

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHBOURNE C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Didcot

LEA area: Oxfordshire LEA

Unique reference number: 123221

Headteacher: Mrs K. Cook

Reporting inspector: Mrs K. Reed
017188

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 June 2000

Inspection number: 190310

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cockcroft Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr H. Collins-Rice

Date of previous inspection: 16 September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs K. Reed	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Design and Technology	How high are standards? The school's results and achievements.
			How well are pupils taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs C. Hinds	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr G. Morris	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities Mathematics Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs F. Aldridge	Team inspector	Under Fives English Music	How well is the school led and managed?
Ms M. Kellow	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Art Geography History Physical Education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Northbourne Church of England Aided Primary School is situated on the southern side of Didcot, a rapidly growing town. The school is in the older part of the town with predominantly ex-council housing and housing association properties. There are 290 pupils on roll, taught in ten classes. An additional classroom is being built. About a half of the children entering the school have attended a nursery school and most others have attended a playgroup. Baseline assessment shows that the attainment of pupils on entry is below average, English being notably weak. Thirteen percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. Eighty-one children are on the register of special needs with three pupils having a statement of educational need. The number of pupils on the special needs register has doubled since the last inspection; this figure is above average. Almost all of the pupils are of white ethnic origin.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The headteacher provides a clear vision and direction for the school. All staff work very effectively as a team and are committed to raising standards. The quality of teaching overall is good, with a significant proportion of very good teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2. The monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress is highly developed and is impacting on standards. Although standards of attainment in English and mathematics are low in Year 6 for 1999, this cohort of pupils actually made good progress based on their low achievement in Year 2. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The overall leadership, management and strategic direction for the school are very good.
- The systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, and the action taken subsequently are very effective.
- The determination to raise standards and provide the best possible education for the children in the school permeates all aspects of school life.
- Assessment is used very well to inform planning.
- There is effective implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies.
- The quality of teaching overall is good; expectations of pupils are high and behaviour management is good.
- Community links both locally, and more widely, are very good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

What could be improved

- More opportunities should be provided for extended writing.
- The early years curriculum should be developed to provide a more appropriate set of experiences.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1996 and has made good improvement since that time. The school development plan is very good. There are clear lines of accountability and the effectiveness of the plan is monitored systematically. Higher attaining pupils are now catered for well and there are more opportunities for pupils to become involved in enquiry based learning for example in history, science and design technology. The quality of teaching has improved significantly. Co-ordinators are very effective in carrying out detailed evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and standards being achieved in their subjects. Resource levels for subjects have improved. Based upon the current Year 6 cohort, standards in English by the age of eleven have been maintained, standards in mathematics and science have improved. The school is on course to meet its literacy and numeracy targets.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	C	D	E
Mathematics	B	D	E	E
Science	A*	B	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

At age eleven, performance in the core subjects generally over the last four years has been broadly in line with the national trend. Taken separately performance in English was close to the national average, mathematics was below the national average and science was above the national average. Whilst the standards of attainment as indicated in the table above appear to have declined, the prior attainment of pupils varies from cohort to cohort. In 1999 pupils in Year 6 started from a low baseline in Year 3. The school identified this and has taken effective action to maximise the progress made by this group of pupils. Compared with schools that had similar scores at Key Stage 1 in 1995, the progress made by these pupils in English was above average, in mathematics was close to the average and in science was well above average. During the inspection standards attained by pupils in the current Year 6 in mathematics and science were judged to be above the national average and in English to be about average. At age seven, standards in mathematics have risen to a level that is well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Standards in English and science are broadly in line with the national average.

The school has set challenging targets in English and mathematics which are regularly reviewed in light of on going pupil assessment, and is likely to meet these. Target setting for pupils is successfully supporting their learning. Standards of attainment in information technology and music are above average, and in the remaining subjects are broadly average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	One of the major strengths of the school is that pupils enjoy coming to school. Their enthusiasm is equally evident towards extra-curricular activities and classroom activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well. Lessons are characterised by calm, purposeful activity. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond accordingly. Their behaviour in large formal settings such as assembly is exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	Very high levels of mutual trust and respect are evident. Pupils relate well to each other and care for one another. They are extremely loyal to their school and feel well cared for.
Attendance	Attendance at the school is good. The school has an exceptionally low level of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is a strength of the school and has shown significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching was good or better in 64 per cent of lessons and very good or better in 40 per cent of lessons. Teaching in English is always at least satisfactory and good or better in 56 per cent of lessons. The teaching of mathematics is good. Both the literacy hour and the dedicated numeracy session have been implemented effectively. Pupils enjoy these sessions and are keen to learn. Lessons are well planned and differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers are very good at assessing pupils and using their assessments to improve learning. Teachers' management of behaviour is very good and the ethos created in classrooms contributes significantly to pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of all pupils. Support staff make a highly effective contribution to teaching and learning in the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school is implementing the national numeracy and literacy strategies well. With the exception of opportunities for extended writing, the curriculum at both key stages provides an appropriate range of learning experiences for pupils. The early years curriculum is insufficiently related to the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is a strength of the school. The co-ordinator manages this area very well. Individual education plans have clear targets and pupils make very good progress. Pupils are well supported by Learning Support Assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils' social and moral development is a particular strength. Cultural provision is good, particularly through the school's international links. Spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good support and guidance for its pupils. Staff put considerable energy and thought into identifying each child's individual need and taking appropriate action. This applies equally to academic and personal needs.

Parents are very welcome in the school. Many opportunities are created by the school for parents to observe the activities of their children at first hand. There are many opportunities for the exchange of information about pupils' well being and progress. The school is developing an open relationship with parents, which values their shared role in the development of the whole child. The prospectus and annual governors' report could be improved by making the style of them easier and more interesting to read.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very effectively led and managed. The headteacher provides a clear vision and direction for the school. Development planning is very good. Curriculum co-ordinators are effective, and exercise their roles with great consistency.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and support the headteacher to shape the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Rigorous and systematic evaluation is a key feature of the school. All staff are committed to raising standards. Curriculum co-ordinators are effective in carrying out detailed evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and the standards achieved in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Effective use is made of the staff, building and resources. The school provides very good value for money.

There are sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified teaching and support staff. Subject expertise is good except in relation to the curriculum provided for children aged under five. The accommodation is adequate overall, and provides an attractive working environment. The library area is too small and not in the best location to maximise independent research. There is no secure and separated outdoor play area for children aged under five.

The school applies the principles of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects children to work hard and do their best. • The teaching is good. • Pupils make good progress at school. • Behaviour in the school is good. • Pupils like school. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The extent to which the school works closely with parents. • The information provided for parents about their child's progress. • The amount of homework provide by the school.

The inspection team agrees with parents in the positive views.

A minority of parents, around 6%, identified the areas listed in the table as areas where they would like to see improvement. The team finds that the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Records of achievement are available for parents at any time, there are regular consultation appointments and teachers are on hand for informal chats as the need arises. School reports are of very good quality. Homework makes an effective contribution to pupils' attainment and the team thinks that the school usually provides a reasonable amount.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Baseline assessment shows that the attainment at the point of entry of most children who enter school is below average. By the age of five, children achieve good standards in personal and social development. At the beginning of the day they settle well to their routines. They share and collaborate well and can organise their own resources and tidy up. Their behaviour is very good. Children make good progress in speaking and listening, however a number of children remain with poorly developed speaking skills. Children can use picture clues to talk about events in storybooks. Most children are able to recognise their names and write these by copying from cards. The fine motor skills of some children are not sufficiently well developed to manage this task adequately. Children's progress in mathematics is sound and significant progress is made in information technology. Most pupils meet the Desirable Learning Outcomes by the age of 5 but a significant minority do not fully reach these standards. A very small number of children exceed the Desirable Learning Outcomes.
2. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils attained standards in English that were broadly in line with the national average and the average for similar schools. Standards in both reading and writing have varied from year to year. In 1999, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 2 was above the national average, but the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was well below the national average. The present Year 2 cohort is likely to exceed the national average at level 2 and above. Taking the last four years together, the performance of boys in reading was lower than that of girls, whilst the performance of boys and girls in writing was broadly similar.
3. Overall, over the last four years, the performance of eleven-year-olds in English has been close to the national average. In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, attainment in English was below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. Inspection evidence shows that the decline in standards in 1999 was due to the Year 6 cohort starting from a low baseline in Year 3. The school identified this and has taken effective action to maximise the progress made by this group of pupils. Although their performance was below the national average these pupils made good progress during Key Stage 2. Compared with schools whose pupils achieved a similar level of attainment in Key Stage 1, the performance of this cohort of pupils was above average. The present Year 6 cohort is achieving standards that are at least in line with national expectations, with the higher attaining pupils exceeding national expectations. Over the last four years, boys performed slightly better than girls in English. Differences between the attainment of boys and girls were not evident during the inspection.
4. At the age of seven, pupils achieved standards in the national tests in mathematics that were well above the national average, and also well above schools similar to Northbourne. Performance over the last four years has been consistently above the national average and is rising overall. This represents a significant improvement since the last report. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
5. At the age of eleven, pupils' performance in the national tests was well below the national average and also well below that of pupils in similar schools. The 1999 Year 6 cohort was below average at age seven but their progress was satisfactory during Key Stage 2. Over the last four years attainment at eleven has been below the national average,

however, standards observed during the inspection were higher than those found nationally at eleven. The school has focused on improving the teaching of mental skills and pupils' attainment in this aspect of mathematics is particularly high. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

6. The school has set challenging targets in English and mathematics which it reviews regularly in the light of routine monitoring of pupils' attainment, and pupils are on target to meet these.

7. Teacher assessment of science at seven in 1999 showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level is well above average, however the number of pupils achieving Level 3 is fewer than would normally be expected. By eleven, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in science was close to the national average and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level was also close to the national average. This particular cohort started from a low baseline in Key Stage 1. Compared with schools with a similar baseline, science results were well above average, showing that these pupils made very good progress during Key Stage 2. Taking the last four years together, attainment in science at eleven was above the national average. Boys achieve slightly better than girls. Work samples and discussions with pupils clearly showed that in terms of knowledge and understanding pupils are achieving well in comparison with national averages. They are, however, less secure in attaining the higher levels of some aspects of scientific investigation. Teacher assessment of pupils in 1999 showed that the proportion of pupils attaining level 4 and above was below the national average, and the proportion achieving level 5 was well below the national average. Teacher assessments for 2000 are much higher than this.

8. Standards of attainment are broadly average in all subjects at seven and eleven years of age. In Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Music, standards are above the national expectation, which is an improvement since the last inspection. ICT is used effectively to enhance learning in other subjects.

9. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. Early intervention and careful tracking of progress means pupils' needs are identified and planned for. Their individual education plans have clear targets and work which teachers plan for them is well differentiated to suit their needs. They are well supported by class teachers and by the learning support assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. One of the major strengths of the school is the positive attitude which pupils have towards the school. Their attitude is very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and talk very positively about their lessons and the wide range of other activities available to them. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the sports and music activities. A group of 30 children from Year 3 upward were buzzing with excitement about their participation in the Festival of Voices at Dorchester. Older boys and girls attending the swimming club after school were enjoying some healthy competition as they tried to improve on their personal best performances in anticipation of the forthcoming inter schools gala. Their enthusiasm for school life extends to classroom activities. They talk with relish about their literacy and numeracy lessons, praising the range of activities in each session. This energy and excitement was evident in a Year 4 literacy lesson where pupils were eagerly learning about unstressed vowels.

11. Pupils behave very well when they are at work and play. Lessons are invariably characterised by calm, purposeful activity. Even the youngest children are quiet, polite and obedient in class. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' correct behaviour. Pupils are showing that they understand completely what is expected of them and the vast majority

are committed to meeting these expectations. They know that it is their choice if they misbehave and are, therefore, prepared to accept the consequences of their actions. The minor disruption caused by the very few who break the rules is never allowed to affect the progress of other children. Pupils also behave very well when they are in large groups. They manage themselves very well in the dining hall at lunchtimes under the close supervision of the lunchtime staff. Their behaviour in formal settings such as the whole school assemblies is exemplary. On one occasion the whole school sat utterly engrossed in a class assembly led and performed by some of the youngest pupils. Not a sound was heard as a little boy and girl said a prayer with clarity and reverence.

12. Their natural high spirits are evident in the playground where they run around and participate in the many skipping, hand-clapping and football games with careful attention to the needs of others. Boys and girls and different ages mix well together. This very good behaviour was particularly noteworthy when considering the exceptionally high temperatures on the first day of the inspection, and the minor flood that occurred on the playground the following day, after torrential rain temporarily blocked a drain. On both occasions pupils remained calm and controlled and carried on with normal playtime activities. The appearance of two large frogs in the copse at the bottom of the field caused interest and concern rather than consternation.

13. Very good relationships exist throughout the whole school community. Pupils are very friendly and high levels of harmony exist in lessons and at break times. Many examples were seen in lessons of pupils helping one another. Two Year 4 pupils were showing some of their older neighbours how to insert pictures into a frame using the computers. Very high levels of co-operation were evident in a geography lesson for the oldest children learning about ordinance survey maps. Here geographers were giving and receiving co-ordinates to and from one another for specific places of interest in and around Didcot. This harmony is also translated into the playgrounds. Several examples were observed of pupils tenderly caring for children with minor injuries, ensuring they were taken to an adult. Pupils form very good relationships with adults. Very high levels of mutual trust and respect are evident and are a particular feature of life at Northbourne. Pupils are extremely loyal towards their school and all spoke warmly of their feelings for the staff. They rightly feel well supported and sincerely cared for.

14. The school is very good at providing for the individual needs of each child. This is reflected in their good personal development. Most of the pupils are sensible and responsible, taking pride in their selection to perform tasks. One of the youngest children was keen to ask an inspector for directions to the main office as he clutched the class register, emphasising this was only the second time he'd been chosen and he wanted to get it right! Several of the oldest children were carefully sweeping the water away from the flooded playground whilst managing to keep younger observers dry and clean. School council members are proud of their offices and are taking an increasingly active part in the life of the school.

15. Attendance at the school is good and yearly figures are showing an improving trend. This is because of the diligence of the school in promoting the importance of attendance and the follow up of any absence. The school therefore has an exceptionally low level of unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is a strength of the school and has shown significant improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the under-fives it is satisfactory overall with 20 per cent of lessons observed being very good. In Key Stage 1, teaching is

good overall. Fifty-eight per cent of lessons were good or better, with 19 per cent being very good. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good overall. Eighty-eight per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better, 64 per cent very good or better and 24 per cent excellent. As a result of the quality of teaching pupils' learning is often good or very good.

17. Planning is of good quality. Schemes of work provide teachers with a secure basis for termly plans. Daily work is very well differentiated to meet the needs of differing groups of pupils. Even where differentiation is by outcome, expected outcomes for different groups of pupils are often specified, indicating that teachers have a clear view about how pupils should perform and can make assessments against these. An example of this was a science lesson where children were engaged in an experiment to show that fluoride toothpaste helps to protect teeth. Expected outcomes for different groups of pupils were clearly identified in the planning.

18. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve irrespective of pupils' prior attainment. Learning objectives that are shared with pupils so they are very clear about the key learning outcomes of lessons. This combined with target setting helps pupils to understand how well they have done and the next steps for their learning. Teaching is highly focused. Teachers revisit learning objectives at the end of lessons reinforcing what has been learnt. During lessons teachers constantly check understanding and use pupils' mistakes effectively to clarify and correct misunderstandings. During the introduction to lessons teachers made good links with previous work. There are effective plenary sessions. Rigorous questioning is used to elicit pupils' ideas, probe their understanding and encourage precision in answers. Teachers often use subject language very well. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their own learning, particularly older pupils. This was exemplified in the way pupils were expected to manage group work and projects in science and design and technology.

19. Teachers are very good at assessing pupils understanding and in using their assessments to improve learning. This is often evident during lessons as teachers question and work with pupils. In one science lesson about the life cycle of plants, for example, the teacher quickly adapted her lesson plans and moved on in response to pupils' higher than anticipated level of knowledge and understanding. Teachers make regular and detailed assessments of individual pupils against the learning objectives of lessons. Homework concentrates primarily on literacy and numeracy and makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning.

20. Teachers' management of behaviour is very good. A highly effectively approach to behaviour management has been introduced in the school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and are rarely disappointed. Pupils take responsibility for their actions and are treated by the staff with respect, consideration and concern. Pupils with special educational needs are correctly identified and managed in accordance with the Code of Practice recommendations; they are very well supported. Teachers are very skilful at including pupils in lessons and in supporting these pupils. Teachers work closely with Learning Support Assistants, who are well briefed. On occasions pupils are withdrawn to provide very specific targeted support for short periods of time. This combination of support in class and withdrawal is very effective.

21. The teaching of literacy ranges from satisfactory to excellent, but is predominantly good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The literacy strategy has been implemented effectively. Good organisation is a key feature of the literacy hour. Specific improvement targets based upon the very good assessment procedures are set for all pupils.

22. Numeracy teaching is good and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers

plan lessons well, using the three-part structure promoted by the national numeracy strategy. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils; however, the work planned for higher attaining pupils in the Year 2/3 sets is not challenging enough. The teaching of mental skills is good. Pupils are involved in self-assessment and in setting targets for improvement. This has a positive impact on their learning.

23. In a very few instances during lessons pace is slow or parts of lessons lack momentum, which slows the rate of learning. Teachers occasionally talk for too long to the whole class at the beginning of a lesson, which results in pupils' attention being lost. Occasionally questioning could have been more challenging, and there were some instances of either pupils not having sufficient to do for short periods of time, or not having work which was sufficiently challenging, which limited progress.

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

24. The school's curriculum in Key Stage 1 and 2 contains a suitable breadth of activities, with the national programmes for literacy and numeracy being planned and taught effectively. There is a balance of subjects for pupils, with other areas of the National Curriculum being taught for a suitable amount of time. The curriculum for pupils in the early years is not as strong because the work for them is planned too much from individual subjects. This does not give these pupils the range of experiences they need at this age.

25. All pupils have appropriate access to the whole curriculum. The school caters well for those pupils with special needs through providing additional support or different resources. This ensures that they can do the same work as other pupils, at the correct level for them. Some pupils are withdrawn from the normal timetable for short periods to do extra work using the computers for English and mathematics. This is appropriate for the pupils involved. The requirements of higher attaining pupils are now planned for and met more successfully than at the time of the last report, however the location and size of the library does not aid independent research

26. The school is implementing the national literacy and numeracy strategies well and the teaching of basic skills in these areas is good. All pupils are taught a programme of personal, social and health education programme (PSHE) from age seven and with younger pupils similar work is done in their normal subjects. The programme includes appropriate work on sex education and drug misuse. The school plays an active role in the local partnership of schools, developing some common policies e.g. on drug education.

27. A strength in what the school provides is the range of visitors invited into the school to add their experience to lessons. All pupils also have the chance to take part in school visits and productions as they move through the school. Again, this enhances the teaching. The school's links with the community and with other schools are very good. This has enabled pupils to work, for example, on science and mathematics projects, which have helped to raise standards of work in these subjects. This aspect of provision has improved since the last inspection.

28. A wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is offered, from sports activities to homework clubs. These are provided at different times of the day and the take-up is good. Pupils benefit from the extra work put in by their teachers and other adults in providing these opportunities for them. During the inspection several extra-curricular activities took place, including two homework clubs which enabled pupils to receive support while doing their homework.

29. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to relate to each other and to develop their social skills in lessons where they often work co-operatively in pairs. The school puts specific emphasis on helping pupils to learn social skills through the way good behaviour is promoted. Assemblies, the PSHE programme and the model set by adults in the school contribute to pupils' moral development. Further work in subjects such as science and Religious Education ensures that pupils are helped to learn what is right or wrong in a range of situations.

30. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their understanding of their own culture through visits outside the school and in what they are taught, for example, in music. The school has made very good links with schools in other countries and pupils can communicate with pupils there. This helps to develop their knowledge of other cultures, which is further extended by work, for example, in Religious Education. Subject co-ordinators have planned how to use their subjects to promote pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies and other acts of worship, such as prayers in most classes at the end of sessions, provide reflective moments during the day for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has good arrangements for ensuring that pupils are safe and secure in school. Clear policies exist and the systems in practice match these policies. Sick and injured children are well cared for. Child protection arrangements are very good with all staff demonstrating a high awareness of the circumstances of all their pupils. The very good personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils have a particularly good understanding of health related issues. Even the children in one of the youngest classes were able to identify things that are good for your body. Of particular benefit to the welfare of the pupils is the very genuine and consistently caring attitudes of all the staff, teaching and support. The pupils at Northbourne benefit considerably from the time, energy and thought which staff give to identifying each child's individual and unique need. A child in need of comfort was given some time out of the classroom and a listening ear; another with the beginnings of hay fever was instantly spotted and dispatched to the first aider.

32. Communication between all staff about pupils' needs is very good. Many opportunities exist for information to flow quickly and carefully both formally, through the well organised programme of different staff meetings, and informally within an extremely co-operative and supportive whole staff team.

33. As in the last report, the school has well-developed procedures for assessing and monitoring academic performance and personal development in order to raise standards. All teachers' planning shows careful consideration of previous assessments. Lessons have clear learning objectives against which teachers make evaluations of pupils' performance. Children with special educational needs are monitored well. There is good written communication between teachers and Learning Support Assistants, identifying strengths and weaknesses of pupils' performance. Pupils have individual targets for the core subjects and are involved in the assessment of their progress to meet these. Classes have targets posted on the wall, which also deal with expectations of behaviour and self-checking of work. The school has comprehensive and systematic procedures for tracking individual pupil progress. This information is used well to inform parents of the performance of their child. Subject co-ordinators are involved in monitoring individual teachers' assessments and this enables them to address curricular issues as they arise.

34. Pupils are given high quality support and guidance about both their work and their development as individual people. The very good systems for assessing pupils' work give the teachers the information that they need and use well to guide the pupils' future activities. Lists

of targets for literacy activities in particular are on the walls of classes and pupils can choose those most relevant for themselves on a termly basis. Pupils are confident that this system works well and helps them improve their weaknesses. Many examples were observed in lessons of teachers demonstrating clear understanding of individual potential and suitably guiding the work of those children, as a result the progress made by pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good.

35. Those pupils who have special education needs are very well supported in the school. Parents are involved at every stage of their child's special need. Work within classes is well differentiated. Teachers often show considerable skill in including pupils within lessons, and pupils with SEN regularly take on responsibilities around the school and take an active part in extra-curricular activities. Learning Support Assistants are very well briefed and make a significant contribution to children's learning. Individual education plans have clear targets. There are good links with a local special school. The leadership and management of the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) are very good. Systems work effectively, teachers new to the school are well supported and the SENCO meets regularly with the designated governor.

36. The very good behaviour of the pupils is a direct result of the way they are so well managed and supported by all the staff. The school introduced an assertive discipline policy in September 1999, which concentrates on re-inforcing the positive. The policy was extremely well researched, carefully considered and adopted and all staff thoroughly trained. The very successful implementation is a credit to the whole school. There is already a high degree of confidence in, and competence with, the system. Many examples were observed of children who were "caught being good". The emphasis is correctly placed on pupils' own decisions to misbehave. Several children were given a warning with staff commenting on their choice of action and resulting consequence. Rewards and recognition are very well used to motivate the pupils; even the oldest children are eager to collect individual and class points. A class given five minutes extra play as their chosen reward for hard work and good behaviour was the envy of many other classes. The school has introduced behaviour-tracking sheets for those few pupils who find conforming to the high expectations difficult. These sheets are used extremely successfully with even the very youngest pupils motivated to achieve improvement. Behaviour management is so good that the school has not needed to make any permanent or fixed term exclusions for five years.

37. Rewards are unnecessary to persuade pupils to attend regularly. From the initial visit which staff make to all pupils' homes and throughout their school career the importance of regular attendance is emphasised to all pupils and their families. Rigorous and vigorous recording and following up of absence is ensuring that the figures are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The partnership the school has with its parents has improved since the last inspection. Most parents have a very good understanding of the school. The majority of parents are very satisfied with the school and the way in which it provides a suitable and appropriate education for their children. Parents are rightly particularly appreciative of the time taken to meet individual pupils' needs. The large number of parents available at different times for inspectors to talk to informally during the week reflected the ease which most parents feel in and around school. The school works very hard to include parents in all aspects of school life and to tell them about what their children are doing. Of particular value are the many opportunities that the school has created for parents to observe first hand, the activities of their children. Parents of pupils who are performing their class assembly are

invited to observe, and over 30 attended the Reception / Year 1 class assembly during the inspection week. After an extremely good performance by the pupils, these parents and grandparents mingled happily in the classroom with the children and staff, sharing and celebrating the pupils' efforts and achievements.

39. Class meetings held at the beginning of each term are very well used to explain the curriculum activities and to indicate how parents can help and support their children's learning at home. The school has also successfully organised basic skills courses for parents to help support literacy and numeracy activities. Concerns raised by a significant minority of parents through the pre-inspection questionnaire about the information that the school provides could well be due to the quality of the prospectus and the annual governors' report. Whilst the information contained is appropriate, the language of the governors' report in particular does not provide easy, comfortable reading for parents. In all other respects concerns are unjustified.

40. The school makes very good use of recognition and rewards such as the 'pupil of the week' to give parents feedback about their children. Homework is generally well used to include parents in their children's learning. Parents can comment in pupils' homework diaries and in one instance a particularly helpful dialogue occurred between the class teacher and parents of a pupil in the pupil's homework book. The help which many parents give to the school in the form of classroom support, activities organised by the Friends Association and helping run clubs such as the swimming club, is highly valued by the school. Many of the wide range of activities that the children enjoy would not be possible without the support of some loyal and committed parents. A group of car drivers very willingly gave up their evening to drive the choir members to Dorchester.

41. The school devotes more time than most schools to the provision of individual interviews for parents to discuss their children's progress; at least twenty minutes are provided twice yearly. Records are kept of the discussion, as parents are encouraged to sign a short statement about their understanding of the progress that has been made either at the meeting, or immediately after. Pupils also identify for themselves where they feel they have made progress and where further improvement could be secured.

42. Annual reports are good, giving very clear descriptions of pupils' strengths. Weaknesses and specific areas for improvement are well identified in many subjects but not always in some of the foundation subjects such as history and geography. Records of achievement are very well kept, including examples of pupils' work, results of some assessments, yearly reports and lists of pupils' achievements in and outside school, e.g. becoming a 'sixer' in Brownies or Cubs. These are accessible to parents at any time. They are a very good example of the open relationship that the school is developing with its parents and the emphasis the school places on their shared role in the development of the whole child.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The school is very effectively led and managed. The headteacher provides a clear vision and direction for the school, striving for continued improvements in the quality of education being provided. High commitment to raising standards permeates through all aspects of the school's work. Research and systematic evaluation are key features of the schools' approach and this is led with rigour by the headteacher, setting high standards and clear expectations for staff and pupils alike. Curriculum co-ordinators take their responsibilities seriously and are effective in carrying out detailed evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and standards being achieved in their subjects. This is an improvement on the last inspection.

44. Monitoring of pupils' performance and attainment is highly developed. Test and assessment results for individual pupils are meticulously recorded enabling staff to track pupils' progress in the core subjects over time. This informs the well-established procedures for setting targets for individual pupils within the schools' overall strategy for improving standards.

45. Development planning is very good. A three-year strategic plan is in place. Detailed review and analysis of the previous years' targets leads to the identification of priorities for the following year. Priorities and targets are appropriate and action taken has a direct bearing on improvements. For example, staff development on assertive discipline during the previous year has led to significant improvement in pupil behaviour. The headteacher has devised procedures to secure consistency and pace amongst staff. This has resulted in the monitoring of progress against school targets being explicit with clear lines of accountability and expectations being set for lead staff. This aspect of management has shown improvement since the last inspection.

46. An ethos of trust and honesty has been created by the headteacher and this results in high levels of motivation and openness amongst staff. Relationships between staff are very good and staff collaborate and cooperate effectively recognising each other's strengths and utilising these to support their work. The advanced skills teacher makes a significant contribution to the work of school providing a model of good practice which is shared to improve further the quality of teaching and learning. Overall the staff work very hard at this school and demonstrate the capacity and commitment to secure further improvements in the quality of education being provided.

47. The senior management team has a good overview of the work of the school and provides an effective infrastructure for both the strategic and day to day management of the school. However, the balance of responsibilities between different members of the team is uneven. The deputy headteacher currently does not hold levels of responsibility commensurate with her role.

48. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and help to shape the direction of the school. They have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school through systematic reporting and feedback from the headteacher and staff as well as from direct observation and review of practice. Governors' committees are well established with clearly defined terms of reference. Communication and decision making processes are effective and well led by the Chair of the governing body. Governors have clear aspirations for the school which include a focus on raising standards as well as pupils personal and social development.

49. The procedures for staff development and appraisal are very well established. Induction programs for newly qualified staff are highly effective involving systematic support, training opportunities and regular review of their progress. All staff are encouraged to utilise and deploy their areas of strength to support the work and aspirations of the school. Professional development activities reflect the priorities of the school as well as the needs of individual members of staff.

50. Educational priorities are supported well through financial planning. The strategic plan sets out longer-term objectives and careful use of the school's budgets ensured that the objectives are achieved. The school is also entrepreneurial about accessing funds from a range of external bodies to supplement the school's budgets. This has enabled the school to embark on activities to improve the quality of teaching and learning, for example. The use of information technology enhances the ability of the school to monitor and control budgets and

staff regularly update their skills and expertise in this area.

51. The employment of a part time bursar enables the headteacher and other staff to focus their attention on improving the quality of education being provided, spending only minimal time on dealing with financial administration. The school has acted upon the recommendations of the most recent auditor's report.

52. The school places considerable emphasis on data analysis and comparing its achievements with those of other schools. It monitors pupils' progress carefully and sets pupils and the school challenging targets. Consultation occurs at all levels with governors, staff and parents and the school evaluates its provision thoroughly. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

53. There are sufficient numbers of appropriately qualified teaching and support staff to meet the requirements for children of compulsory school age. Subject expertise is good in all areas except in relation to the curriculum provided for children aged under five. Support staff are always well prepared by teachers and make a highly effective contribution to teaching and learning in the school.

54. There is adequate accommodation overall. However, the library area is too small and not in the best location to maximise opportunities for independent research. There is no secure and separated outdoor area provided for appropriate outdoor play experiences for children aged under five.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to improve further the quality of education the school offers its pupils, the headteacher and staff together with the governing body should:

- (1) Provide greater opportunities for extended writing through
 - reviewing the content of English teaching outside the literacy hour.
(Paragraph 72)
- (2) Improve the quality of education in the early years through
 - providing a more appropriate curriculum for children in their foundation stage;
 - providing greater opportunities for structured play and for children to choose for themselves;
 - improving the provision for outdoor play.

(Paragraphs 24, 57, 59, 61, 63, 64)

The following additional issues may be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

Build upon the work already done to provide greater opportunities for children to work independently and to research and investigate using the library and other resources.

(Paragraphs 25, 72)

Improve the style of the Annual Report to parents and the prospectus, making them easier and more interesting to read.

(Paragraph 39)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	28	26	36	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	290
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	81

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	5.5	School data	0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	18	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	20	22
	Girls	16	16	18
	Total	36	36	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 [71]	90 [88]	100 [96]
	National	82 [80]	83 [81]	87 [84]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	22	22
	Girls	16	18	17
	Total	35	40	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 [77]	100 [98]	98 [98]
	National	82 [81]	86 [85]	87 [86]

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	19	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	13
	Girls	15	11	15
	Total	24	20	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 [66]	59 [59]	82 [82]
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	11
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	21	20	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 [61]	59 [57]	74 [83]
	National	68 [65]	69 [65]	75 [71]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	251
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.2
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	143

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	421,992
Total expenditure	423,665
Expenditure per pupil	1,524
Balance brought forward from previous year	41,891
Balance carried forward to next year	40,218

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	290
Number of questionnaires returned	84

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	43	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	45	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	55	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	11	4	2
The teaching is good.	57	39	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	40	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	7	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	40	18	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	45	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	45	6	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	42	15	1	8

N.B. percentages of responses are rounded to nearest whole number, sum may not = 100

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

56. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children attending the Reception Year on a part time basis. Children enter school on a part-time basis during the term in which they have their fifth birthday. When they enter their attainment is below average. However, there are a number of children whose attainment is average and a small minority whose attainment is above average. The majority of children have had some pre-school education. There are approximately 12 pre-school settings from which children come to this school and, on entry most are prepared for the daily routines of the classroom.

57. Teachers' planning is meticulous and detailed. However the curriculum is planned under subjects rather than areas for learning for children aged under five. Whilst teachers work hard, the nature of the curriculum provided for children aged under five does not enable children to develop all the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding to underpin future learning at the school. Although progress is made during the reception year it is not sufficiently brisk. The low baseline results highlight the necessity of more rapid progress during the early years. By the age of five a significant minority do not achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes, though most have made steady progress.

Personal and social development

58. Children's behaviour is very good. They share and collaborate well during work and play, for example, when creating a landscape using sand and water in small groups. They listen attentively to teachers during playtime and follow instructions in a mature manner. They are able to organise their resources and equipment and tidy up at the end of sessions. Their concentration spans vary, some demonstrating the ability to persevere for a sustained period whilst others move quickly from one activity to another. They demonstrate the ability to negotiate with each other when sharing a task or equipment. When starting at the beginning of the day, they settle quickly into the general routines of the classroom. Teachers and other staff have consistently high expectations of the children. Politeness and courtesy are shown by children towards adults, and to each other. Teachers promote children's personal and social development very effectively.

Language and Literacy

59. Children make good progress in speaking and listening. They listen with increasing interest and attention to adults and most join in well in discussions. There are, however, a number of children who have poorly developed skills in speaking and find it difficult to express simple ideas. Adults' sensitive handling of this is apparent and all children's contributions during lessons are valued. Children particularly enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and can recall the main events in well-known stories. They join in singing rhymes with great enthusiasm and with a real sense of fun when such singing is accompanied by actions. The majority of children know the conventions of reading and can point to some familiar words in books. They use picture cues effectively to talk about a sequence of events in storybooks. Most children can recognise and write their names. Many independently write their names and other words. Children are being taught to form letters correctly but for some children their fine motor skills are not yet sufficiently developed to manage this task adequately. The approach adopted to implement the literacy hour with the youngest children results in some

activities being too formal and narrowly structured.

Mathematics

60. Children enjoy their mathematics activities and their progress is sound. They are able to count up to 10 with ease and can recognise written numbers. They understand that 'a pair' means two and can confidently talk about more and less in containers. They have a sound grasp of language to describe size and measure, for example they discuss who is tallest in the class and can compare using terms such as 'shorter than' and 'bigger than'. In a minority of instances children are involved in writing numbers before they have fully grasped the concept. Practical experiences with real objects are, at times, not provided sufficiently.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing appropriately. There are many opportunities for children to build and construct using a range of materials. They are able to talk about the properties of materials such as those which float and those that will sink. Pupils were able to name parts of the body. They know about the habitats of some animals and can talk about different types of weather. They can name geographical features such as land, river, jungle and hills. They happily discuss their families and have a good understanding of their position in their family. Pupils learn about toys and games played by their parents when they were at school. Work on periods in history enables children to consider changes over time. However, whilst teachers plan well, the methods used to develop such a complex concept are not wholly appropriate for children aged under five.

62. Children make significant progress in information technology. Most are able to operate simple programmes using the keys and the mouse.

Creative Development

63. Creative development is promoted satisfactorily. Children sing tunefully after reinforcing counting or their knowledge and understanding of the world, for example, the song "heads, shoulders, knees, and toes" required children to name different parts of the body as accompanying actions to the song. The use of paint, clay, fabrics and different media for drawing is limited. Children do not have access to these aspects sufficiently regularly.

Physical Development

64. Children handle and use tools for writing, gluing and sticking with increasing confidence and control, but some still have difficulty when they use a pencil for writing and drawing. Gross motor skills are demonstrated as children move around the classroom. Many pupils throw and catch with two hands and higher attaining pupils throw, clap and catch. Opportunities for outdoor play are too few. Children do not have regular access to wheeled vehicles or have outdoor resources for climbing, jumping and balance in a safe and secure area for these youngest children at the school.

ENGLISH

65. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum test for eleven-year-olds show that performance was below the national average and well below those for similar schools. This is lower than at the time of the last inspection. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level 4 or above was close to the national average but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was below average. However, these results are not an accurate

reflection of the school's performance in English and overall attainment levels in the present Year 6 are average and some of the higher attainers in Year 6 are working above national expectations. There has been an apparent decline in standards over the period 1996 to 1999 with last year's results being particularly low. As indicated by their results as seven year olds at the end of Key Stage 1, last year's Year 6 was a cohort of less than average ability, who have none the less, made good progress over the last four years.

66. Progress throughout the school is sound. The school is highly effective in implementing the National Literacy Strategy though greater emphasis is required to develop extended writing. The good teaching combined with the vigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and target setting, means that the challenging targets set for English in 2001 for eleven-year-olds are likely to be met.

67. The 1999 National Curriculum results for seven-year-olds show that attainment in reading and writing is average. For the period 1997 to 1999 standards have varied from year to year; in reading results were particularly high in 1997, but since then have been either below average or average. During this period the performance was in line with that of similar schools for both reading and writing. The proportion of pupils in this year's Year 2 attaining the nationally expected standard is likely to exceed the national average.

68. Previous years' results show differences between the attainment of boys and girls. This was not in evidence during the inspection. Pupils with SEN are well supported and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

69. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to respond to teachers' questions in the literacy hour as well as in other lessons. Most pupils are keen, and contribute and express themselves clearly. There are a number of pupils whose vocabulary range is narrow and their responses are, at times, restricted. Teachers, however, are highly effective in sensitively modifying their questioning to secure a response from them, often providing words and models to be used in response to the questions posed. Very good examples of this technique were observed in the lower set in Year 6. Despite the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in this class, almost all pupils made an effective contribution during a literacy lesson. Pupils also have opportunities to speak to a larger audience; for example, in assembly reception year and Year 1 pupils demonstrated high levels of confidence when they led a whole school assembly. Their speech is clear and all pupils project their voices well to suit the occasion. There was little evidence during the inspection of pupils entering into dialogue as part of their work, for example through collaborative work. By the age of seven, pupils answer questions accurately and articulately. They listen carefully to instructions and most express themselves clearly. By the age of eleven, pupils talk confidently about their learning and most express their ideas with confidence. The average and higher attaining pupils argue their point of view and provide well thought out responses, for example when examining the style, content and impact of different poems in Year 6.

70. Most pupils by the age of seven read with accuracy and fluency. They tackle less familiar words using well-developed skills in phonics and the use of word patterns. Their knowledge of the alphabet is well developed and used effectively when spelling or finding the meaning of words using dictionaries. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to use the contents and index pages in non-fiction books. They describe accurately how to locate books in the library.

71. By the age of eleven, pupils read from a wide variety of books. They discuss their preferences for particular authors and their styles. When asked, they give reasons for their choice of books. Most explain the events in a story and discuss the differences between

characters in books they have read. They describe how to locate information from non-fiction books. Some pupils read with good expression and most enjoy reading. As compared to the last report, pupils are now selecting texts appropriate for their reading level. A small minority does not read regularly and do not demonstrate an enjoyment for reading. The reading dialogue enables teachers to monitor pupils' progress in reading; further analysis of numbers and types of books read by the older pupils particularly would help to encourage the more reluctant readers to read more frequently. The range of genres read is very good and provides a richness and diversity which contributes to the overall average, and at times above average, standards being achieved. The provision of non-fiction texts has improved since the time of the last report, with the exception of texts to support younger readers and those pupils with special educational needs in history.

72. Attainment at ages seven and eleven in writing is in line with national expectations. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection. Pupils write for a variety of purposes, including poetry, recommitting experiences, descriptions and letter writing. Pupils also develop their writing skills in other subjects, for example in history and science. Pupils write brief reviews of books they have read. In Key Stage 2 good attention is paid to helping pupils to use language well and some of the writing is imaginative and lively, for example poems written by Year 6 pupils. In the literacy hour, great emphasis is placed on developing writing skills such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. In these aspects, most pupils demonstrate well-developed skills and apply these effectively in both their reading and written work. By the time pupils reach the age of seven, they apply their phonetic skills well to spell words in their writing. Spelling patterns for more complex words are well understood by Key Stage 2 pupils, and the standards in spelling are generally good. While some opportunities exist for more independent, creative and extended work in writing, these are too few, particularly for the higher attaining and the older pupils. The time allocated for English outside the literacy hour too frequently provides similar work to that covered in the literacy hour rather than extending opportunities for more sustained work in aspects of the English curriculum. The older pupils particularly have not undertaken enough work on extended writing during English lessons, though a few examples of such writing can be seen in their English books and in other subjects.

73. Pupils work hard in literacy sessions and generally persevere well. They are always polite and their behaviour is very good even where pupils' concentration skills are less well developed. The pace of lessons is such that all make at least satisfactory progress. Only in a small minority of instances were there short periods of off task behaviour. Pupils' ability to organise their work is good. Opportunities to work collaboratively are few though there is provision in the curriculum for drama. Pupils are familiar with the pattern of the literacy hour and respond in a mature manner when moving through different parts of the lesson. In a small minority of instances pupils were unable to complete the tasks set during the literacy lesson.

74. The quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent but is predominantly good. The literacy strategy has been effectively implemented. Staff have worked hard to secure good quality planning underpinned by the effective use of resources. Lesson objectives are always clear and shared with other pupils. Prior assessment and monitoring of pupils' learning informs lesson content and planning. Most lessons have good pace and expectations of pupils are consistently high. In the best lessons teachers' enthusiasm for the subject permeates throughout and excellent pace and very high expectations and challenge secures very good progress. Good organisation of lessons is a key feature of teaching during the literacy hour; work and resources are always very well prepared. The school involvement in the 'Esme Fairburn Project' has resulted in specific improvement targets being set for all pupils. Pupils are aware of these and take responsibility to achieve these in a mature manner. Teachers work very effectively with support assistants who provide high

quality support across the school.

75. The school's procedures for assessing and tracking pupils over time are very good, but the subject co-ordinator's involvement in this is not as high as it should be. There are good procedures for monitoring teaching; resources are adequate and well managed.

MATHEMATICS

76. Results in mathematics in the national tests at age 7 in 1999 were well above the national results and also well above those of schools similar to Northbourne. At age 11 the results in 1999 were much lower than national figures and those for similar schools. However, standards at eleven are now much higher than these figures indicate. The standards of work seen during the inspection were above those nationally in both at age seven and eleven. Standards become increasingly high compared with those nationally, as pupils move through the school. The school has worked successfully to reduce differences in the performance of boys and girls. The performance of boys and girls is now much closer than in previous years. Overall standards have improved since the last inspection.

77. By the age of seven most pupils work confidently with numbers to 100, with many pupils going beyond this. They are beginning to know addition and subtraction facts for small numbers and they can use simple bar charts to represent information. By the age of eleven pupils can work confidently with decimals and have a good grasp of number facts such as multiplication tables. Their skills in other areas of mathematics are also strong. For example, pupils can interpret charts and graphs to a high standard.

78. The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection and it is now good. Teachers use the three-part lesson structure promoted by the national strategy for mathematics lessons. Within this structure teachers plan lessons well, with a clear focus on what pupils will learn. This focus is shared with the class so that pupils know what they will be learning. All teachers use resources to help pupils understand how numbers relate to each other. For example, one teacher taught pupils to add 19 by moving down and across on a hundred square. This useful image gave the pupils an effective strategy to replace merely 'counting on' in ones.

79. Teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils will do in mathematics lessons: for example, in a Year 5 and 6 class pupils were expected to double and halve decimals mentally. However, the work planned for the high attaining older pupils in the Year 2/3 sets is not challenging enough.

80. The school has focussed on improving the teaching of mental skills over a long period of time leading up to the implementation of the national numeracy strategy. This has worked well and teachers are now adept in developing pupils' mental skills through their work in the first part of each lesson. Pupils' standards in this area are particularly high as a result.

81. Teachers generally set interesting activities for their classes. Pupils enjoy these and are keen and enthusiastic to join in. They often work together in pairs, helping one another and behaviour in mathematics lessons is very good. Pupils work hard and concentrate well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' concentration flagged towards the end of lessons. During the time that pupils are working in groups teachers spend too much time moving between them and not enough with one or two groups, helping to raise their standards.

82. Pupils being encouraged to assess themselves makes clear to pupils their strengths and weaknesses and significantly enhances the assessment of how well pupils are doing in

mathematics. Targets for improvement are set as a result and pupils know exactly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. This is a strength.

83. Because of the high standards of teaching and assessment, pupils make good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs who receive learning support assistance make good progress because of the quality of this support.

84. Pupils' skills in numeracy are developed in other subjects as well. In information technology, for example, pupils used computers to draw bar graphs and learned about different ways of showing information. In Year 5 and 6 pupils used spreadsheets in science to examine light levels in parts of the school.

85. The school has worked very successfully to forge links with parents through evening sessions, a course for parents in mathematics and by linking the use of mathematics software between home and school. Also of note are the strong links with the business community which have led to substantial amounts of funding being won for the school and with other local schools. These links have had a beneficial effect on what pupils are offered in mathematics lessons.

86. Mathematics has developed well in the school as a result of the national strategy and of the work the school did before the strategy started. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. Her monitoring of what goes on is excellent and this has led to improvements in standards and teaching in the subject.

SCIENCE

87. In the 1999 statutory teacher assessments, the proportion of seven-year-olds attaining the expected level was well above average but the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grade was well below average. Inspection evidence shows that teachers plan and teach to enable pupils to attain the higher level. In some lessons observed, and in the work seen, some pupils were achieving these higher levels in knowledge and understanding of science.

88. In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds pupils attained standards which were close to the national average and broadly in line with those for similar schools. Standards of attainment have been maintained since the last report. However, results show a decline in standards over the last three years compared with schools nationally, from standards which were very high in comparison to all schools, to standards which are close to the national average. Cohorts vary from year to year. The 1999 cohort did not attain high levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and therefore were starting from a low baseline. The school's tracking of pupil performance between 1995 and 1999 shows these pupils made considerable progress. Compared with schools that achieved similar results at Key Stage 1, pupils' performance in tests was well above average for science. In lessons observed during the inspection, standards varied from average to above average. Work samples and planning showed that pupils have access to higher levels and are appropriately challenged. From discussions with higher attaining pupils during the inspection and work sampling, it is evident that pupils have a good understanding of knowledge and understanding at higher levels but were less secure in scientific investigation. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test and the emphasis on representing and interpreting data in both mathematics and science is evident in pupils' skills in this area. They are less successful in using scientific knowledge and understanding in making predictions and drawing conclusions and in explaining how results lead to conclusions. From work sampling it is evident that all pupils often pursue one line of investigation. Investigations could be further exploited to provide differentiated experiences for pupils.

89. The quality of teaching in science is at least good with 55 per cent of teaching being very good and a further 22 per cent being excellent. This is a significant improvement on the last report. Schemes of work are good and show clear progression. Work is very well differentiated to fit the needs of differing groups of pupils. Lessons have very clear learning objectives that are made explicit to pupils and revisited effectively in plenary sessions to re-inforce the key learning points. Plenary sessions are often used to extend learning and indicate next steps forward. Good resources are available, which are used to good effect. Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) are very well briefed, have a good knowledge of science and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. LSAs and teachers work very effectively together. Lessons generally have good pace and there is a good balance between teacher exposition and question and answer sessions. There is a clear emphasis on the development of scientific vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to explain answers and be precise. Science makes a very good contribution to the development of literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The high quality of teaching means pupils learn well. They have very good attitudes to their work in science. They respond well to questions and are keen to show what they know. They apply themselves equally well to written and practical tasks and behave responsibly during practical activities.

90. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership. She has a clear management role and the monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress is rigorous. Pupils' answers in national tests are analysed to identify weaknesses and action is taken e.g. working with a partnership advanced skills teacher (AST) to provide information technology resources which enable pupils to practice identifying key variables in investigations and the effects of changing these. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of initiatives, e.g. participation in the Didcot Science Festival and the use of visiting science 'drama characters' such as Newton.

ART

91. The attainment of pupils of all ages is satisfactory, and in the development of drawing skills, it is good, which is an improvement on the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils are given a variety of experiences of working with both two-dimensional and three-dimensional materials. They record experiences from memory; for example, reception year and Year 1 pupils do paintings of their favourite games, and Year 2 make observational drawings of artefacts associated with their history topic. Key Stage 2 pupils build upon their existing skills with developing skills in the use of line and tone in watercolour paintings, and drawings based on close observations. From examples of work seen there are too few opportunities for pupils to make their own choices about the media to use when creating a piece of work.

92. Very few lessons were observed during the inspection and no lessons were observed in Key Stage 1. In the lessons observed teaching was satisfactory. Teachers planned lessons well and gave good explanations and instructions for the activity. In the reception class pupils 'went for a walk' around the carpet to simulate the activity they were about to do. In Year 4 good use was made of Van Gogh's, painting 'The Wheat Field' to show how the use of line can create movement. However, in all lessons the impact of teaching could have been improved with a more appropriate choice of resources, for example younger children would have benefited from larger pieces of paper and a wider choice of drawing implements. Older children would have discovered the use of pressure to create different lines had they used a softer drawing medium such as charcoal or soft pencils.

93. Evidence from portfolios of work and displays show that pupils make good progress in developing knowledge of the work of artists and in developing skills. In the Year 5/6 classes pupils study the work of Bruegal, Kandinski and Escher. Pupils in the Years 2/3 classes use

the work of Barbara Hepworth as an inspiration to develop their own sculptures using natural materials. In Year 4 pupils study Islamic art; however, there was little evidence of the study of work from other cultures in the work seen.

94. Pupils have positive attitudes to artwork. Younger pupils concentrate on the task in hand and talk enthusiastically about the activity. Older pupils talk with interest about their work and show particular enthusiasm for three-dimensional work such as batik or pottery. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in developing three-dimensional work, including pottery.

95. The school makes good use of artists in residence and community artists to provide specialist teaching and enhance provision. The tapestry work for Portrait 2000 has provided a focus for a school wide project and the school's efforts will be displayed at a county - wide exhibition.

96. The school has good resources for the practical aspects of the art curriculum. However, the provision of fiction and non-fiction resources, including large prints and posters is inadequate. The school has rightly identified this as an area for development.

97. The subject co-ordinator takes a lead in the development of the subject. Since the last report good improvements have been made in the school's methods for monitoring and evaluation and in assessing pupils' work. There is a good policy and scheme of work and the co-ordinator provides regular training for staff.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Standards in design and technology have been maintained since the last inspection and are broadly average. The evidence base for design and technology consists of only one complete lesson of design and technology observed and two part lessons where older pupils were working on a project. There was, however, a variety of pupils' work on display, a portfolio of pupils' work from different year groups, samples of work from individual classes and pupils were able to talk about their work in design and technology. Based upon the small amount of teaching seen, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching overall.

99. A carefully constructed scheme of work ensures pupils have the opportunity to be engaged in a variety of tasks where they learn particular skills, examine products to understand how they work and why they are as they are, and to design and make products for themselves. This scheme of work draws upon national guidance effectively and ensures that pupils make appropriate progress. The criticism made in the last report that some tasks in Key Stage 2 were mundane and over prescriptive no longer applies. By the age of eleven for example, pupils are able to research different recipes, adapt these for their own purposes, giving reasons for their choice of ingredients, and produce and serve their dishes with appropriate attention to hygiene. Pupils draw labelled diagrams, produce step by step plans including lists of materials and tools to be used, and evaluate their designs as they develop. A particular strength of the subject is the links that are made with other areas of the curriculum. Pupils draw on knowledge gained in science about food types when considering the contents of sandwiches and use their knowledge of electric circuits in making models with moving parts. Information communication technology was used effectively in designing 'Joseph's Coat' and a lesson on which fabrics are waterproof preceded the design of a waterproof bag.

100. The co-ordinator leads developments in the subject very well and has a very comprehensive monitoring system, which enables her to identify areas for development. For example, through sampling pupils' work she identified the need to improve the quality of

pupils' labelled drawings of designs. The action taken is evident in work presented where some pupils have tried to draw in three dimensions from different views. The co-ordinator's monitoring, as well as teachers' assessment against learning objectives in lessons, means pupils' attainment is regularly monitored and action to remedy any weaknesses can be taken. The co-ordinator has rightly identified quality of finish as an area for further work, since this is variable. Another area to develop will be working within the constraints of a budget or certain materials.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Standards of attainment are broadly average. In Key Stage 1 good links are made with literacy, with the use of fictional texts to help pupils to develop mapping skills. In Year 2/3 effective use is made of fieldwork in order to develop an understanding of a wider area and to explore environmental issues such as the effects of traffic. By the age of eleven, pupils have good mapping skills, they are able to use four figure grid references with confidence and above average attainers can use six figure grid references. Pupils identify the main features of a map, plan a route and understand the importance of scale. The school spends less time teaching geography than at the time of the last inspection, however pupils have continued to achieve average standards.

102. As at the time of the last report the geography curriculum is closely linked to pupils' own experiences and those provided by the school. However the needs of the youngest children are not met as the curriculum is too structured, and pupils are not working towards desirable learning outcomes. Evidence from work samples shows that all areas of the National Curriculum are covered. Good use is made of field trips and links with the local community to develop pupils' geographical skills of enquiry and to develop environmental awareness. In Key Stage 2 classes pupils build on this earlier work through thematic units. Work on weather shows comparisons with weather systems from other countries such as Kenya. The school's links with schools in Europe and Australia is developing a greater awareness of life in other countries. Conversations with Year 6 pupils show they have great enthusiasm for work developed through the link with the Spanish school and they particularly enjoy the chance to write to their pen pals.

103. A small number of lessons were observed in which teaching was satisfactory. In the Reception Year and Year 1 teachers make good use of the school grounds and stories to teach about litter. Through work on designing and making improvements to the playground, links are developed with other subject areas such as literacy and design technology. In Year 2/3 children compare types of transport from the past and present day and consider their effects on the environment. In some lessons teachers are not clear about the geographical focus of lessons. In Year 5/6 teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of available resources to teach the use of four figure and six figure grid references. Teachers have effective questioning skills to draw on pupils knowledge and to develop their thinking.

104. Since the last inspection the school has improved the range of fiction and non-fiction texts available, in particular there is a good range of 'big books'. However, the range of books and posters on other countries and cultures is barely adequate. The school has well developed grounds and this provides an invaluable asset in the teaching of environmental issues. The use of information communication technology is underdeveloped and the school has rightly identified this in the school development plan.

105. The subject co-ordinator takes a lead role in developing the geography curriculum. Monitoring and evaluation are carried out systematically and clear targets are set for future developments.

HISTORY

106. Standards of attainment are average. There is a heavy emphasis on the development of skills, with pupils' powers of observation well developed. Displays of pupils' work show good examples of paintings and drawings showing children's favourite games. By the age of seven, pupils' work on the Victorians has good examples of observational drawings of artefacts and local Victorian architecture. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop analytical skills through the use of census returns and can make comparisons of life in Didcot from Victorian times to modern day. By the age of eleven pupils show an understanding of the developments of events over time. Written reports on Britain since the 1930s describe the main events of the decades leading up to the end of the century. The school has maintained standards overall in history since the last inspection, with a clear improvement in the standards of enquiry skills attained, particularly in Key Stage 2.

107. A small number of history lessons were observed. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Teachers give pupils opportunities to work in groups to discuss and develop their own ideas about differences between Victorian and modern forms of transport. In Key Stage 2 teaching is good overall with the best teaching being outstanding. Lessons are planned in detail, the work is well differentiated to meet individual needs, teachers have high expectations and work is suitably challenging for all pupils. There is a good pace to the lessons and pupils are well supported through clear instructions and guidance. All lessons observed had a clear structure, teachers gave a clear explanation of what the children were going to learn, activities matched these objectives, and lessons ended with a plenary where the learning objectives were revisited. Teachers across the school make very good use of available resources to aid discussion and to develop pupils' enquiry skills.

108. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. They are developing an understanding of how people lived in previous times and gaining knowledge of historical events and figures. Work on the Great Fire of London shows how the fire progressed over time, and how Samuel Pepys recorded events in his diary. Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave school pupils have developed an understanding of chronology and have gained good enquiry skills through observations during fieldwork, and the use of historical photographs and documents. Other areas such as the use of information communication technology and use of artefacts are less well developed. The four year cycle of history topics in Key Stage 2 hampers some areas of continuity and progression and the school has rightly identified the review and development of a new scheme of work in the school development plan.

109. Resources for history have greatly improved since the last inspection. However, some, areas are in need of further improvement. To fulfil its aims to develop the use of information communication technology and the use of artefacts, the school will need to improve its current provision. In addition, the library's range of non-fiction texts for younger readers or those pupils with special educational needs is inadequate.

110. The leadership and management of history are good. There is an adequate history policy and units described in the scheme of work are well developed. The co-ordinator takes a lead in monitoring and evaluating the subject and clear targets are set for future development. History is taught through a topic approach with good links made to other subjects, particularly geography, literacy, information communication technology and art.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards in information technology are good throughout the school. Most of the work seen during the inspection involved pupils communicating and handling information. Within

these areas the majority of pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. This is particularly true in the early and middle parts of the school. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

112. Even the youngest pupils are able to log on to the computers for themselves and use the mouse and keyboard. By the age of seven pupils are growing in confidence in using toolbars and icons to find the program or effect they need. By the age of eleven pupils can use IT to combine different sorts of information, for example to create a newspaper story with pictures and words, and they are using IT equipment to monitor external events such as light levels.

113. The teaching of information technology is generally good. Teachers take great care in teaching pupils the skills they need, for example to enlarge text in Reception and Year 1 or to plot graphs in Years 2 and 3. This ensures that pupils make good progress in a relatively short time. The school has put a lot of effort into training teachers in the use of information technology and this is paying off in increasing their knowledge of the subject. All teachers are confident about taking pupils to the IT room and teaching them there. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teachers lacked confidence in the subject. Teachers manage pupils well in the computer room, overcoming difficulties caused by the size and layout of the room. The school plans to improve these facilities as part of the building work to start shortly. One urgent need is for a large display screen so that teachers can demonstrate the software to a whole class easily. At the moment the screen is too small for all pupils to see well enough.

114. At times lessons are punctuated by periods when some pupils wait for others to catch up. To avoid this, teachers need to set tasks which engage all pupils, but have extension for those who work quicker or who already know more. Overall, though, pupils make progress in their lessons and become more competent in using information technology as they move through the school. The school uses additional support staff to enable the pupils with special needs to take a full part in IT lessons. As a result of this provision these pupils make good progress as well.

115. The school is well resourced for information technology. The use of additional software such as 'RM Maths' means the computers are used throughout the day for pupils to work in other subjects. There is an outline scheme of work showing where different programs are used across the curriculum. Work seen in history, geography and science indicates that pupils are developing their skills across several subject areas. In Years 2 and 3 the computers in classrooms are used to good effect within the literacy hour.

116. Pupils enjoy using the computers. They co-operate in pairs very well and help each other to learn about how to use the software. Pupils using the machines on their own during the day behave sensibly and are very confident in managing the computers for themselves. Here, too, their attitudes towards the use of IT are very positive.

117. The co-ordinator and the network manager have effective plans for continuing the improvements in IT. Some aspects, such as assessing and recording pupils' levels of attainment, are not as well developed as in other subject areas but work is in hand to correct this.

MUSIC

118. Timetable restrictions meant that only a few lessons in music could be observed. However, discussions with the co-ordinators, scrutiny of documents and planning, and observation of recorded evidence indicate that pupils attain standards that are above national

expectations.

119. The high emphasis on instrumental tuition means that many pupils learn to play musical instruments, can read musical notation, and have the opportunity to perform with others. Pupils enjoy music and benefit from musical activities as part of the curriculum as well as the numerous extra curricular opportunities. Whole class performances during assemblies mean that all pupils have the opportunity to perform to an audience. Progress in music is good.

120. In Key Stage 1 pupils recognise that instruments make different sounds and can perform using tuned and untuned instruments. They sing tunefully and in harmony during class lessons as well as during assemblies.

121. By the end of the Key Stage 2 most pupils can read musical notations and nearly half the pupils across the key stage take advantage of the opportunity to learn to play an instrument. Listening and appraising are regular features and pupils are gaining a good understanding of the work of well-known composers. Use of recorded music during assemblies further enhances pupils understanding of different composers and their works, and appraisal of their style.

122. Attitudes and response to music is always good. Pupils concentrate well and follow instructions. They demonstrate high levels of motivation and interest. The youngest pupils particularly demonstrate good skills in performing to a large audience with confidence, where required to collaborate, they so with maturity.

123. The quality of teaching overall is good. The specialist music teacher has good subject knowledge and uses this effectively to promote high standards in the school. Music has a high profile in the school and is effectively co-ordinated by the two co-ordinators. A policy is in place which provides a sound framework for teaching. Resources are adequate and the specialist room for music is used regularly for instrumental tuition. The co-ordinators are in the process of developing assessment procedures to further enhance tracking and monitoring pupils' progress in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Attainment is average. In the reception class many pupils are able to throw and catch with two hands and higher attaining pupils are able to throw, clap and catch. In Y2/3 pupils show greater control. They are developing greater skills in catching and throwing and a developing awareness of the importance of fitness. They are aware of the effects of exercise on the body and recognise the need for a warm up. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop specific sports skills. In tennis they show good eye, hand and ball control and they are able to describe areas for their own improvement

125. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. Learning Support Assistants making good contributions, supporting where required. In Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory and is sometimes better than this. Since the previous inspection the pace of lessons has improved. Lessons are well planned and teachers show good knowledge of the subject. Teachers use pupils contributions to elaborate or demonstrate teaching points, for example in the reception class pupils were able to describe animal movements. Teachers manage the class and behaviour well and this ensures best use of the time available. During the inspection week many lessons were disrupted by the weather and teachers showed great patience and flexibility in adapting their plans quickly.

126. Pupils of all ages make satisfactory progress in physical education and pupils with physical disabilities are integrated well into lessons. All pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They have a positive attitude to physical education. All pupils have a clear understanding of appropriate behaviour and manage their own behaviour well. They work individually and co-operate well when working with others.

127. Resources for physical education are very good. There is a good selection of small games equipment and gym equipment is adequate. The schools involvement in the Top Play and Top Sport scheme ensures a regular cycle of specialist sports equipment in sports such as badminton rugby and basketball and many staff have attended training sessions on how to use this equipment effectively. The Fitness Trail in the school grounds is an asset and is used regularly by all pupils apart from the very youngest.

128. Specialist teachers and coaches in dance and football work with pupils and teachers on a regular basis. The school has good links with local upper schools and the nearby leisure centre. Older pupils have been given opportunities to work with pupils from the local girls' school on activities such as trampoline, basketball and gymnastics. Pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 are given swimming lessons and the school is rightly proud of the pupils' achievements in this area. Extra-curricular activities such as games and short tennis for younger pupils and rounders, athletics, field events and cricket for older pupils support the curriculum. Teachers encourage pupils to attend clubs by offering taster sessions in each activity. There is also a swimming club for all ages.

129. The subject co-ordinator takes a lead role in the development of physical education. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject is excellent with use made of videos of lessons for assessing pupils' progress and evaluating teaching. Appropriate developments and targets for physical education are identified in the school development plan.