less well developed. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils developed a very good understanding of the properties of three-dimensional modelling, lifting their work from a mundane activity to a more abstract, visually exciting way of seeing.
94. Since the last inspection, standards of attainment, teaching and pupils' attitudes have been maintained. However, the present time allocation for art is low and this risks allowing insufficient time to maintain present standards.
95. Teaching overall is good. In most lessons, the use of the current topic gives a stimulating context to the work, but pressure of time means pupils have insufficient opportunity to learn and practise specific art skills. When this happens, pupils do not make satisfactory progress in their skills. This was the case in a music lesson and a geography lesson. When teachers focus on art skills and knowledge, they explain and demonstrate them effectively, and there is a clear relationship between the teacher's knowledge and pupils' understanding. Teachers emphasise aesthetic awareness, feeling, line and shape, but miss opportunities to develop specific skills such as handling tools and working in particular media.
96. Pupils' like and enjoy art. Within the restrictions of the provision, they make good progress across both key stages and benefit from the value put on their work by the quality and extent of the displays around the school. The learning makes a significant contribution to their personal development.
97. The new co-ordinator has made a strong, clear-sighted start and is developing a good portfolio of pupils' work. This collection of work helps teachers to make more detailed and accurate assessments and to monitor progress. Teachers work effectively as collaborative year teams, but they tend to consider planning and

activities rather than pupils' progress in skills and understanding. Despite an awareness of the need to develop a broader cultural range of stimuli and responses, this is still under-developed. The school takes advantage of occasional exhibition opportunities such as this year's exhibition in the 'Dome', and one in the town. However, there is scope to develop more extension activities for the most motivated and talented pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Attainment is average at both key stages, and achievement is satisfactory. It was possible to observe only a few lessons during the inspection. Discussions with the co-ordinator for the subject show that it receives less time and emphasis than at the last inspection, due to the current priority given to literacy and numeracy. This reduces balance in the curriculum, and reduces the breadth of learning in design and technology. The co-ordinator intends to raise the profile of design and technology in the near future and re-build the staff's confidence and good expertise which the school reports were previously in evidence. However, from the few lessons observed and previous pupils' work, it is clear that learning and attainment are at least satisfactory. The pupils produce good work, for example in Years 2 and 3, creating 'Charlie's chocolate factory' and devising recipes for Egyptian bread.
99. At the end of Key Stage 1, planning indicates the pupils should be able to use their skills in designing, make suggestions about how to proceed with tasks, and consider the strengths and weaknesses of their designs. At the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are able to develop their skills in design and technology through such 'design and make' activities. The pupils' recording and evaluation of their work is generally satisfactory; for example, they judged the success of their designs, what they found difficult and how they might change or improve their designs. They use their knowledge and understanding perceptively and have developed a sound awareness of products and their applications in relation to people's needs, for example how things work and their intended purpose. They also look at structures and apply considered techniques for reinforcing and strengthening them.
100. In Year 1, the pupils can use the 'post office' area to develop their skills using simple tools, and there is photographic evidence of work making lighthouses. In Year 2, the work is good, and related to the current theme and topics. This learning effectively helps the pupils to develop their own skills and techniques in a variety of ways. In Year 3, previous work and evaluations reveal the satisfactory and, in some cases, good work the pupils achieve in this year group. For example, topic books give a clear record of the pupils' efforts in creating puppets, from an initial design to evaluating the success of the project. In Year 4, teachers relate work in design and technology to topic work, for example creating Roman shields and mosaics and designing typical Roman menus. In Year 5, work again relates to the current topic, for example making Greek pots and looking at packaging designs. In Year 6, plans show work on making clockwork toys and developing fairground rides for the 'Millennium'.
101. Lessons observed showed good teaching at both key stages. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and a clear understanding of intended outcomes for the pupils' learning. Teachers plan effective lessons, with a steady pace, a concern for quality and a sense of challenge. This produces good learning. Progress for the pupils of above average ability and pupils who learn more slowly is satisfactory. Teachers gave careful consideration during the lessons observed to grouping the pupils

appropriately so that they all gained maximum benefit from the activities, and these groups were helped to promote their skills in language. This is particularly true when classroom assistants support pupils learning English as an additional language.

102. The last inspection judged this area of the curriculum to be a strength. Standards are now only satisfactory, and this reflects the lower emphasis given to the subject.
103. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in the lessons observed are good, and previous work shows that pupils try hard to do their best. They work well individually and as a group.
104. The co-ordinator for design and technology has clear and sensible views as to the way to re-establish the subject within the whole school curriculum. Monitoring of teaching and planning is satisfactory and the co-ordinator is well aware of the areas for development. Resources for design and technology are good and being used effectively to promote the pupil's learning and the acquisition of skills. There is a good range and variety of construction equipment throughout the school. The teachers use this effectively during 'Golden Time' to develop the pupils' skills in fixing and joining.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Attainment in geography is above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Although little geography was taught during the inspection, this judgement was possible from limited observation of teaching at Key Stage 1, scrutiny of pupils' previous work, school and classroom displays, teachers' plans and discussion with a group of Key Stage 2 pupils. The older pupils' questions show a good understanding of the basic skills of map work and they have a firm grasp of the key geographical ideas. Throughout the school, pupils are generally progressing appropriately with some examples of high quality learning in Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs are making sound progress and achieve appropriate standards for their abilities. Pupils with English as a new language find some geographical ideas difficult, but make satisfactory progress.
106. Behaviour is good and occasionally excellent. Pupils generally concentrate on their work and enjoy their activities. Older pupils can make natural and effective links between geographical concepts and other subjects, and are conscious of global and environmental issues. Pupils have a positive and constructive attitude to the subject.
107. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good, with an outstanding lesson seen in Year 1 on routes and use of a plan of the school. This lesson showed many very good features, including productive ways of involving pupils in practical activities and well-matched planning for different levels of attainment. On the evidence of previous work and discussion with pupils, teaching at Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory. Teachers plan to cover the scheme of work, but the low time allocation for the subject and the way the timetable is organised, limit the breadth and continuity of coverage. Although teachers include geography in other topics, for example history topics on the Romans and ancient Egypt, this loses focus on key geographical skills such as mapping, and concepts such as location. Teachers manage their classes effectively and make good use of the appropriate resources, including visiting areas of a contrasting physical environment. The provision and standards in geography are similar to the last inspection.

HISTORY

108. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is at least average and at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is above or in some cases, well above average. No teaching could be observed at Key Stage 1, and therefore judgements are based on other evidence such as previous work. These standards represent an improvement since the last inspection.
109. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory or better, with most teaching good or better, and nearly three-quarters very good or excellent. The high attainment and depth of understanding evident in Year 3 provide strong evidence that sound foundations were laid at Key Stage 1. For example, pupils have a very certain sense of past and present, and a much deeper understanding of the way events and circumstances inter-relate than is usually seen with pupils of this age. The well understood and deep subject knowledge of the teachers enriches both teaching and learning. It leads to careful and precise planning, with clear objectives and considerable breadth and depth. This allows the secure general teaching skills to flower. Lessons have many learning opportunities ranging from investigation of Roman pottery as young archaeologists, to investigations of the way ancient Egyptians 'mummified' their dead, and on to interviewing a participant in the original Olympic games. Teachers skilfully set tasks to help pupils of each level of attainment to achieve their best, moving from a class activity, such as looking at a video, to individual work with parent helpers or classroom assistants. The excellent teaching adds an extra component. These teachers use challenging and probing questions that force pupils to think for themselves and evaluate what they discover. In these classes, pupils look continually for ways they can help themselves and others learn quicker and better.
110. This teaching produces very powerful learning. Pupils work hard, fast and are determined to tease out the answers to very challenging problems. They work together to gather a very wide range of information, and then bring this together to create an overall view. What is particularly good is the way even young pupils think as historians, seeking to understand why change occurs, and how events affect people and discoveries affect events. Pupils become very confident learners, thinking on their feet and intelligently when in the 'hot seat'. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, in many respects equal to their more able peers. Pupils for whom English is a new language find things more difficult. They try hard, but their difficulty is not only as to language, but also because history is understood rather differently in their home culture.
111. Attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In a Year 5 class most pupils were at a standard expected of pupils a year older, and the ablest pupils were at a level expected of pupils three years older. The school teaches history within topics, and during the inspection these covered ancient Egypt and Greece, the Romans and Tudor England. Work from other subjects such as art and design and technology enriches the historical learning. In each class, pupils show a breadth of knowledge that is above expectations, and apply this knowledge to answering historical questions of considerable challenge. The strength of the attainment is that it is based upon developed skills and deep understanding.
112. The sound literacy skills of the pupils make a significant contribution to their learning. This is particularly true of speaking and listening, but extended writing is also good as

is reading linked to research skills. Information technology, especially through research on the Internet, is beginning to make a significant contribution.

113. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject, based upon her own secure subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. She ensures that the subject is properly managed and monitors the work to see that what is planned happens, and happens in the right way. Year teams plan effective lessons together and share ideas and, in most years, these teams are beginning to use assessment more systematically not only to record progress but also to guide their planning. Resources are good and significantly enriched by artefacts and models borrowed from the local resource centre.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 but below these standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are provided with insufficient opportunities to cover in sufficient depth all the requirements of the National Curriculum and, consequently, do not reach their full potential in the subject. The senior management, information technology governor and the subject co-ordinator are very aware of this and a systematic programme has now been established to address the deficiencies.
115. At Key Stage 1, pupils are generally confident and competent users of computers and some show good ability. They are able to use many of the functions, use the keyboard effectively, can recall previous work, save and print. Year 2 pupils use the computer confidently to produce good written text and skilfully combine text and graphics. They quickly extract information from historical resource materials to extend their topic work.
116. At Key Stage 2, many pupils are able to operate successfully the range of programs available on the system and use a number of these programs to good effect. They gain experience in the use of the Internet and use e-mail. Good use is made of word processing at both key stages. Teachers provide insufficient opportunities for all pupils to experience work involving the use of databases and graphic forms. Little time is given to work on control, monitoring and modelling, although a very good lesson on the use of a floor robot was seen in Year 1. Pupils of all ages have a clear understanding of the uses and contribution of information technology in the wider world, and the impact this has on their lives. They are able to use their previously acquired skills on a variety of programs. They readily respond to advice, and progress overall is rapid. The pace of work is generally satisfactory, but needs to be accelerated if the older pupils are to cover all elements of the subject. Teachers use information technology insufficiently to support and enhance other subjects, although a good start has been made on rectifying this situation, and some effective practice is already in place.
117. Pupils respond very well to the subject and learn effectively. They show a positive attitude and interest in the use of computers. Most are able to discuss their work and explain the activity within the context of the lesson. The quality of teaching support is generally good and often very good. Teachers are taking every opportunity to develop their own expertise in the use of equipment and are becoming confident in its use. Teachers produce many of their labels and display captions on the computers, and this shows a good example to the pupils. Teachers provide opportunities for the use of computer programs to support work in most other

subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils are encouraged in their efforts; they are given helpful feedback and supported appropriately. Teachers and pupils keep on-going records, which helps ensure equal entitlement of use. The scheme of work for information technology forms a good foundation for better progression through the school, better continuity between each step and deeper and broader coverage of skills and knowledge. However, it has yet to be fully implemented.

118. The school has recently established an excellent and dedicated information technology suite. This is the result of the commitment and hard work of the school's information technology project group, the able leadership by the subject co-ordinator; and the support of numerous individuals and organisations. In the term that it has been in use, it has given obvious advantage to the subject and has raised the profile and status of this fundamental area of learning. All years use it very effectively and it is also available through after-school club activities. In recent months the school has made significant advances in the provision and support for information technology, much of it due to the ability and enthusiasm of the subject co-ordinator. Standards are improving rapidly. There has been a decline in standards since the last inspection at Key Stage 2, but improvement is now rapid.

MUSIC

119. Attainment at Reception is above average, and at the end of Key Stage 2 it is in line. No lessons in music were seen at Key Stage 1 and insufficient other evidence was available to make a full judgement. However, attainment in singing across the school is very good. Pupils sing well, confidently and musically, often from memory. They sing with a sense of presence, in tune, sometimes in parts, with good breathing skills and very good diction. Standards are below expectation in composing, and pupils have too little experience of playing instruments in lessons. In the early years, pupils play instruments rhythmically with control, sing well, and have good listening skills and a broad repertoire for their age. By Year 6, pupils' knowledge about music is good though they have too little opportunity to put it into practice. A large number of pupils are learning to play additional instruments outside the classroom. They reach appropriate standards in most individual instrumental lessons and this contributes well to their understanding in class.
120. Since the last inspection, standards overall have been maintained. The quality of teaching has been maintained and in consequence, singing has improved. However, due to restrictions within the curriculum, standards of composing have declined. The amount of music teaching going on in classes has decreased and pupils' experience is consequently less comprehensive and coherent.
121. Teaching is good in the early years, and pupils are enthusiastic and keenly engaged in musical activity throughout their lessons. It is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. In some lessons, good teacher knowledge and a strong musical role model is having a marked effect on the quality of singing throughout the school. Pupils enjoy music, particularly singing, and they commit themselves well to it over long periods of time, especially when it is practical music making. Where teaching is less effective, the teacher does not manage the use of time well and pupils make too little progress for the length of the lesson.
122. Some instrumental teaching is good, motivating pupils and ensuring good technique. In one lesson it was poor, with no use of demonstration and where the teacher was satisfied with far too low a standard of playing; she moved on to new material and

- new techniques far too soon. In some instrumental lessons, the teacher encourages pupils to develop ensemble skills playing with others; a group of guitarists added greatly to the quality of an assembly. There is considerable scope to extend these opportunities.
123. The new co-ordinator has made a good start on improving both standards and provision. Her personal example inspires and leads pupils to enjoy music and sing very well. She is clear about the areas still needing to be developed. Very little composing is being taught and there is too little practical music making. This is because too little time is allocated to music teaching in the classroom, a lack of dedicated music spaces and because of the need to develop the subject expertise of class teachers. Teachers give pupils opportunities to develop a 'feeling' response to music, but their teaching does not give equal emphasis to building pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils listen and work within a too limited range of cultural musical styles and traditions. Assessment is at a very early stage of development and the progressive development of skills is not yet receiving sufficient attention across the full curriculum. The monitoring of teaching, including the work of instrumental teachers, has barely begun.
124. The school is rightly proud of its ambitious and effective school productions and concerts involving a large number of pupils; they are of a high standard. Through the very good quality of singing, music also makes a valuable contribution to the personal development of pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Attainment by the end of each key stage at least matches expectations, and in some cases exceeds them. During the inspection, inspectors observed gymnastics, games and dance. In games activities, pupils control their movements well, handle appropriately a range of equipment and demonstrate a good range of skills. They move and arrange apparatus sensibly and safely. In small-group games, many pupils achieve a good standard. They use the small equipment in a controlled way and develop a range of effective ball handling and throwing skills. Most are able to catch, control and pass balls at a standard appropriate to their age. Pupils of all ages develop an understanding of the demands, rules and complexities of competitive activities, balancing a desire to win as a team with a willingness to play fairly. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress, building on previous experiences to better their performance and skills. Most pupils perform well in dance and respond appropriately to music.
126. Pupils have very good attitudes to their physical education activities; pupils at Key Stage 1 are very enthusiastic yet still very self-disciplined. They enjoy the lessons and concentrate well on their learning. They follow instructions and try hard to improve their performance. Most pupils practise sensibly and work well both on their own and also in co-operation with others, including teamwork in games and competitions. They make appropriate use of equipment and apparatus for the tasks they are asked to perform. Pupils constructively evaluate performances of others and advise on improvement. They are well aware of safety aspects related to physical education and conscientiously apply them during lessons.
127. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Teachers plan and prepare lessons well, with clear objectives for the pupils' learning. Teachers provide a good range of resources, give clear directions and make appropriate teaching

- points throughout the lesson. They make effective use of demonstration by pupils to illustrate skills to be achieved. However, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance so that they see how to improve. Teachers constantly offer encouragement and feedback to individual pupils to extend their learning. The pace of lessons is brisk and suitable attention is given to warm-up and cool-down activities. In all lessons, teachers demonstrate good class management and control, and show a confidence in the subject.
128. The school provides pupils with the opportunity to learn to swim and the school grounds provide many opportunities to extend physical activity. There is a well-developed scheme of work, which is an improvement since the last inspection. This considers the links between good health and exercise. This planned provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum for both key stages. The school involves pupils in a range of competitive sports and provides a range of after-school club activities. These give the older pupils opportunities to extend their sporting skills, but similar opportunities for younger pupils are too limited.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. Provision for religious education is unsatisfactory, and this represents a significant drop in standards since the last inspection. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 meets the expectations of the current locally Agreed Syllabus, but is well below this standard by the end of Key Stage 2.
130. Teaching is mainly satisfactory but only rarely better than this, and there are instances of unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is more effective than at Key Stage 2, and this is because it is more dependent upon general teaching skills than on specific knowledge and skills associated with religious education. The curriculum reflects the current locally Agreed Syllabus, but development is delayed, and awaits agreement of a Swindon Agreed Syllabus.
131. There are clear reasons why the teaching is insufficiently effective. In many lessons, too little time is allocated to the subject, and the time given is towards the end of a long day. This means that the pupils' concentration wanders and the teachers' energy is low. Lack of time leads teachers to attempt too much in the time available. The teachers' insecure subject knowledge and understanding exacerbate this unsatisfactory situation. This leads to teaching that does not have clear objectives, contains many subject mistakes, and lacks a clear understanding of what is to be taught. As a result, a highly skilled teacher who tried very hard to teach well and had planned several potentially interesting learning tasks, in the event taught several things that were incorrect and missed the point of teaching Islam. In a lesson on the same topic, another teacher had a much better understanding of the material and consequently had simplified the ideas and focused on what was really important. She was able to help the pupils to move from their own experience to a new area of learning.
132. The lack of confidence on the part of the teachers means their usual enthusiasm for their teaching is restricted and their uncertainty transmits itself to the pupils. This means pupils do not understand the importance and meaning of what they learn. They become unmotivated and uninterested. In a more general lesson, again the teacher tried hard but did not know the teaching strategies that underpin effective teaching of religious education. In this lesson, teaching that needed to be deeply reflective and spiritual became a homily on morality. As a consequence, the learning

- became unsatisfactory and uninspiring. To balance this, a lesson in a reception class used a simple story to enable very young pupils to reflect in great depth on feelings of loss and loneliness, and both teacher and pupils linked this securely to the reason why Christians pray. Behaviour and relationships are satisfactory in most lessons, but in one lesson that exhibited many of the weaknesses in the teaching detailed above, the behaviour of a group of boys became unacceptable, and many of the other pupils only began to learn satisfactorily when working on their own.
133. Resources for learning are satisfactory and include a range of artefacts. However, teachers tend to use them as illustrations rather than special objects to generate response and expression. Lack of understanding led a teacher to talk about the way Muslims honoured the Koran by never placing it on the ground, but then she put it to one side on the floor.
134. As a consequence of this unsatisfactory teaching and learning, pupils make unsatisfactory progress. A good start is made in reception classes, but by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have only a satisfactory knowledge, and have not fully developed the attitudes, skills and understanding expected by the Agreed Syllabus. They do not develop sufficient ability to reflect on the meaning and purpose in life and express their developing beliefs. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils do not have a secure knowledge of the range of religions covered by the current syllabus and their understanding is shallow and confused.
135. The subject is not adequately led or managed. The co-ordinator does not sufficiently help her colleagues to understand the point, purpose and significance of the subject. The subject policy places too great an emphasis upon the moral aspects and too little on the expressive and reflective. When dealing with other major religions, the policy tends to compare other religions with Christianity rather than respecting, appreciating and celebrating their difference. The scheme of work does not ensure that pupils build clear and unconfused knowledge, and links with other topic work are not secure. During the inspection, classes in several years were introducing Islam. This topic is not equally appropriate for all these years. However, the crucial weakness in the provision is the inadequate training for teachers, and this lies at the root of many of the problems.