

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC FIRST SCHOOL

Cowley

Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123215

Headteacher: Mrs Hilary Webb

Reporting inspector: Dr Melvyn J Bradshaw
6169

Dates of inspection: 3rd to 5th July 2000

Inspection number: 187625

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Oxford Road Cowley Oxford
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of Chair of Governors:	Father Ivor Netto
Date of previous inspection:	18 th March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Melvyn Bradshaw	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Mathematics (support)	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
		Under fives	What should the school do to improve further?
		English as an additional language	
		Special educational needs	
Mr Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Mr Eric Wilson	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Science (support)	
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		History	
		Equal opportunities	
Mrs Ann Bradshaw	Team inspector	Science	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Geography	
		Information technology	
		Music	
		English (support)	

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
 Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 200 pupils who attend full-time from Reception to Year 4, together with 24 part-time Reception children. The numbers of boys and girls are almost equal. At the time of the inspection, 10 of the part-time children were not yet five years old. Children enter Reception part-time in the term in which they are five, and become full-time in the term after. This means that those entering the school after Easter have only one term, part-time, before starting in Year 1. Few children have Nursery experience, but before starting in Reception many attend the preschool group, held on the school's site. The school's roll is quite stable, with few children entering or leaving at times other than normal. Each year group is close to the standard entry figure of 45. The majority of pupils (78 per cent) are white; this figure includes 12 per cent from European backgrounds other than Britain. Other pupils come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. Nine pupils are supported because their first language is not English. The background of pupils is about average; 21 pupils (11 per cent) claim free school meals, which is below average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is about average; 40 (18 per cent) are on the register of special educational needs, of these one has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Attainment on entry is broad and below average overall; it is weakest in the areas of language and literacy and mathematical language. Owing to their limited time in Reception, many children are not as advanced on entering Year 1 as pupils in most other schools. This is especially evident in the Year 1 only class.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady's Catholic First School is a well organised and happy community. Children enjoy their time in the school and progress well. They achieve standards that are above average by the end of Year 2. Current pupils who are about to leave Year 4 are attaining broadly average standards, except in English where they are higher. The school cares for its pupils effectively. Teaching is good, especially in Reception and Key Stage 1. The new headteacher, supported by staff and governors, is providing the school with very good leadership. She has accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school has broadly average income; it uses its resources well and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very good; she is well supported by staff and governors.
- Teaching is good overall, and is currently good in Reception and Key Stage 1.
- Children are interested in their work, show good respect and attendance has improved.
- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science, especially by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, it is very good for spiritual and cultural aspects.
- The quality of care and support given to pupils is high.
- There are good links with parents, the pre-school group and the Middle School.

What could be improved

- The organisation of the curriculum, the use of time and the range of science work in Years 3 and 4 are not yet good enough. Assessment is developing well, but is not consistent across all subjects or throughout the school.
- Behaviour management strategies are not applied consistently.
- The management roles of co-ordinators are not developed sufficiently.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Our Lady's Catholic First School was inspected in March 1996 and, since then, it has made satisfactory progress. Most areas of weakness identified in the previous report have been dealt with, although more work needs to be done. The results achieved by its pupils at the end of Year 2, in the National Curriculum tests in reading and writing, have risen, and are now well above the national average. In mathematics, there has been a significant improvement this year. In information technology there has been satisfactory progress and attainment is now about average. There have been improvements in history, physical education and design and technology. The quality of teaching has improved. Almost all teaching is at least satisfactory, and much is good. This represents a notable improvement over the last inspection when about a quarter was unsatisfactory. There still needs to be more emphasis on problem solving, and the development of pupils' skills across a range of subjects is not systematic. Better use is made of open-ended questions, although this is less in evidence in science. The positive ethos in the school has been maintained, although pupils' behaviour is not of the same consistently high standard. The previous strengths related to the provision of special educational needs are still evident. Under the direction of the new headteacher and the Governing Body, the leadership and management of the school have improved and are good. The school development plan is better and there are clearer links to the use of resources. The role of co-ordinators has been extended, but needs developing further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	A	A*	A	A
Writing	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	C	B	D	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Over the past four years, the school's results have improved at a rate similar to that found nationally, although it has varied from subject to subject and year to year. In reading and writing, at the end of Year 2, results have generally been well above the national results and those of similar schools; that is those with between eight and twenty per cent claiming free school meals. In mathematics, results have been much closer to the national average, and were below in 1999. The results for 2000 show a significant improvement in mathematics, and are only a little less good in reading and writing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress. Standards when children leave the school are generally similar to the national picture, except in English where they are higher. The school sets appropriate general targets and meets them. Attainment in science is currently above average by the end of Year 2 and average by Year 4, being weakest in the development and use of skills. Too often, in Years 3 and 4, all pupils produce the same writing in science when recording their work. Improvement is evident in information technology and standards are now similar to those expected. In other subjects, standards are at least satisfactory, and have improved in history and design and technology. Children under five make good progress in the Reception class. However, because of the limited time in school, few of these children achieve the standards expected by the age of five and they are not well prepared for starting full-time in Year 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory, and improve as they move through the school. They are interested in the activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory; some pupils are boisterous in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is satisfactory. The youngest children find it hard to take turns. Pupils show good respect for the feelings of others.
Attendance	Attendance is good; it has improved recently to be above the national average.

Pupils' attendance has improved and they are interested in the activities provided. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils in the Year 1 class are improving rapidly. There are too few opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
44 lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when a quarter was unsatisfactory. Virtually all teaching is now at least satisfactory, and in over 65 per cent of lessons it is good or better. About 16 per cent of lessons featured very good teaching. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. In mathematics it is good up to Year 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Strengths of teaching, evident especially in Years 1 and 2, are good planning, high expectations, the effective use of a range of methods and good pupil management. There has been a marked improvement in the Year 1 class recently. Occasional weaknesses, most evident in Years 3 and 4, include allowing the pace of lessons, and hence pupils' learning, to drop and not paying enough attention to developing pupils' skills. Teachers often ensure that pupils use literacy well to support learning in other subjects. The good teaching in Key Stage 1 helps to promote children's learning. They show interest and concentration. The demands are not quite as great in Years 3 and 4 and, as a result, the pace of learning slows, but remains satisfactory overall. The teaching in Reception is good but, for the youngest children, is not always totally effective because too much emphasis is being given to preparing them for Year 1.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad curriculum, which is enriched by the provision of swimming. Very good provision is made for developing literacy skills. There is some imbalance in the amount of time allocated to subjects and time during the day is not always used effectively.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are well supported and have full access to the curriculum provided. They make good progress overall and achieve well for their abilities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Although additional support is limited, provision is good. Sensitive teaching and the effective use of other staff enables these pupils to make good progress and, by the time they leave the school, their attainment is similar to that of other pupils.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall the provision is good; it is very good for spiritual and cultural development, and good for moral development. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. Many subjects make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has effective procedures to care for its pupils, although staff do not apply behaviour strategies consistently. Assessment procedures are improving and well developed in English, for children under five and for those with special educational needs. However, assessment is not consistent across the school and is not used sufficiently to guide planning. Procedures to monitor and improve attendance are good.

The school works well in partnership with parents; parents give good support to the school and to their children's education. The curriculum offered to children under five, who entered school after Easter, is adversely affected by the short time many of them have in Reception and the desire to prepare them for a formal Year 1 timetable.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. There is a shared vision of taking the school forward. Staff changes have inhibited the development of the roles of other senior staff, especially in relation to the monitoring of teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfill their responsibilities very well. They share the forward vision of staff and have developed very good procedures to support the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance effectively. Senior staff and governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	The high standard of development and financial planning ensures good strategic use of resources.

The school has adequate staffing; accommodation, except for the outside area for children under five, and learning resources are good. Principles of best value are applied very well. The recently appointed headteacher has already identified the school's key strengths and the most important weaknesses.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like school and their progress is good. Behaviour is mostly good; problems are dealt with quickly. The school cares very well for the children Teaching in the school is good and teachers are approachable. The school expects children to work hard. Children are helped to become mature and responsible. The support for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of Christian values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards in the Year 1 class. Behaviour in the playground and the Year 1 class. Information of what is being taught. Reports are variable in Key Stage 1. The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors support parents' views. Standards in Year 1 have been a major concern for the school; action taken has been as prompt and as effective as possible given the circumstances. The school is aware of the behaviour issues and has plans to ensure consistent application of policies. Reports are generally good, but some variation does occur in the level of detail provided. The school recognises that newsletters do not contain sufficient information on what is to be taught. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, which is similar to that found in most first schools. Inspectors agree fully with parents' perceptions of the strengths of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 In 1999, in National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 2 or above was well above the national average in reading, above the average in writing, and close to the average in mathematics. Similarly, the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was well above the average in reading and writing, and close to the average in mathematics. Overall, taking account of the full range of attainment, results were well above the average in reading and writing, and below the average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results in reading and writing were well above the average, but below the average in mathematics. Since 1996, results have remained above the national average in reading and increased at about the same rate as the national improvement. In writing, the improvement has been greater than that nationally. In mathematics, after a period of improvement, results declined in 1999. Teacher assessments in science indicated that 91 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2, similar to the national average, and 34 per cent of pupils were recorded as attaining the higher Level 3, well above the average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are above the average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This is consistent with the data from the 2000 National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments, which show a marked improvement in mathematics.
- 2 Standards of attainment when pupils leave the school in July, at the end of Year 4, will be above the average in English, and about average in mathematics and science. In English, these results represent an improvement over those reported in the previous inspection. The weaknesses relating to standards, identified in the previous report, have been successfully addressed. In information technology, attainment is now about average and there have been improvements in history and design and technology. The school analyses its assessment data carefully and uses this to set targets for improvement, such as to raise standards in mathematics.
- 3 Attainment on entry to the school is below average overall, especially in aspects of language and literacy and mathematics. Children join Reception part-time in the term in which they are five and, as a result, few children achieve the expected levels of attainment by the age of five. Children's progress in Reception is good, but only those who have more than one term's experience are adequately prepared for Year 1. In language and literacy, children do not listen well or speak clearly. They handle books well and a few recognise some words. About half write their own first names. Children's work in the mathematical area of learning improves well. Children have an improving knowledge of number. Most can count up to 10, but have a limited mathematical vocabulary. Children's knowledge of the world gradually increases. In particular, they have made a good start in science. For instance, they observe a range of minibeasts and describe simple life cycles well. They move the computer mouse accurately. In other areas, children are close to the expected standard by five. They use a range of media, including paint, well. They produce colourful, careful paintings and drawings of other children in the class. Children handle scissors, cut and stick with skill and develop good physical control when using large ride-on toys.

- 4 Pupils in Year 2 are achieving above average standards in English, mathematics and science. They are similar to the average in information technology. Virtually all pupils read accurately and with developing expression and awareness of punctuation. At least half show good comprehension skills. Attainment in this area is above average. Writing skills of pupils are well developed and attainment is above average; their writing is often interesting and includes good use of descriptive phrases. Pupils' creative writing is particularly good. Handwriting is neat, well formed and almost always joined. Listening improves, especially in the Year 1/2 classes. Although attainment is not as good as in other areas of English, pupils are becoming more confident and articulate speakers. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is above average. The majority accurately add and subtract numbers to 100, and many beyond this. Many can also multiply and divide using simple numbers. They know a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developing well. Literacy is used well to support learning in other subjects, but Numeracy is not used extensively. In science, pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 2. They have a broad knowledge across all areas of science and use descriptive vocabulary to good effect. Pupils' skills also develop well, especially observation and description. In information technology, attainment is about average; pupils use the keyboard to input text, select different icons, control the mouse and print their work satisfactorily.
- 5 Pupils in Year 4 demonstrate attainment that is above average in English and about average in mathematics, science and information technology. Pupils read with accuracy and expression. They have a good understanding of what they have read. Pupils write using correct punctuation and know how to spell many important words. They write well for a wide range of different purposes. Handwriting, however, is not as good as in Year 2 because a significant proportion has reverted to using print. This is partly due to teachers not consistently using a joined script when writing on the board or marking pupils' books. Pupils' listening skills are good and they speak clearly. Higher attaining pupils know how to use the contents and index pages of a non-fiction book. Pupils' literacy skills are good. Literacy lessons are used well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is about average. Pupils have good number skills, but they have too few opportunities to use them to solve problems. Pupils' mental mathematical skills are also good. They draw block graphs and histograms with reasonable accuracy. Their knowledge of science is about average, but too much of the recorded work is similar for all pupils. Scientific skills are not developed or used consistently. Pupils understand that a circuit is required for a light to work and apply this knowledge well when making robots in design and technology. In information technology, attainment is about average. Pupils are confident in using the mouse and keyboard.
- 6 Throughout the school, pupils generally achieve at least satisfactory standards in other subjects. The satisfactory standards, identified in the previous report, in art, music and physical education, have been maintained. The weaknesses in history and in design and technology have been overcome and pupils display satisfactory standards of attainment in these subjects. In art in Key Stage 1, pupils use a range of media to good effect in both two- and three-dimensional work. Observational drawing develops well in Key Stage 2. In music, pupils throughout the school sing rhythmically and confidently; and in Year 2 they use instruments sensibly. In history, pupils understand that changes have occurred over time. In geography, pupils draw accurate plans of their school and classroom and, in Year 4, know about different locations overseas, such as Kenya. Pupils' design and technology skills, especially

making and evaluating, develop well. In physical education, about half the pupils in Year 2 swim confidently. In Years 3 and 4, they perform well in country dancing.

- 7 Pupils' achievement varies from class to class. It is good in Reception and the Year 1/2 classes. This is due to very well organised teaching, interesting lessons and generally challenging activities. In Years 3 and 4, achievement is satisfactory with pupils building soundly on their work in Year 2. The pace of learning is not always high enough. In the Year 1 class, achievement has been unsatisfactory throughout the year, but has improved rapidly recently due to good teaching and high expectations regarding behaviour. Throughout the school, achievement is strongest in English.
- 8 Pupils with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in Reception and Key Stage 1, and at least satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. This is particularly evident in their English, which then helps support learning in other subjects. The amount of progress is illustrated by the fact that, in 1999, by the time they reached Year 2, almost all pupils achieved at least Level 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. This good progress is associated with good teaching and well organised support provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator, classroom assistants and parents who help pupils in the classroom. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls by the end of Key Stage 1 or Year 4. Achievement has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in Key Stage 1. Higher attaining pupils are now mostly well catered for, but more demands could be placed on them in Years 3 and 4, especially in science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 9 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are satisfactory overall, but generally improve as they move through the school. Pupils like coming to school and attendance levels are good. Children under five in the Reception class who attend on a part-time basis find concentration and listening difficult, do not take turns well and often call out answers or remarks without the teacher's permission. These attitudes limit the learning for many pupils in the lessons. As pupils attend full-time and progress through the school these attitudes improve although the standard achieved in lessons is linked to the consistency teachers show in their management and control of the pupils. For example, the older Reception pupils were absolutely entranced when observing the teacher paint roses and using a stick to create petals enabling them to make good progress in their development of observational and painting skills. Attitudes are generally better when pupils are engaged in practical activities. In some lessons, especially in Year 3, learning is limited because pupils often seek the attention of staff for example, following the teacher around the classroom. In the Year 3/4 classes, pupils' attitudes are almost always good with a positive impact on their learning.
- 10 Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well, but a number of pupils mess about in lessons. Behaviour in lessons improves as pupils progress through the school. Behaviour observed in the Year 1 class shows a significant improvement over that reported by parents, due to the impact of the new supply teacher. In the playground, a small number of pupils show aggressive and boisterous tendencies and potential bullying has been identified by the school. No temporary and permanent exclusions have been made since the previous inspection; a figure well below the national

average. Most pupils know the rules well and develop an increasing awareness of how to behave appropriately. Manners of the youngest pupils are below what is normally expected for children under five. Although they improve as pupils get older, many younger pupils find it hard to take turns or share resources. Pupils are generally polite and friendly to adults and visitors. Relationships are satisfactory overall.

- 11 Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They willingly undertake the limited amount of tasks they are given. They respond well to clubs, for example, almost all Year 4 pupils attend the First Aid Club. In class and whole school assemblies most pupils show good respect for the feelings and values of others.
- 12 Attendance levels have improved. They are now good, being above the national average. They show a steady improvement since the previous inspection. Levels are consistent between classes. Rates of unauthorised absences are low.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 13 Pupils are well taught when they start school and during Key Stage 1, this is helping to raise their achievement and learning. The quality of teaching in Year 1 has improved significantly over recent weeks. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils in Years 3 and 4, although there are examples of better teaching, especially in the Year 3/4 classes. Virtually all teaching is satisfactory or better, with over 65 per cent being at least good. Very good teaching is a feature of about 16 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection report when about a quarter of lessons featured unsatisfactory teaching. This improvement has largely been associated with the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
- 14 The teaching of children in Reception is good. However, its success depends to a large extent on when in the year a particular group of children began school. The older children in Reception have made good progress in their learning due to a well planned programme of work which has been delivered effectively. Good attention has been given to all areas of learning and the children have been well prepared for entering the mixed Year 1/2 classes. Procedures are less effective for those children who entered the school part-time after Easter. The teachers are working hard to provide a suitable range of activities, but their impact is less because of the desire to attempt to prepare children for the more formal expectations in Year 1. These children are not yet ready for this owing to their age, immaturity and lack of previous school experience. Children's personal and social development is given good emphasis, as the teachers are fully aware that many of them find sharing and co-operation difficult. A weakness, however, is that expectations with regards to behaviour are not systematically followed through. Planning, the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the areas of learning are good. Activities are well structured and good account is taken of the need to develop children's language, numeracy and social skills. The quality of teaching of aspects of science is especially good and this is one reason why children's science knowledge and skills develop so well by the end of Year 2. Although the teachers' planning is good, there are occasions when the lesson does not follow the original plan and the order of work presented is not logical. When this happens, children get diverted from the task in hand. The good teaching helps promote good learning by children in Reception. Older children, in particular,

concentrate well and show good independence. They are interested in the activities offered, enjoy what they do and many now cooperate satisfactorily.

- 15 The quality of teaching is good overall, but more variable in Key Stage 2. Here, only 40 per cent is good or better, compared with over 90 per cent in Years 1 and 2. Teaching of English is good in both key stages; in mathematics it is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In other subjects, where there is sufficient evidence, teaching follows a similar pattern as in mathematics. Insufficient evidence is available to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in information technology, design and technology and geography throughout the school, in history in Key Stage 1 and in science and music in Key Stage 2. Evidence available suggests teaching in these areas is satisfactory. The strengths and weaknesses are similar throughout the school, although minor weaknesses are most evident in Years 3 and 4. Strengths are particularly evident in Years 1 and 2, and here pupils' learning is good. Although the school recognises that it is not secure in information technology, teachers' subject knowledge is usually good. This helps to ensure that pupils, especially in the Year 1/2 classes, are challenged effectively in their work. Literacy is well taught, and the effective use of the time devoted to English is helping pupils to improve and attain above average standards by the time they leave the school. Literacy lessons are used well to develop pupils' knowledge of other subjects. Teachers use questions well, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. An exception is that, in science, questions do not always allow pupils to give extended replies. Mathematics is taught well in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactorily in Years 3 and 4. The National Numeracy Strategy is assisting teachers, but the pace of these lessons, especially in Key Stage 2, is not always sufficiently high. Lessons in both literacy and numeracy are often longer than the strategies recommend, but little more is achieved within the extra time. Mental mathematics sessions are used well. Mathematics is not used sufficiently to support learning in other subjects. Expectations of pupils are often high in Years 1 and 2, and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. However, in science, demands on older pupils are not appropriate since all pupils often copy the same text in to their books. The good organisation within most classes helps teachers plan to meet the needs of pupils effectively. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive good teaching from classroom and specialist teachers and assistants.
- 16 Lesson planning is mostly good throughout the school, but does not consistently identify how the pace of lessons, or expectations of pupils, can be raised. A range of methods is used well. Teachers encourage discussion and good group work. In the Year 1/2 classes, the teachers skillfully draw out moral and environmental issues when using literacy texts, which leads to interesting discussions. Pupil management is sound, and has clearly improved in the Year 1 class. There are occasions, however, when behaviour management strategies are not consistently applied within and between classes. Relationships between staff and pupils are generally good. The improvements in Year 1 recently have resulted in better learning and more settled pupils.
- 17 In Key Stage 2 in particular, the pace of lessons is rarely better than satisfactory. The slow start to the day in Years 3 and 4, together with some overlong literacy and numeracy lessons, contribute to this. Resources are used effectively to support learning, although there is limited use of information technology in other subjects. At times, not enough material is prepared for group activities in literacy and numeracy and the tasks set are not sufficiently demanding. Teachers know their pupils well

and there are examples of effective use of assessment during lessons. The quality of marking is sound, and especially good in a Year 1/2 class. Homework is well organised, used effectively to support pupils' learning, begins in Reception and increases as pupils move through the school. Much of the homework links with literacy and numeracy.

- 18 Staff work together effectively so that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are given relevant support and activities. As a result, these pupils learn well and make good progress, especially in Key Stage 1. The good teaching in the school helps to promote good learning, although it is not so good where the pace drops. As pupils become accustomed to the demands of Year 1 their concentration improves and many are now working hard. Acquisition of new skills and knowledge is good in English and mathematics. In science pupils acquire good skills in Years 1 and 2, but these are not used or developed systematically in Years 3 and 4.

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

- 19 The curriculum provided by the school, including that for children under five, is broad and meets statutory requirements but it lacks balance. The provision made by the school promotes the intellectual, physical and personal development well and is enriched by the provision of swimming throughout and extra-curricular activities. There is very good provision for developing literacy skills and good provision, through a balanced programme and effective use of time, for physical education. The curriculum does, however, lack balance. There is too much variation in the amount of time allocated to the subjects, for example, it is high for English and low for science. There is also an imbalance in the time allocation in the weekly timetables where that for literacy and numeracy exceed the amount recommended. Provision for science on the timetable is low and there is little evidence to suggest that the use of blocks of time during the year compensates for this. There are schemes of work for each area of the curriculum but these often do not sufficiently identify development of the subject through the whole school and, in particular, the links between Reception, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The curriculum for some areas, for example, art, history and design and technology is built around themes and activities which ensure satisfactory coverage but give insufficient emphasis to the development of skills. The clear identification of skill development and the introduction of more detailed schemes of work should improve teachers' planning and help to raise standards in these aspects of the school's provision. The curriculum committee of the Governing Body is now better placed to take a more active role in curricular issues in the school.
- 20 The broad and relevant curriculum offered to children under five is good in many respects. However, the conflicting pressures of providing a suitable curriculum for children under five and for preparing them for Year 1 presents difficulties when dealing with children who join after Easter. The curriculum is therefore based in part on the recommended areas of learning, but also attempts to take account of the requirements for Year 1, especially the literacy and numeracy sessions.
- 21 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans for them are clear and provide good guidance on how to achieve the identified targets, which cover mainly English and mathematics. Teachers and learning support staff include these pupils in all activities using appropriate

questions. Group tasks planned for literacy and numeracy sessions match these pupils' needs well. For instance, in literacy, they encouraged use of a dictionary and writing sentences to indicate the meaning of a word. Pupils from homes where English is not the main language are also given good support. The input of the specialist teacher, although limited in time, is valuable in identifying the needs of individual pupils, which are then shared with the class teacher. As their English skills improve, these pupils become more confident in other subjects; they have full access to the curriculum and progress well.

- 22 The school makes good provision for the development of literacy and numeracy. The school now makes full use of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and a new mathematics scheme. The analysis of test data, an improved assessment and record keeping system have provided information which has been used effectively for planning new learning for children. The governors with particular responsibility for literacy and numeracy have been very active during the year and monitored the introduction of the strategies throughout the school. All these activities are having a positive effect in helping to raise standards. Literacy is used well to support learning across the curriculum but, as yet, insufficient use is made of numeracy in other areas of the curriculum.
- 23 The school offers a range of activities outside the normal curriculum. These include music, sports, French and First Aid. The provision of the Rainbow Club does much to help children come to terms with loss and bereavement. The school's provision plays an important part in enriching the pupils' learning. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and no exceptions are made on the basis of gender or ethnicity.
- 24 The school does much for pupils' personal development within a Christian framework. The sex education policy is firmly rooted in family values and promotes the importance of relationships. There are clear links to the school's Mission Statement and the importance of promoting the teachings of the Catholic Church. Statutory requirements for sex education and drugs awareness are fully met.
- 25 The school has good links with the community and makes effective use of visits and local experts, particularly in art. The active Parents Association does much to support the school. Some support has been given by local firms, for example, through the provision of a number of computers which were surplus to requirements. The strong links with the parish, identified in the last report, have been maintained. The school's links with the Middle School are good and the current Year 4 pupils are looking forward to starting there in the autumn. The links with the play groups are also strong and good use is made of a pre-school group located on the premises.
- 26 The school's overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For spiritual development it is very good. Provision is evident through the school's commitment to living out its Mission Statement and the promotion of the Catholic Faith. The school provides an environment where the pupils are valued as individuals and success is celebrated, for example, the pupils' first communion. There are also opportunities to explore feelings, for example, the experience of being worried and the relief when the concern was removed and also to offer prayers for the older pupils who were visiting the Middle School. The commitment to developing the Catholic Faith is much in evidence through the provision of focal points in the classrooms and around the school, in the prayers and in the way the pupils sing the communion hymn with due reverence. Provision is particularly

strong in art when young children sit entranced at seeing the way roses are painted and in their reactions to the effect of a paint wash on wax resist work.

- 27 Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. The provision is firmly rooted in the Christian Faith and on the ideas of caring for God's world. Pupils are encouraged to have a clear idea of what is right and wrong and of the need to help others. They discuss the effects of human activity on the environment through consideration of pollution and the diminishing rain forests. The concepts of forgiveness and fairness are explored through the curriculum, for example, in physical education when a pupil admitted to an incident of unfairness. The provision of the Rainbow Club to help pupils through periods of loss and bereavement makes a particularly good contribution to this aspect of spiritual and moral development. The school has a clear policy for behaviour management and each class has a set of rules for behaviour. It is not clear how the behaviour policy should be implemented through the school nor what system of rewards and sanctions should be used. This lack of clarity and consistency is not helpful when members of staff are dealing with incidences of inappropriate behaviour, particularly in the playground.
- 28 Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups, especially in literacy and numeracy. In physical education, groups are organised effectively during team games and country dancing. Pupils make contributions to various charities, for example Fr Hudson Homes, CAFOD, and the Salvation Army, while the oldest pupils sing at the Cowley Centre at Christmas time. Pupils do help around the school, for example, distributing the registers and clearing the dining room but there are insufficient opportunities for them to accept real responsibility and to use their own initiative.
- 29 The provision for cultural development is very good. It is promoted through a wide range of activities in the curriculum including history, and through the study of various artists, such as Renoir and Picasso. The pupils' studies of the Victorians and the early invaders of Britain provide a valuable background to the culture of England. Pupils gain an awareness of other cultures through studies of Kenya and learning about dress, food and life styles of people of other faiths. The school's involvement in May Day celebrations and Maypole dancing, the art week and the use of a local sculptor and an artist are good examples of the commitment to improving this aspect of provision. The school also makes good use of visits to support the curriculum, for example, to the museum at Cirencester in the topic on Romans and of other cultural pastimes such as Morris and country dancing.
- 30 All these experiences are having a positive effect on the development and the learning of the pupils in the school. Provision is evident in much of the school's work but is not yet explicit in the planning for the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 31 The supportive environment provided by the school for all its pupils helps to ensure that they feel valued and cared for. Teachers know their pupils well and the headteacher is active in monitoring personal development in an informal yet purposeful way. The few incidents of potential bullying and aggressive behaviour are treated seriously and dealt with quickly and effectively. Assessment procedures, which were not well established at the time of the previous inspection, have improved and are now good in English and mathematics and the information gained

is used adequately to inform planning. Procedures are satisfactory in science but not for other areas of the curriculum.

- 32 In English and mathematics, teachers assess pupils' work against clearly identified targets and are then able to use the information to plan suitable programmes of work. The improvements represent a growing understanding of the purpose of assessment by teachers which is monitored by the headteacher. Good reading records are kept and the English co-ordinator has recently introduced a scheme to assess the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills but, despite this, assessment of English, although completed in every class, is not of a consistent standard. In science, although a record of work is maintained, in Key Stage 1 the targets are often too general and do not therefore give sufficient information about the performance of individual pupils, particularly with regard to skill development. In Years 3 and 4, science tests indicate the level of subject knowledge acquired in particular topics but give little indication of attainment in skills. National Curriculum tests and optional standardised tests, including those for reading, are completed systematically together with a range of teacher assessments in English, mathematics and science. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good, ensuring that they receive a programme of work suited to their needs. The school complies with the requirements of the code of practice, and statements and reviews are up to date. The statement for a pupil with specific disability related needs is clear and the targets identified achievable. There is no systematic provision for the assessment of skills or knowledge in information technology or other subjects.
- 33 Good procedures are used to assess children's attainment three weeks after they enter Reception. This information is used well to plan the delivery of suitable work. Transition reports from Reception to Year 1 include comments about social development where relevant. As yet there are no procedures specifically aimed at assessing pupils' personal and social development in either key stage. The headteacher has identified the need to introduce a system that will help develop the personal and social skills of pupils and encourage independence in the context of the caring ethos of the school. Class teachers do know the personal characteristics of their pupils and include this in their annual reports.
- 34 Staff in the school take care to ensure the health, safety and well being of the pupils. The school has a number of clear policies to guide teachers and parents on safety issues and links with outside support agencies are satisfactory. The governors' Finance and Buildings Committee oversees health and safety matters and the governor responsible reports to the full Governing Body. Regular risk assessments are carried out.
- 35 Adequate supervision is provided for pupils as they move round the school and during playtime and lunchtime, but lunchtime supervisors do not have sufficient guidance to ensure rigorous procedures as pupils move from classrooms to dining room and the playground. Pupils tend to wander from place to place and in and out of the school building rather than have an orderly routine. The headteacher assists in monitoring behaviour in the playground during lunch times which helps to support the supervisors and ensures satisfactory behaviour.
- 36 The school has a behaviour policy that gives suitable guidance and indicates class teachers' responsibility for setting up appropriate systems for managing behaviour in their classrooms. The effect of this is that although in some classrooms this is

managed well there is inconsistency throughout the school. Strategies for rewards and sanctions therefore vary from class to class and this sometimes results in a failure to address fully some forms of bad behaviour. Good behaviour evident in most lessons occurs when the teacher makes expectations clear to pupils and applies them consistently.

- 37 Procedures for monitoring and recording attendance are good and this has resulted in improved attendance. The routine for the start of the day, particularly in Years 3 and 4, does not provide sufficient encouragement for pupils to arrive on time because the register is taken up to ten minutes after school has started and during this time little work is completed. The arrangements for child protection are good. The school follows the local authority guidelines and the headteacher is the named person responsible. She is intending to undertake further training in the near future. Staff, including the newly qualified teacher, have been fully informed of procedures. The care provided by the school helps pupils learn in a secure and caring environment. As a result, they settle into school quickly and make good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 38 The school has a good partnership with parents which has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or completed the parents' questionnaire consider their children make good progress and like coming to school. They feel standards in Year 2 and the Juniors are good, teachers are approachable, support for pupils with special educational needs is good, teaching of Christian values is good, and that behaviour problems are dealt with promptly. They like the weekly newsletters. Many raised concerns about standards in the Year 1 class, and about behaviour both in that class and the playground. Some showed concern about the consistency of reporting in Key Stage 1 and the range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence largely supports the views of parents. Standards and behaviour in Year 1 have been a major cause of concern of the school. Action taken by the school has been as prompt and effective as possible given the circumstances. The recently appointed supply teacher is having an impact on standards of behaviour. The school is aware of the behaviour issues in the playground and has plans to ensure the consistent application of policies. Reports are generally of a good standard but there is variation in the detail provided on progress and specific targets in Key Stage 1. Information provided on what is to be taught is limited. A satisfactory level of extra curricular activities for pupils of this age is provided.
- 39 The information parents receive about the life of the school in weekly newsletters is very good. The range of events to inform parents on areas such as the numeracy or literacy initiatives is good. The home/school agreement is a well prepared document and has received the support of most parents. The school prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report are well presented and give parents helpful information on the work of the school. Staff are readily available to deal with problems and issues at the start and end of the school day.
- 40 Parents give good support to the school and their children's education. Parents provide valuable help in lessons especially in information technology and swimming with a positive impact on standards. The Parents Association provides a good level of financial support. Parents feel pupils receive the right amount of homework and support the provision well.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 41 The new headteacher has been in post for the past two terms only. Her very clear vision and strong leadership is already having a positive impact on the life of the school. There is a shared vision for taking the school forward. Governors are very well informed and fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. They have developed very good procedures to support the school. Governors and senior staff have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior staff changes have inhibited the development of roles of responsibility. The school's aims and values are reflected well in much of its work.
- 42 Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory but the school is now developing at a faster rate and the scope for further improvements is good. The headteacher and governors are committed to improving standards overall, especially in the main core subjects. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted well. The school development plan is a good tool for guiding the school's planning. It gives a good long-term review of priorities with a detailed plan of action for the current year. It includes appropriate costings and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Staff and governors are well involved in the process.
- 43 The turnover of staff has limited the level of responsibilities delegated to the senior management team and to subject co-ordinators. As a result, their roles are under developed. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Governors are becoming involved well in this process, being linked to specific areas and regularly meeting co-ordinators and reporting back on standards and issues. This helps them give good direction to school improvements. Co-ordinators have been given time to monitor the subjects, but in relation to art, geography, history, music and physical education they have yet to make an impact. The analysis of Key Stage 1 data made by the school has had a positive impact on standards in mathematics, Governors and the headteacher have taken good steps to deal with the problems relating to the Year 1 class.
- 44 The governors and headteacher have very good plans to use future resources. Budget allocations are clearly linked to educational priorities, and are based on a careful evaluation of standards using the principles of best value well. The school has an appropriate level of balances. Spending is monitored very thoroughly. The recent deficit budget was related to staffing changes, and should not occur in the next financial year. The school administration officer provides an excellent level of support and advice. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are used well. The headteacher meets with staff to discuss their professional needs and links their personal needs with school priorities well in allocating funds for staff development. Good support and help have been given to the newly qualified teacher. The school plans to implement a programme of staff development in line with national proposals for performance management.
- 45 The school currently has sufficient levels of suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The problems over recruiting a capable, permanent teacher for the Year 1 class has had a negative impact on standards for this class. The school has a sufficient number of classroom assistants, although they are not always used effectively; for example, watching without contributing to whole class parts of lessons. Time and staff are not used effectively at the start of the day in Years 3 and 4, or in relation to lunchtime arrangements.

- 46 Accommodation is good overall. Outside facilities are particularly good and used well to support science and physical education, especially the effective use of the swimming pool, which ensures high standards in swimming for pupils in Key Stage 1. The outdoor area for children under five is cramped. The location of the administration office makes reception duties difficult. Resources are good and they are used well in relation to children under five, English, physical education, and music. The school has a very good number of computers but they are not used effectively due to lack of staff expertise and confidence.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- 47 The curriculum should be improved because it is not sufficiently balanced, time available is not used to best effect and planning is not detailed enough to ensure smooth progress from Reception and through Years 1 to 4. Assessment is developing well in English and mathematics, but needs to be extended. The roles of the senior management team and curriculum co-ordinators are not developed sufficiently. The management of behaviour is not consistent throughout the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 48 In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Improve the curriculum for pupils by:

- reviewing schemes of work and ensuring there is continuity in the development of pupils' knowledge and skills as they move through the school;
- examining the use of time, in particular with reference to the start of the day in Years 3 and 4, and the time allocated to some literacy and numeracy lessons;
- providing more opportunities for pupils in Years 3 and 4 to undertake investigative work and to record their work in a variety of ways;
- identifying how literacy, numeracy and information technology can be used to support learning in other subjects;
- ensuring that the activities in Reception consistently meet the needs of the youngest children.

(Paragraphs 4, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22, 37, 45, 50, 64, 71, 74, 76, 78, 81, 82, 87, 91, 93, 96, 101, 104, 105, 110, 117)

(2) Improve the quality of assessment by:

- examining the current assessment arrangements to identify strengths and weaknesses;
- introducing assessment procedures across a wider range of subjects, including information technology, and use the information gained to plan future work;
- ensuring that assessment procedures are used consistently throughout the school.

(Paragraphs 31, 32, 33, 50, 65, 74, 82, 87, 93, 96, 101, 106, 110, 117)

(3) Review behaviour management strategies, develop a whole-school behaviour policy and ensure it is implemented consistently throughout the school. (Paragraphs 9, 14, 16, 27, 35, 36, 38, 51, 57, 79, 81, 85, 86)

- (4) Develop the roles of senior management team and subject co-ordinators, in particular in relation to the monitoring of teaching and learning in both key stages. (Paragraphs 41, 43, 82, 87, 93, 96, 101, 106, 110, 117)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15.9	52.3	29.5	2.3	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 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	212
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.3	School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	19	25	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	25	25	23
	Total	41	40	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	91 (95)	89 (86)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	16
	Girls	25	24	24
	Total	41	42	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (94)	95 (87)	91 (91)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	138
Any other minority ethnic group	18

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	28.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
	£
Total income	326514
Total expenditure	335698
Expenditure per pupil	1687
Balance brought forward from previous year	40266
Balance carried forward to next year	31082

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	244
Number of questionnaires returned	109

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	29	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	47	4	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	37	4	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	44	10	2	4
The teaching is good.	59	38	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	32	14	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	21	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	40	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	43	7	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	47	39	7	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	35	6	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	36	17	6	10

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

- 49 Children enter the Reception class part-time in the term in which they are five, and become full-time the following term. This means that children who enter after Easter only have one term part-time before entering Year 1. At the time of the inspection, 24 Reception children were attending full-time, all these were over five, and 24 children were part-time, of these ten were still under five. The introductory arrangements are good. Positive links have been established with the parents, who join children in the Reception class on a number of occasions before they start school. Especially good links have been made with the preschool group which meets on the school site. Since children are in school for such a short time before their fifth birthday, it is rare for them to be included on the Register of Special Educational Needs. Children's level of attainment when they enter school is below average. It is weakest in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening and the use of mathematical vocabulary. Although children make good progress, few attain all the standards expected by five.
- 50 The classroom is used well to create an attractive environment based on all areas of the curriculum. The rooms used are spacious and few problems arise when all 48 children are present during the mornings. The outside accommodation, on the other hand, is cramped and inadequate. The amount of adult help is limited, but that available is used effectively. The broad and relevant curriculum offered throughout the year is good in many respects. However, the conflicting pressures of providing a suitable curriculum for children under five and preparing them for Year 1 presents difficulties when dealing with children who join after Easter. The curriculum is therefore based in part on the recommended areas of learning, but also attempts to take account of the requirements for Year 1, especially the literacy and numeracy sessions. Baseline assessment is carried out shortly after children enter school and is effectively used to inform planning. It also assists in identifying children who may, in the future, require support because of their special educational needs. The teachers also monitor personal development and pass on suitable information to Year 1 where relevant.
- 51 Children's personal and social development is given appropriate emphasis. As a result, when they leave Reception, the oldest children show well-developed personal skills. Staff act as good role models and help them form positive relationships with one another. Children are encouraged to become independent and make choices about the activities they are completing. This includes, for instance, to moving on to the computer to use a drag and drop program which promotes their understanding of mathematical language related to size. They are encouraged to cut and stick independently and to develop confidence by talking to the whole class about their work. The oldest children are responsive and interested; they enjoy their learning. The youngest children do not yet concentrate well, they tend to become restless when sat for too long. The teacher is not always consistent in using strategies to promote consistently good behaviour. Teachers promote caring and respect for one another and encourage sharing. There are, however, still a minority of children who do not share resources well or rarely work with their peers.

- 52 In language and literacy, children make good progress, although few reach the expected outcomes by five. Teaching is good and the children are provided with a wide range of activities that support the development of language and literacy. The more formalised sessions are least effective for the youngest children. The children listen attentively to stories, songs and poems; they often join in with enthusiasm. They enjoy role-play in the shop. This helps children to become more confident in expressing themselves. They talk eagerly about what they have done in school, using an improving vocabulary. They have very positive attitudes towards books, know that words and pictures carry meaning and understand the connection between speech and print. They know the way pages of a book are turned and a few read simple text. The majority write symbols and marks to communicate meaning; they copy printing and about half write their own names correctly.
- 53 Attainment in mathematics is close to that expected for children aged five, except in the use of mathematical vocabulary, where it is below. They make good progress in their mathematical development and acquisition of skills. Children count everyday objects, know most colours and organise symmetrical patterns involving shapes and colours. They know simple two-dimensional shapes. The quality of teaching is good and staff help progress by the use of correct mathematical vocabulary. When using sand and water, children develop an increasing awareness of vocabulary such as full, empty and half, and early measurement. Most recognise numbers to five, and the highest attainers beyond 20.
- 54 Children make good progress in learning about the world in which they live and achieve the expected standard. The quality of teaching is generally good. A particular strength is science, where children's progress prepares them very well for extending their knowledge and skills in Year 1. They learn how to collect data using tables to record the different minibeasts found around the school. They describe some of the features of ladybirds and, with the aid of the teacher, find information about them in books. They understand the features of simple life cycles, which helps them begin to appreciate the passage of time. They can talk about the weather and their immediate locality. The children use computers confidently, they know the connection between the mouse and the pointer, and use the mouse correctly using a 'drag and drop' program.
- 55 There are sufficient opportunities to promote the development of physical skills when using large toys, including tricycles. The space available is inadequate and the area cannot be easily laid out to promote other aspects of learning, in particular an awareness of other children in role-play activities. Teaching is good and staff plan good opportunities to use scissors, glue and paint brushes, and to use crayons and pencils for writing letters, numbers or colouring in. Children ride the wheeled vehicles confidently and are aware of the space around them. No formal physical education sessions were planned during the inspection.
- 56 Teaching of creative development is good and children are offered a wide range of activities. They observe and express their ideas well and, by the time they are five, most are close to achieving the expected standard. Children produced good observational drawings of others in the class, which included details such as the hole for an earring. They paint recognisable shapes, illustrate the stories they have been listening to and represent spring flowers effectively using a range of media. Children enjoy singing action songs and have good opportunities to use instruments in music lessons.

- 57 The teaching of children in Reception is good, but its success depends, to a large extent, on when in the year a particular group of children began school. The older children in Reception have made good progress in their learning. This reflects a well planned programme of work which has been delivered effectively by the staff. The children are well prepared for entering mixed Year 1/2 classes. There are some difficulties for those children who enter the school part-time after Easter. The teachers work hard to provide a suitable range of activities. The overall result is less effective because of the desire to prepare children for the more formal expectations in Year 1. These children are not yet ready for this owing to their age, immaturity and lack of previous school experience. Personal and social development is given good emphasis, because teachers are aware that many of these young children find sharing and co-operation difficult. A weakness, however, is that expectations with regards to behaviour are not systematically followed through. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children and of the areas of learning are good. The quality of teaching of aspects of science is especially good. Teachers' planning is good, but there are occasions when a lesson does not follow the original plan and the order of work presented is not logical. If this happens, young children tend to get diverted from the task in hand. The generally good teaching helps promote good learning by children in Reception. Older children concentrate well and show increasing independence. They are interested in the planned activities, enjoy what they do and most co-operate satisfactorily.

ENGLISH

- 58 In 1999, at the end of Year 2, attainment recorded in National Curriculum tests was well above the national average. In reading, 93 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2 or above and 45 per cent the higher Level 3; both figures were well above the national average. In writing, 91 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2 or above a figure above the national average, and 16 per cent gained Level 3 which was well above the average. Both sets of results were well above those of similar schools. Over the past four years, results in reading have been consistently above the national average, and in writing they have improved at a rate faster than that found nationally. The performance of boys and girls is similar. Current Year 2 pupils are achieving broadly similar standards. By the time pupils reach Year 4, when they leave the school, standards remain above the national picture.
- 59 The previous inspection found that 'standards in English are sound overall', although there were examples of higher attainment. The school has made good progress in English since then. Inspection evidence confirms that attainment has improved, with an increasing number of pupils achieving higher levels. This improvement is evident by both Year 2 and Year 4. Teaching has benefited from the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and all pupils now make good progress overall. Teaching, which appears to have been satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection, is now good.
- 60 Inspection findings from current and previous work show attainment in English to be above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Throughout the school pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in all aspects of English. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented; this has helped provide a good framework for teaching and give children a broad range of experiences in literacy. Teachers use

literacy well to support learning in other subjects, and make good use of opportunities to promote personal development. In reading, good use is made of both fiction and non-fiction books.

- 61 Standards of pupils' speaking and listening are improving, and are average overall. Pupils listen well to the teacher reading or leading discussions, and to the contributions of other children in the class. Speaking skills are not quite so good. Pupils speak clearly but they do not always use the wide range of vocabulary evident in their written work. Teachers provide good opportunities to answer questions at length, an improvement over the previous inspection. In Years 1 and 2, pupils described some of the features life in the rain forest and gained a good understanding of moral issues associated with its destruction. In Years 3 and 4, pupils listened well to a story written by Joan Aiken and then satisfactorily explained why it was a fairy story and what they liked about it. The co-ordinator has introduced a useful assessment system for recording pupils' achievement in speaking and listening. This is being used well by most staff.
- 62 By the end of Years 2 and 4, standards of reading are above the national average. Pupils make good progress, reading well in whole class, group or individual sessions. Teachers generally organise shared text sessions well and maintain pupils' interest by involving them and asking relevant questions. Pupils are motivated and enjoy these sessions. They are keen to contribute and pay good attention to the text. Even in the Year 1 class, where standards are low, recent good teaching has helped to promote interest and a willingness to be involved. Effective teaching enables pupils to work independently with concentration or within groups. Good examples included pupils co-operating to find information and the meaning of words using a dictionary. By Year 2, pupils know about authors and illustrators, and the difference between story and information books. By Year 4, they distinguish between fiction and non-fiction books. The highest attainers also understand the classification system used in libraries. The literacy time is used well to develop research skills. Pupils' understanding of what they have read is good and, by Year 4, they refer to the text to illustrate this, and recall in detail key features of stories they have read. When using fiction books, they understand the value of using contents and index pages. Books are taken home regularly and teachers and parents comment on the quality of reading and areas for improvement. Good recording of pupils' progress is evident in most classes, although some are more detailed than others.
- 63 By the end of Years 2 and 4, attainment in writing is above average. Many opportunities are provided to write within literacy, additional English sessions and other subjects. In science, in Years 3 and 4, however, all pupils in a class are copying the same text too often. The range of writing helps pupils make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, they use very good descriptive vocabulary when writing stories stimulated by the teachers' ideas. As they move through the school, pupils increase the range of forms in which they write. It is particularly broad in Years 3 and 4, including diary, poems and reports. They also write instructions, for instance, for following recipes. A well organised programme for teaching handwriting means that all pupils leaving Year 2 use a fluent, joined script. This is maintained in Year 3, but in the Year 3/4 classes about half the pupils revert to printing. This is associated with teachers using print extensively on the board and in pupils' books. Spelling is good, pupils attempt words they do not know and help others by suggesting 'sound it out'. Dictionary skills are developing well, although not all cope with using it beyond the second letter of a word. Punctuation is used accurately and effectively

throughout the school. Assessment of writing is detailed and, in the best examples, includes analysis of very precise skills, such as the use of different aspects of punctuation.

- 64 Teaching is good throughout the school. The best lessons, which occur in both key stages, have a brisk pace and high expectations. Teachers are confident in teaching literacy and use suitable technical vocabulary correctly. The good resources, both fiction and non-fiction, enhance lessons and are used well. There are occasions, throughout the school, when teachers are spending in excess of the recommended time for literacy lessons. This can mean that pupils sit for too long during the introduction to the lesson or that other sections are not sharp enough. Occasionally, not enough work is prepared for all groups and the work then given is not always planned clearly or sufficiently demanding. Plenary sessions, at the end of each lesson, are used well. Most teachers use questioning effectively to help pupils extend their knowledge and check understanding. Pupils' behaviour is managed well in most sessions. In the Year 1 class, expectations regarding attention and good behaviour were consistently emphasised. Teachers, learning support staff and other adults provide good help to pupils whose English work is below most in the class, including those for whom English is an additional language. The quality of questions, in particular, helps them progress well.
- 65 The subject is well led by a recently appointed, highly motivated co-ordinator. She wants to continue to raise standards of literacy and has helped to improve provision over the past year. She has completed a detailed analysis of the quality of work in English, and has correctly identified the need to ensure good progression from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This has included monitoring teaching and pupils' work, and giving relevant feedback. The curriculum for English is good. The National Literacy Strategy is followed for some lessons each week, but the school provides additional sessions to focus on, for instance, extended writing. Many literacy sessions are used effectively to promote pupils' personal development. These include reflecting on the meaning of a fairy story or considering modern environmental issues, such as the destruction of the rain forests. Assessment is developing very well across all areas of English, but is not yet consistently followed in all classes.

MATHEMATICS

- 66 In 1999, National Curriculum tests showed that the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 was close to the national average. About 89 per cent of pupils achieved the expected Level 2 or above and about 18 per cent achieved Level 3. All figures are close to the national average, but are below those of similar schools. Taken over the four year period from 1996 to 1999 standards in attainment have been consistently close to the national average and the attainment of the girls has been better than that of the boys. The results of the tests showed a steady improvement in standards in mathematics until 1999 when they fell. The school decided that mathematics was to be a focus in 1999. Teachers analysed the test results carefully, improved assessments procedures and introduced a new mathematics scheme to support the National Numeracy Strategy. This resulted in an improvement in mathematics provision and currently the pupils in the Year 2 classes are achieving good standards. This improvement is now confirmed by the results of the National Curriculum tests for 2000, where all the pupils at the end of Year 2 attained the expected standard of Level 2 in mathematics and almost one third of them attained the higher standard of Level 3. The efforts of the teachers

and the improved provision are having a very positive effect on standards in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 1. There is no significant difference evident in the attainment of boys and girls.

- 67 The previous inspection found that attainment throughout the school was average. The school has made good progress since then and attainment has improved. This improvement is especially evident in Key Stage 1 where the analysis of test data and the introduction of a more structured approach are having a positive effect on raising standards.
- 68 Currently, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards in mathematics are above average and attainment is better than last year. The pupils have a good working knowledge of numbers over a hundred and recognise the importance of position value when adding tens and hundreds. They recognise number patterns in multiplication tables, for example in twos, threes, fours and fives, and use the appropriate language accurately when referring to multiples in number patterns. Their work on multiplication tables is clearly linked to division and they can solve simple problems using both operations. Pupils use their knowledge of numbers well when working on measuring length and recording amounts of money. They know about simple fractions and use them in everyday situations. Pupils use a variety of ways of recording data effectively for example, in the form of Venn diagrams, block graphs, bar charts and tally charts. They tell the time accurately and know the relationship between analogue and digital clocks.
- 69 In Year 4, when the pupils leave the school, the standards of attainment in mathematics are average and in line with national expectations. Assessment tests taken by pupils in Year 4 show that about 45 per cent of pupils achieve the expected standard of Level 3, 28 per cent Level 4 and 28 per cent achieve Level 2. The results show a normal distribution of scores with some high levels of achievement by a group of girls in Year 4. A scrutiny of the work done in mathematics books reflects this distribution and level of attainment. The pupils in Year 4 work confidently with numbers up to 1000 and recognise the importance of position value, for example when calculating the number of hundreds and tens in any given number. They know about equivalence between decimals and fractions, and record decimals accurately to two places in money. Pupils know about perimeters and areas and record their calculations accurately. Their work on number patterns includes odds, evens and negative numbers, as well as those found in the multiplication tables.
- 70 Overall the progress made by all pupils, in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, is good. Pupils use numbers to 100 with confidence and are beginning to recognise the importance of the value of each figure in a number. They recognise patterns in numbers through addition and multiplication tables. They use addition and subtraction accurately and apply their skills to money and to simple shopping. Pupils record data accurately using block graphs and tally charts. At times, pupils' progress is limited because teachers provide insufficient time for them to consolidate work or to apply their skills to new problems, for example, when not given the opportunity to collect data and record it in their own way. The youngest pupils use numbers up to 20 with confidence, counting forwards and backwards accurately. They record data on simple charts and make comparisons between objects of different masses, using language such as heavier than or lighter than. Progress in the Year 1 class has been unsatisfactory and attainment is below expectations mainly due to lack of

continuity in teaching. The introduction of a regular supply teacher is beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards in the class. The pupils are now beginning to make progress and work with numbers up to 50, perform simple additions with confidence and use money in simple shopping problems. They recognise all the coins up to £1 and know how to make amounts, such as 15 pence, in different ways.

- 71 Progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. There is steady progress in learning the four rules of number and in learning their multiplication tables. They measure accurately and know the relationship between centimetres and millimetres in measuring length and they record in millilitres for liquid measures. Pupils understand fractional quantities and recognise equivalents. They know and can name common two- and three-dimensional shapes and calculate simple areas, recording their results accurately in cm^2 . There has been a major improvement in standards in a mixed Year 3/4 class since the arrival of a new member of staff in January. At times the progress of pupils in the key stage is inhibited by the lack of opportunities to work on their mathematics for longer periods of time and by the use of new methods of computation which are potentially confusing. Lessons sometimes lack pace and too much time is spent on the introduction. Pupils with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4.
- 72 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory, it is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In the most effective lessons, for instance in a Year 1/2 class, the expectations are clear and the activity well matched to the pupils' abilities. The purpose of the lesson is made clear to the pupils so that they are fully aware of what they will learn and what they have to do. Time is used well and questioning is used effectively in order to involve all pupils and to maintain the pace. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well and the most effective teaching makes good use of the lesson structure suggested, particularly the mental work and the plenary session at the end. Teaching is less effective, in Key Stage 2, when insufficient time is allowed for pupils to work independently and for an extended period of time and also apply their knowledge to new situations. Teachers use assessment well although opportunities to check work in the lesson are not always taken and much additional time is spent marking work which has already been seen. Pupils' work is marked regularly and errors usually corrected although some reversals of numbers in the Reception class are left unchecked.
- 73 Overall the pupils' attitudes to mathematics are satisfactory. Some pupils in one class at the end of Key Stage 1 and some in a Year 3/4 class showed very positive attitudes and made good progress with their work because of well organised teaching. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics and settle quickly to their work. They listen carefully to their teacher and are eager to answer questions. Pupils take a pride in their work and present their work neatly. On occasions, the introductory session on the carpet is too long and this causes pupils to be restless and not listen as well as they could. Most pupils use their time effectively to complete the work they have been set. In one lesson in the Year 1 class, the attitudes of a small group of pupils was unsatisfactory. These pupils work well with the teacher but are unwilling to complete tasks on their own and disturb others who are willing to work. Their lack of self-discipline and an unwillingness to work independently of the teacher are having a negative effect on their progress.

- 74 The pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum for mathematics which incorporates the National Numeracy Strategy. Some of the lessons extend beyond the time recommended in the strategy and, in these cases, time is not always used effectively. Day-to-day assessment and optional test materials are used well and the information used to inform future provision for the subject. Pupil progress is assessed and recorded but the records only reflect knowledge and contain no comment on the quality of learning. Homework is used effectively throughout the school and is making a significant contribution to improving standards. The co-ordinator is an experienced and well-qualified teacher who has been responsible for the subject for a year. She has clear priorities and is well placed to develop the subject through the school. The numeracy governor is monitoring the effect of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and has observed mathematics lessons in each class. She is a member of the curriculum committee and makes a good contribution to the management of the subject. The school has introduced a new scheme of work to support the development of mathematics but insufficient use is made of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. The school provides the basis for a consistent approach but some new methods of recording computation in addition and subtraction have the potential to confuse pupils who understand the processes and are already competent in using other methods. Mathematics makes a sound contribution to the pupils' social development through opportunities to collaborate and share resources and ideas.

SCIENCE

- 75 In 1999, at the end of Year 2, attainment recorded in teacher assessments was broadly in line with the national average for Level 2 but well above the national average for Level 3. The results overall are well above the average for similar schools. Results for 2000 indicate that results are similar. Teacher assessments and tests of pupils at the end of Year 4 show that attainment is broadly in line with that expected.
- 76 The previous inspection found attainment was satisfactory but that the more able were not always sufficiently challenged and that pupils were not given sufficient opportunity to plan, carry out and evaluate their own investigations. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in Key Stage 1 but not in Key Stage 2 where, on the evidence of pupils' written work, there remain insufficient opportunities for independent work and for suitable challenges for the more able in investigations. No lessons were observed in Years 3 and 4 during the current inspection. Whilst the scheme of work provides for skill development as well as knowledge and understanding, pupils' written work in Years 3 and 4 provides limited evidence of this. This is because on many occasions, pupils copy an identical piece of text and differences in attainment are not revealed. Further, recording of the limited number of investigations indicates the level of skills to be just satisfactory.
- 77 During Key Stage 1, pupils acquire a good range of knowledge across the whole programme of study. They have investigated pushing and pulling, boiled an egg to observe the difference between liquid and solid, named the parts of the body and discovered the best material to make a teddy's rain hat. Investigations of materials give the pupils an opportunity to sort and classify and to use a range of suitable recording methods. Good skills of observation were seen in lessons, for instance in the Reception class when pupils were describing and drawing snails. They recognise a spiral shape in the shells and know that holes in leaves may have been caused by snails eating. When recording the results of a minibeast survey they use

a tally chart and can suggest reasons for the number of insects found in different locations. In the Year 1 and 2 classes, pupils make careful observational drawings of a range of plants. In these lessons, pupils comment thoughtfully on the similarities and differences between the plants, describing the varied shapes of leaves. They know what serrated edges are. They observe that not all the plants have green leaves and recall other facts which define them as plants. Progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, or for whom English is an additional language, is good. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered well by their attitude to living things.

- 78 In Years 3 and 4, pupils study a wide range of topics. They investigate sound and vibration, electrical circuits and the effectiveness of different materials as insulators. They study the position of body organs and learn about the functions of the roots and stem of a plant. Pupils' written work shows some evidence of investigative work, for example, they predict what might be the best material to make a raincoat. Although the predictions vary, conclusions are the same and on too many occasions pupils' produce similar written work. This means that they are not revealing their individual ability to set up investigations or to interpret and analyse their findings. There is an imbalance between setting down facts and investigative work. Suitable vocabulary is used but there is no apparent difference between the work of the most able and the rest of the class. There is a small amount of data handling, but this is not at a level which matches the pupils' numeracy skills. The insufficiency of good quality investigative work is having a detrimental effect on pupils' progress in this area of science in Years 3 and 4. Although progress of all pupils is satisfactory overall it is less in the development and use of skills. Throughout the school not enough use is made of information technology. There are no planned links to use pupils' good skills in literacy and numeracy in science lessons.
- 79 In Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy their science. They are fascinated by the animals they find and enjoy investigating plants in the school grounds demonstrating a good level of care and respect for living things. They respond eagerly to questions thinking carefully before answering and matching answers to their previous experiences. They make suggestions for investigations and use scientific vocabulary well. Reception pupils remember that a snail trail is caused by mucus. Pupils usually work well together sharing equipment sensibly and discussing and comparing results. Year 1 and 2 classes work with sustained concentration. In Reception, when the teacher does not make consistent expectations about behaviour, some pupils are easily distracted and call out. Even when effective behaviour management techniques are used some Year 1 pupils are less able to take turns or to concentrate. There is insufficient evidence to comment on the attitudes of pupils to science in the Year 3 and 4 classes. Their books are neat and written work is completed.
- 80 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good overall and never less than satisfactory with one very good lesson. In the previous inspection, teaching was satisfactory in Key Stage 2 with some unsatisfactory features. These included a significant number of lessons in which pupils were over-organised and too heavily directed. No teaching was observed in the current inspection but pupils' work indicates that, although teaching is satisfactory, insufficient steps have been taken to remedy the deficiencies. In Key Stage 1, teachers encourage pupils to use suitable scientific vocabulary well. They set clear expectations for accurate observation and drawing, and often use questions well to check pupils' understanding, to ask for their suggestions and to encourage them to make

decisions. Planning for investigative work gives good focus on skills to be taught and knowledge to be learned. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and lessons are well planned.

- 81 Teachers do not plan effectively to include literacy, numeracy or information technology in their science lessons. Pupils are usually managed well although sometimes unsatisfactory behaviour is not dealt with consistently. Suitable resources are made available and used well to support learning and the importance of health and safety is emphasised in lessons. Marking throughout the school seldom indicates the level of pupils' achievements. Displays are used well to celebrate pupils' study of plants and the environment in Key Stage 1 and electricity in Key Stage 2. The school grounds are used well and a small garden provides the opportunity for pupils to observe the growth of their own plants in this environment.
- 82 Planning for the science curriculum is satisfactory and the scheme of work gives sufficient detail to inform teachers' planning, particularly with regard to knowledge and understanding. There is provision for the teaching of skills but this does not give an indication of the level that can be expected in each year group. Science in the school is to be reviewed in the coming year and this will provide a good opportunity to update the scheme and to introduce links with literacy, numeracy and information technology. In addition, consideration should be given to ensuring that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The time given to teaching science is short, particularly in Key Stage 2. The scheme of work gives some good suggestions for assessment in science. Teachers keep a satisfactory record of work done and their judgements are secure but the targets for assessment are not yet sufficiently precise to provide detailed information about individual progress in all aspects. The headteacher has assumed responsibility for science and is beginning to introduce suitable systems for monitoring of teaching and learning and to establish target setting. Whilst health and safety measures were satisfactory in lessons, there are no guidelines currently available for teachers' reference.

ART

- 83 The standards in art, identified in the last inspection, have been maintained. Throughout the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress. At the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2, when the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, standards of work are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 use a variety of techniques to produce pictures and pattern work. They use painting techniques well to produce dot pictures of flowers and work in the style of Matisse and Renoir. The work produced in one of the Year 1/2 classes is of a particularly good standard but this is not evident throughout the key stage. Pupils make sound progress through the key stage and are learning to use paint, felt pens, crayon and chalk effectively to produce their pictures of the world around them. They use printing techniques as well as paper and felt for their work on flowers. Some work using wax resist caused particular excitement when the effect of the paint wash was observed. Pupils in Year 1 are also making sound progress in their observational drawing using charcoal and, in Reception, a stick to create the petal effect on their drawing of some roses.
- 84 The satisfactory progress is maintained through Key Stage 2. The pupils are taught to use a range of materials including charcoal, pastel and watercolour pencils in their observational drawings of a rabbit, plants and the school pond. They make

accurate observations noting detail and the effect of reflection and light and shade. The work on the Romans in history has provided the stimulus for making mosaics using small paper squares. Their three-dimensional work includes modelling in clay and the production of models and buildings linked to their history. They have opportunities to study the styles of a variety of artists and make reasonable attempts to produce work in the style of Durer.

- 85 A variety of lessons was observed during the inspection and the standard of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. Some good teaching was seen in Key Stage 2 when a small group of pupils was engaged in observational drawing in the school grounds. Teaching is most effective, for instance in Reception, when the teachers' subject knowledge is secure, demonstrations are effective and time is used well. Lessons which are well organised and, where the demands made on the pupils are clear, enable them to make good progress and achieve success. Where teaching is less effective, for instance in the Year 3 class, and pupils do not learn as well as they could they are not well organised, have no clear strategies for managing behaviour and do not use time effectively.
- 86 The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils in Key Stage 1 are good and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Most pupils enjoy their art and do their best to produce some good work. Most behave well, settle quickly, use resources sensibly and, on the whole, are interested and involved in their work. Some of the youngest pupils were absolutely entranced when their teacher was demonstrating how to produce images of rose petals using paints and a stick. Other pupils in Key Stage 1 show excitement when they observe the effects of a paint wash on their wax pictures. Pupils in Year 3 maintain concentration for a sustained period of time during their observational work in the school grounds and readily comment on others' work. On other occasions some Year 3 pupils are less well involved and become restless; they become noisy and chatty and follow their teacher around the room seeking comment or asking about the next activity. There is no real buzz of enthusiasm and the lesson is far too long.
- 87 The teachers responsible for co-ordinating the subject have only been in post a few months. They have undertaken a review of the provision for art in the school and are well placed to make the changes necessary to improve standards. The introduction of the new scheme of work and the clear identification of the development of skills through the school will make a significant contribution in helping to raise standards. The policy for 'The Arts' is vague and contains no identification of skill development through the school. Pupils' progress is not monitored nor any record kept of work undertaken. The whole policy for the subject is now out of date and needs to be reviewed particularly in the light of the introduction of Curriculum 2000. There is an adequate range of resources and the school makes good use of the expertise of artists but their use throughout the school is limited. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development through the consideration of the work of various artists in Europe and in other parts of the world and to their spiritual development through their response to art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 88 All pupils make steady progress through the school so that by the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave at the end of Year 4 in Key Stage 2 they achieve

standards of work in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement from the last inspection when standards in Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory. Standards at Key Stage 1 have been maintained. The improvement in standards at Key Stage 2 and the maintenance of those in Key Stage 1 are due, for the most part, to the combined efforts of the staff and the support of the headteacher.

- 89 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 use their design skills effectively to make a toy with moving arms and legs. They design and make a moving vehicle and then carry out a simple test to establish its effectiveness. They make simple drawings and evaluate their work to identify possible improvements. All pupils within the key stage make satisfactory progress using a range of materials including paper, card and textiles to make puppets, dolls and clowns. They use paper fasteners and simple levers effectively in order to make the arms move. The youngest children in the key stage use small construction kits well to make models and toys but the range is limited and there are no opportunities to work with larger apparatus.
- 90 Steady progress is maintained by all pupils through Key Stage 2 so that at the end of Year 4 they achieve the standards expected for their age. Pupils use their design skills well for robots and lighthouses which incorporate circuits and batteries. They produce instructions for making the models and evaluate their work at the end of the project. They identify how their work could be improved and identify the skills and materials used in the construction. The links with history are evident in their models of Roman villas and the hypocaust system which heated them. The work in the key stage shows that the skills of designing, making and evaluating are taught and are used.
- 91 During the inspection no lessons were seen and no comment can be made about the standard of teaching. Evidence is taken from a scrutiny of work and an examination of the planning documentation. Planning for the subject contains too little identification of skill development although it is clear that the skills necessary for design and technology are used satisfactorily by pupils in both key stages.
- 92 Scrutiny of work in displays and in the pupils' books indicates that they put considerable effort in their work and apply themselves fully to their tasks. Their explanations and instructions for making the models are clear and can be easily replicated by others, although the diagrams lack some detail. The evaluations are thoughtful and are based on accurate observations.
- 93 The co-ordinator for the subject is currently on leave due to long term illness and the headteacher is assuming temporary responsibility. There is an adequate level of resources to support design and technology and a sufficient amount of time devoted to the subject but how this is utilised is not clear from the planning documentation. The current scheme of work is inadequate and does not include a clear programme for skill development nor a system for assessment and recording pupils' progress. There is also a lack of advice on how to plan development into the programme or how to incorporate design and technology into other areas of the curriculum. The use of design and technology is apparent in history and science but this is not explicit in the planning documentation. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' social development through opportunities to work collaboratively and to cultural development through the links with history.

GEOGRAPHY

- 94 One lesson was observed during the inspection and there was some additional evidence in pupils' work. There was very limited evidence in the previous inspection. On the limited evidence currently available, attainment meets expectations in some areas of learning and all pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Year 1 pupils develop their mapping skills by drawing their route to school and they have constructed simple instruments to measure the wind. In Years 1 and 2, pupils draw accurate plans of their school and classroom. They discuss their likes and dislikes of the school playground environment and discover what happens to the rain when it falls. A homework task encouraged them to draw a plan of their own room. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about life and landscape in Kenya and compare it to life in Britain. They identify successfully the countries of the United Kingdom on a map. In one class pupils identify features from aerial views and refer to a land use key. Throughout the school there is little evidence of map work using co-ordinates.
- 95 Teaching of geography in the lesson observed was good. Pupils were encouraged to think carefully about their route to school and to draw it accurately. They were given clear expectations for the good quality of the outcome of their work and as a result, the work produced was well matched to their ability. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory because their work is of a satisfactory standard but there is insufficient material to make a secure judgement on the overall quality of teaching.
- 96 There is a scheme of work which covers all required areas of knowledge and skills. This is not effective in ensuring that pupils will make sufficient progress as they move through the school because programmes for each key stage are not related to each other. The scheme will need to be reviewed to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum and to provide continuity of experience as pupils move through the school. There is no monitoring of planning or teaching, or any record keeping, so it is not certain that teachers use the current plan fully to cover the whole curriculum. There is no assessment of pupils' attainment in geography. The current scheme does not identify opportunities to use information technology although Year 1 and 2 pupils have used a program to design a town. There are no planned links made with literacy or numeracy. The co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the subject and has had no opportunity to give guidance or support to teachers, or to produce an up to date review. Resources are satisfactory overall and there has been recent expenditure but consideration should be given to ensuring that the needs of the more able pupils in Key Stage 2 are suitably met.

HISTORY

- 97 All pupils, including those with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory progress and achieve standards in history which are in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when standards reached were considered unsatisfactory. During Key Stage 1 standards are in line with expectations. Pupils have a sound knowledge of chronology and recognise the differences between past and present through a study of life now and in Victorian times. The theme for Years 1 and 2 is the Victorians and the pupils learn about toys, children's games and what schools were like 100 years ago. Their knowledge of past times is enhanced by a study of

three Queens, Victoria and the two Elizabeths. Local history is used well to support this work through Morris dancing and Maypole dancing in the school now and 43 years ago and in America 100 years ago.

- 98 Progress is maintained into Key Stage 2 where overall standards are in line with expectations. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 are studying the Romans, Anglo Saxons and Vikings and how these peoples invaded Britain and settled here. They look particularly at the effect of the Roman invasion on life in England and what changes occurred in consequence. Pupils know how the Romans built their roads, how they heated their houses and what education was like. A visit by a 'Roman soldier' provided the stimulus to examine what life was like in the army and to describe how the soldiers might have felt being so far away from home through the writing of imaginary letters.
- 99 The three lessons observed during the inspection were all at Key Stage 2 where the standard of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good with clear objectives so that pupils can link new work to previous experiences. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and use resources well. They make good use of discussion and help pupils develop research skills through the good use of homework and printed matter. Lessons are usually well structured but long introductions and the allocation of insufficient time does not enable pupils to complete the work set. On one occasion the history content of the lesson was not sufficiently emphasised and the pupils were uncertain about its purpose.
- 100 Most pupils have good attitudes towards history and behave well. They listen carefully to their teachers and settle quickly to their work. They work well and produce some good results. Their models of Roman villas and the mosaic patterns show effort and a desire to produce work of good quality.
- 101 History is planned through a series of topics on a two-year cycle. Good use is made of visits to local museums and towns, for example Cirencester for the topic on the Romans in England and of visitors to the school like the 'Roman soldier'. The topics to be studied are clearly identified but the development of skills and the continuity between the key stages and the local Middle School are not sufficiently established. The co-ordinators are new to the post and have already identified what needs to be done to improve provision for humanities, including history. They are keen and eager to make the changes necessary to improve standards further. They have recognised the need to revise the scheme of work and to implement systems for assessment and monitoring the subject throughout the school. History makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development through the opportunities to study how people lived in the past.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 102 At the time of the previous inspection attainment in information technology was unsatisfactory. The school did not provide full coverage of the National Curriculum and there were insufficient resources. There has been satisfactory improvement since then, because the school now has a good number of computers and sufficient software to meet the needs of the curriculum. Attainment in both key stages is satisfactory in pupils' work and in their use of the equipment. Although handling of the mouse was a little cautious, a Reception pupil could move items accurately about the screen to dress the toys and return to the start of the program. Pupils in a Year 1 and 2 class independently word processed a piece of work and printed it out

during a science lesson. In Key Stage 2 classes, a rota for the start of the day ensures that pupils regularly practise their skills.

- 103 The scrutiny of pupils' work contains little evidence of their activities and there is no portfolio of work. There is little recorded evidence of pupils' use of data handling or manipulation of control devices. In Year 1, pupils use a drag and drop program to complete a range of shapes demonstrating secure mouse control. Year 2 pupils use shift, space, delete and return keys correctly and they know their way round the keyboard. In a Year 1 and 2 class, an art program is used and pupils competently draw a picture, fill with colour and erase. Year 3 and 4 pupils use a simulation program to learn about the Romans, they design a mosaic and compose music. They have good mouse control and move items confidently round the screen. In the Year 3 class pupils learn how to use the scanner.
- 104 The school has obtained a good number of computers although, as these vary, a wide range of software is required. This increases the complexity and cost of ensuring best use of the computers. There is a policy in draft form and the scheme of work, which has been satisfactory, is due for review. This will enable teachers to plan together to ensure effective use of information technology in other lessons. There is evidence that computers are used in a range of subjects including history, art, English and mathematics, but little in science or geography. In a Year 3 literacy lesson pupils used a word processing program for making notes about research using a reference book. These links are not yet sufficiently planned to exploit fully the equipment available or to extend the work of the most able pupils.
- 105 Only one short example of teaching was seen during the inspection and teachers were not observed intervening in pupils' use of computers. In many lessons computers were turned on and loaded with suitable programs but not all teachers made regular use of them. Pupils use the equipment sensibly and share well. They have a positive attitude to their work. In the Year 3 and 4 classes, they begin the day by checking the rota and then confidently and independently set to work. Although they do this well there is little opportunity for them to load the computers and set up the programs for themselves. When given the opportunity, pupils in other lessons throughout the school work quietly and with suitable application to the task. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have equal access to the computers and make satisfactory progress, but there is no provision to meet their specific needs. Some teachers lack confidence in the use of information technology and are less likely to incorporate its use into their teaching. Pupils are sometimes therefore not able to develop the full range of skills.
- 106 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and willing to give time and support to other teachers, but he is not a trained specialist and has had no recent in-service training. He is given little opportunity to monitor the implementation of the scheme of work or teaching, or to provide in service training for teachers. The lack of experience of some teachers means that he is often called upon to solve problems associated with the operation of programs. The school has not considered how to respond to these demands on his time. There are no records of work done, neither is there routine assessment of pupils' attainment. This means that there is no system to ensure that pupils will make progress. The co-ordinator has identified the establishment of a computer suite as the first priority for the future but there is a large number of computers already in the school which could be used more effectively.

MUSIC

- 107 At the time of the last inspection standards were satisfactory throughout the school and often good in Key Stage 2. Teaching was sound or good in all classes and planning covered all elements of the National Curriculum. In the lessons and singing practices in the current inspection standards were good although it was not possible to observe the full range of the curriculum. Pupils have the opportunity to sing and use a range of percussion instruments. They make good progress in lessons that are structured to provide opportunities to practise and develop skills, for example, in a Reception and a Year 1 and 2 class. Good standards of singing are maintained through regular key stage practices in which clear expectations are made about quality and full participation.
- 108 Effective teaching helps pupils make good progress and reach a good standard in Key Stage 1 lessons. Reception pupils sing in tune to a well known taped song. They clap in time and maintain a steady rhythm. They observe well whether they are singing too fast or too slow. They accurately copy the teacher's example and tap out the rhythm of their name on a tambourine. The teacher's high expectations for careful listening and accuracy in performance ensures a good standard of work. In a Year 1 and 2 class pupils are taught to recognise a repeated rhythm and are introduced to the musical term 'ostinato' to describe this. Pupils play a range of percussion instruments in time to a taped song and sustain a suitable rhythm throughout. The teacher encourages full concentration and good standards by ensuring a good pace through the lesson allowing sufficient time to practise individual skills and at the same time maintaining the interest of all the pupils. The teacher's own enjoyment of the lesson stimulates a good level of participation and enjoyment in the pupils. In both Key Stage 1 lessons full and productive use was made of the short time available.
- 109 Across the school there are opportunities for pupils to take part in key stage singing practices which prepare them for the school assemblies. The sessions are ably led by a learning support assistant who is helped at all times by the teachers. In practice sessions all pupils participate well and sing with a sense of enjoyment. A Holy Communion song was sung with due reverence for the content and singing makes a good contribution to the spiritual development of pupils. The good quality of singing is maintained because, where pupils make errors in matching words to the time of the music, or in repeating a specific sequence of notes, they are stopped for further teaching and practice. Although no new hymns were taught during this time, good teaching together with good pupil participation meant that when pupils sang in assemblies the quality was good. Nevertheless, participation in singing in assemblies is less good than in the practice sessions. Some pupils have the opportunity to take part in fee-paying extra curricular lessons on recorders and guitars.
- 110 There is no policy for the teaching of music and the scheme of work, although just satisfactory, does not guarantee consistency between the key stages and requires more detail on the development of suitable skills. There is no assessment or record keeping in music. The subject co-ordinator has been absent from school, owing to long-term illness, and the headteacher currently oversees the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 111 The previous inspection indicated that pupils' attainment was in line with expectations. The time allocated to physical education was low, especially in Key Stage 1. The school has done well to maintain these standards despite the increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy. More time is now provided, and pupils have access to a broad curriculum, which includes swimming from Year 1. Standards of attainment are good in swimming, and satisfactory in other areas. Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is an additional language make similar progress as other pupils.
- 112 Only swimming was observed in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 1 are making good progress and are confident to enter the water. Most of them can swim a length of the school's pool with the help of floatation aids. By the end of Year 2, at least half are attaining the standard expected by the end of Year 6 in relation to being able to swim 25 metres. Good analysis by the teacher helps pupils improve their leg and arm action.
- 113 Pupils in Year 3 show a good awareness of fairness in games. They catch a ball satisfactorily, and throw with reasonable accuracy. Only about half are fully aware of the importance of movement when trying to create space for a pass thrown by a teammate. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve good standards in country dancing. Both boys and girls improve their skipping and during the lessons get better at moving to a beat of eight. The teachers use the taped programme skillfully to develop pupils' understanding of each element of the dance 'Bridge of Athlone'. In the best lesson, the evaluation of the performance of the different groups of pupils, was particularly good. The teacher ensured pupils observed carefully the performance of others and then encouraged them to identify what areas could be improved. This they did accurately.
- 114 Learning is promoted when teachers' encourage pupils to evaluate the work of others and suggest changes, although there are occasions when the teacher's questioning limits possible responses and when the teacher outlines the errors before pupils have a chance to suggest their ideas. Learning is also limited when insufficient attention is given to how to improve performance.
- 115 Pupils enjoy physical education. They have very good attitudes and display very good behaviour during lessons. Pupils are keen and most listen carefully to the teacher or the taped music. Relationships are also very good, illustrated by the way pupils worked very well in their dancing sets.
- 116 The quality of teaching is good, and occasionally very good. The standard has improved since the last inspection. The strengths previously identified in a few lessons are now evident in most. There are well planned opportunities to allow pupils to evaluate the performance of others. Teachers use resources, including time, effectively; as a result pupils are kept active throughout their lessons. In the best lessons, where teachers have good subject expertise, they take time to teach particular skills, especially in dance and swimming. As a result, pupils' learning and performance are enhanced. Another feature of the best lessons is that pupils are encouraged to evaluate the work of others in a very focussed way, and to suggest how it could be improved. Teachers emphasise the importance of health and safety during lessons, although there are occasions when pupils wear hooped earrings during lessons.

- 117 The co-ordinator leads the subject satisfactorily. All areas of the National Curriculum are taught, thus ensuring pupils develop skills across all relevant areas of physical education. A new policy and detailed scheme of work are to be developed to meet the new requirements for September, 2000. There is no consistent assessment of pupils' physical education skills, although there are plans to develop one alongside the new scheme. There are few opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching or standards of pupils' work. Resources are good, and include a swimming pool for younger pupils. A public swimming bath close by is used by Years 3 and 4.