

INSPECTION REPORT

CHRIST CHURCH C of E VC JUNIOR SCHOOL

DOWNEND, BRISTOL

LEA area: South Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 109165

Headteacher: Mr S Frontczak

Reporting inspector: Mr R E Helliwell - 5535

Dates of inspection: 17th - 20th January 2000

Inspection number: 191347

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pendennis Road Downend Bristol
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend A Joyce
Date of previous inspection:	27 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr R E Helliwell	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr C Herbert	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	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 P Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics Information technology Physical education	
Mrs F Ruddick	Team inspector	Art Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs S West	Team inspector	English Design and technology Music Special educational needs	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Christ Church Church of England Junior School is a foundation school which is voluntary controlled. It is of above average size with 286 pupils on roll from the ages of 7 to 11 years. A few families come from non-British heritages, but the backgrounds of most are British, white European, and all except two families speak English at home. They represent a cross-section of the social spectrum, from some families with social stress, to most in reasonable or comfortable circumstances. In the main, the pupil population is settled - a vast majority has attended the 'paired' infant school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective: it sustains the high standards which pupils have on arrival in mathematics, considerably improves the low standards in English, and slightly improves the standards in science. In particular, strong leadership and good teamwork have combined to improve teaching quality. Strong staff and pupil relationships, coupled with a good range of extra-curricular activities, result in pupils who are happy to be at school. Consequently, the school is a very orderly community and is very largely free from bullying. Spending is around the national average - but the school is improving and adding value for its pupils from entry to Year 6. It gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Nearly all pupils attain standards at or in excess of national expectations¹ - many pupils achieve well. In National Curriculum tests in 1999, proportions of pupils attaining Level 4² were greater than national averages in English and mathematics.
- Standards of numeracy remain high throughout school, from entry to leaving at age 11.
- Standards in religious education are good; a large majority of pupils' attainments exceed the standards expected, as set out in the Agreed Syllabus³.
- Nearly all pupils behave very well, are happy to be at school, and get on well with each other - there is an almost total absence of bullying.
- Taken as a whole, teaching quality is good - consequently, nearly all pupils respond well, try hard and are polite and courteous.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced, and supported well by a good range of extra-curricular activities, of which music is particularly strong.
- The vast majority of parents is supportive and expresses good opinions of the school.
- Taken as a whole, leadership is strong: headteacher, governors and most curricular co-ordinators have some impact on raising standards.
- Standards and teaching quality are monitored regularly, and the school's own, informal appraisal system has a positive impact in improving quality.

¹ National expectations are those standards, laid out by Her Majesty's Government in the National Curriculum, which pupils are expected to achieve by a particular age.

² 'Level 4' is the level expected for most children aged 11 to attain.

³ The school has adopted the South Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus and the expectations for religious education are set out therein.

What could be improved

- There is some underachievement in reading.
 - Science attainments are somewhat low because the curriculum is not consistently well planned and work is not well matched to pupils' attainments.
 - Standards in information technology are low: they have yet to benefit from the reorganization and secure foundations which have been established recently by the newly appointed curricular co-ordinator.
 - Teachers do not make enough use of the assessment information they have to match work to prior attainment across years and in sets, or to establish clear targets for groups and individuals.
 - Governors do not plan their budget strategy sufficiently well over time. One consequence is that pupils with special educational needs do not get enough extra support.
 - The accommodation is attractive and well furnished, but not designed to match the curriculum which the school prefers. This was mentioned also in the previous report.
- The rôle of deputy headteacher lacks clarity.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the previous inspection in January 1997, a good number of successful improvements has been made. This has resulted in raised attainments in most curricular areas, except science and information technology. Improvement has been made in line with nearly all recommendations set out in the previous report. The school has worked hard to ensure higher attainers fare better and, in 1999, higher than average numbers attained standards above those expected in National Curriculum test results in English, mathematics and science. Improved planning has brought about a broad and well-balanced curriculum. This includes good planning in design and technology, the unsatisfactory nature of which was commented on in the 1997 report and, consequently, teaching has improved and standards have risen. The provision for information technology has been improved by producing a scheme of work and policy to guide teachers, and by upgrading a suite of five computers. Expanding the use of extra-curricular music has raised standards in this subject. Further improvements have been made to the system for child protection to ensure it is operating effectively, and now all staff are aware of possible indications of children under stress. As a consequence of all this, National Curriculum test results have improved steadily - at the same rate as all schools nationally: pupils' attitudes are now more positive and behaviour has improved.

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	D	C	B	C
Mathematics	D	B	B	B
Science	C	C	C	C

Key

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

In 1999, the school's results were above the average⁴ for schools nationally in English and mathematics, and similar to the average in science. Compared with pupils' work in class now, these results are somewhat better than expected in English and science, and similar in mathematics. Standards are boosted by revision work and parental support for homework, prior to national tests taking place. Since 1997, there has been a steady improvement in all three subjects at a similar rate to all schools nationally. In comparison to similar schools with comparable proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals, standards were broadly similar in 1999, except in mathematics which were higher. In all three subjects, there was a higher than average proportion of pupils who attained above the expected Level 4 (i.e. Level 5).

As presently set, the school's targets are too low, do not match standards to be expected from the good quality teaching, and will not produce an increase in attainment compared with similar schools. Standards at entry are low in English; however, the progress made by most pupils is quite rapid and so most achieve well by the time they leave. Achievement in mathematics is high on entry; steady progress is maintained and results are sustained - owing to the good teaching. In science, standards at entry are somewhat low; only small gains are made in this subject and achievement is satisfactory, but at the end of the key stage, standards are somewhat below those expected. In mathematics, pupils' knowledge and use of numbers are of a good standard - but data handling by comparison is weaker. In English, reading standards suffer somewhat because texts are not interrogated well by pupils to reveal depth of meaning and, in science, investigation and experimentation are weak features because pupils do not explain their findings sufficiently well.

In almost all other subjects, standards are close to national expectations, except in religious education and design and technology - where they are above. However, in information technology, standards are below those expected. Taken as a whole, most pupils achieve well; higher attainers and pupils with access to support with their special educational needs often make better progress than most.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Nearly all pupils speak well of school, and say how they enjoy being there.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour of nearly all pupils is often very good in class and outside, in the dining hall and on the playground.
Personal development and relationships	At times, all pupils take responsibility, and do so well in relation to money-raising events. They do not often take the initiative in seeking improvements to their lot. In the main, relationships are very good between pupils and between pupils and staff.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average.

⁴ National averages refer to the percentages of pupils nationally who achieve particular levels in English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at age 11.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good when taken as a whole

A high proportion of teaching - about 60 per cent - is good or better, and about 25 per cent is very good. Ninety per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better. Some weakness in teaching occurs in about 10 per cent of lessons. Some of this weakness occurs in science: however, the school is aware and already is trialling new teaching approaches to eradicate this. Literacy teaching is mostly good with a little unsatisfactory - the teaching of reading is occasionally weak. Teaching of numeracy is never less than satisfactory. Teaching in science is mostly sound but with occasional weakness. Some weakness occurs occasionally in music and very occasionally in science, geography and information technology. Teaching in religious education is often strong.

On the whole, pupils learn well, sustain effort, show interest and persevere - however, because teachers do not often discuss curricular targets and desirable improvements with groups and individuals, not many have an accurate idea of how well they do or what they should do in order to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably broad and well balanced.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with statements is of good quality. For those on Stage 3 of the Code of Practice it is not so good and does not adequately meet their needs because there is too little extra help given.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good. There are ample opportunities for pupils' development in these aspects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils, keeps a good eye on their progress and attainment, and ensures they feel supported by teaching and other staff.

Since the previous inspection, the school has consolidated its work with parents and so continues to work well with them. This relationship often assists pupils' achievements, particularly in the lead-up to National Curriculum tests.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed, and suitably focused on improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well, have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and assist it to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school assesses its own strengths and weaknesses well, and makes good use of most of the data available.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is not planned well strategically and, although money is spent wisely, efficiency is reduced somewhat by not looking forward to link future needs and spending plans.

In the main, there are sufficient learning resources and enough teachers, but too few hours to support pupils with special educational needs. Accommodation is adequate, pleasant and well kept, but the design does not fit the preferred teaching styles, and shared areas are under used. Because of the strong lead, the school's mission statement and aims are reflected in its work. The strong lead is supported well by most curricular co-ordinators and a strong sense of team work. However, the rôle of deputy headteacher lacks clarity.

The principles of best value guide the school in its discussions, but links between spending and the school's achievements are not fully grasped.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are happy at school. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The teaching is good. • Pupils' behaviour is good. • Children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents express concerns about the amount of homework. • A few express concerns about how well they are informed of their children's progress.

Inspectors agree that the school merits parents' mainly positive views, but judge that behaviour is very good on the whole. Inspectors state in the full report that there is sufficient homework and that revision at home aids pupils' attainments. Although some pupils' reports make very suitable comments about progress, many do not do so sufficiently well. All issues raised by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, or in written form, have been conveyed to the school, without reference to a particular source.

OTHER INFORMATION

The governing body is responsible for drawing up an action plan within 40 days of receiving the inspection report, showing how the school will tackle the improvements needed. This action plan will be circulated to all parents at the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Results of National Curriculum tests show that the school is improving. Results in English and mathematics have strengthened since 1997 and remained around the average in science. So, in 1999, standards were above national averages⁵ in English and mathematics, and similar to them in science. When these results are compared with those schools which are 'statistical neighbours'⁶, they show that standards were similar in English, somewhat better in mathematics and somewhat weaker in science. However, most pupils' achievements⁷ are good at the end of Year 6 - particularly in English: there are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls. National Curriculum tests results in 1999, for pupils now in Year 3, show below average attainments on the whole in English. School records of previous entry groups confirm a similar picture of underachievement. In addition, the school's assessments at the outset of Year 3 show pupils' attainments do not match the level descriptors in science.

2. In the work seen, most pupils read with reasonably accuracy and fluency, and recognize individual letter sounds and many sounds created by letter groups, but at age 11 are not on the whole familiar with a wide range of authors or have the facility to penetrate text for layers of meaning. Most write reasonably well, although the use of imaginative words and phrases is by no means of a good standard, and spellings are often inaccurate - despite practising them at home and in class. Pupils' numeracy skills are good: most are confident in using different ways of solving problems and have a good grasp of their 'tables'. Nevertheless, in mathematics, many are unfamiliar with the vocabulary of simple charts and diagrams associated with collecting, presenting and analysing data. In science, most have a reasonable grasp of some facts but do not explain the results of their investigations and experiments in written work well enough, or draw on previous work to express them scientifically.

3. In all other subjects, except information technology, pupils' achievements are broadly in line with the standards expected at the end of Year 6. However, standards in religious education exceed those set out in the South Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus, and in geography are somewhat better than expected: many pupils achieve well in these subjects. In information technology, standards are mostly below those expected. By the time they leave school, most pupils of higher attainment have done well and have much improved - particularly in English: most other pupils progress steadily. Although they do not attain high standards, pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress and achieve well owing to the good quality support they often receive. However, pupils on Stages 1-3 of the 'Code of Practice' fare less well and sometimes make slow progress when not provided with suitably modified work or given any extra attention in class.

4. The school has exceeded its targets in English and mathematics for 1999, is well on course to attain or exceed its targets for 2000, and to exceed them in 2001. Taking into account the overall good quality of teaching seen at inspection, its targets are somewhat low. In addition, the school states that it aims to make more progress by comparison to its statistical neighbours. Its targets, even if achieved, will not do so if trends in other schools remain at similar rates.

⁵ National averages refer to the percentages of pupils nationally who achieve particular levels in English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at age eleven.

⁶ 'Statistical neighbours' are those schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to claim free school meals.

⁷ 'Achievements' are based on how well pupils have attained standards in the past, compared with the standards they attain now.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. These aspects of school life are strongly underpinned by the Christian ethos and there have been improvements since the last inspection. Most pupils at Christ Church speak very well of school and the majority shows an enthusiasm for learning.

6. Relationships between nearly all pupils and adults are very good. Consequently, in lessons, the behaviour of nearly all pupils is good and sometimes very good, and this helps them to learn well. Furthermore, when they are in the dining hall or playground, or moving around school between lessons, their behaviour is most often very good. They are polite and well mannered towards visitors and happily engage in conversation. Nearly all pupils respond immediately to any direction from their supervisors and show them proper respect. They have a very good understanding of what is expected of them; they take pride in being recipients of certificates in the behaviour of the week (BOW), worker of the week (WOW) or star of the week (SOW) assemblies. Because of this, nearly all pupils are settled at school - a view confirmed by nearly all parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire - and pupils' personal development is a strong feature.

7. The vast majority of pupils collaborates well in the classroom and enjoys working together on such topics as 'cams' in design and technology or 'village settlements' in geography. They play sensibly together in the playground and, consequently, at inspection there was no unsociable behaviour or bullying.

8. There is a good number of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility as class monitors or fundraisers for local or national charities. In particular, the work that Year 6 puts into their summer fair raises approximately £1000 each year. However, pupils do not always show sufficient initiative to put forward their own ideas about school affairs or aspects they would like to improve their lot.

9. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. There have been no exclusions in recent years.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. Taken as a whole, teaching is of good quality: more than half of it seen at inspection was of good quality or better, about 25 per cent was very good and 10 per cent was unsatisfactory. Overall, this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. In English, most teaching is good or better, with very occasional weakness. In mathematics, no teaching is weak and most is of good quality or better. In science, teaching is sound on the whole but varies in quality from a little being very good, most being satisfactory or good, to some being unsatisfactory. However, trials are already underway to remedy this. In other subjects, teaching is largely satisfactory or better - including information technology, where the newly-instigated approaches are good and are well supported by parents working in school, but require more time to have an impact on standards. In religious education, teaching is often of good quality, but in music it is sometimes not. Two out of five music lessons seen were unsatisfactory. These variations show in pupils' attainments, and because teaching as a whole is good for many pupils result in good achievement and, in the main, pupils' needs are met through setting arrangements, extra support or mainly good teaching approaches.

11. Most teachers have at least a satisfactory grasp of the subjects they teach and many have a good grasp. This enables them to challenge pupils well and to deepen their learning to inspire them to greater effort. Most have a good understanding of the basics in English and mathematics, which ensures quite rapid progress for most pupils in English and sustains standards above the average in mathematics. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is rarely less than satisfactory and is often good, very good and occasionally outstanding. Pupils are

encouraged to think by skilful questioning and to consolidate or extend their knowledge and understanding from previous learning. However, some teaching of reading and writing skills is unrefined, which leads to some underachievement in these aspects despite good gains being made. Numeracy skills are most often taught well. Teachers' understanding and teaching of scientific investigation and experimentation are not so good and barely satisfactory, particularly at the higher levels, and so achievement in this subject is only satisfactory - weaker by comparison with other core subjects at the end of the key stage. Most teaching is resourced very well - by the use of a good range of texts in English, for example, and a wide range of charts and diagrams in mathematics. However, in science, many opportunities are missed to use charts, text books, videos, pictures and diagrams to illustrate teaching points further and so deepen pupils' interest and understanding. Most teachers' planning is effective and results in nearly all lessons being well structured in helping pupils to build on previously acquired skills and understanding. Additionally, teaching methods are suitably varied so that most pupils learn well. In nearly all lessons, pupils are very well managed and they are treated kindly but firmly and fairly. Thus, nearly all pupils are willing to work and try hard. Sometimes, teachers are very ably assisted by skilful teaching assistants, particularly in support of pupils with special educational needs - this speeds up their pupils' rates of learning and raises achievement. However, not enough of this quality of support is available.

12. Although some teaching manages it successfully, and most teachers assess pupils' attainments regularly and quite well, the information gleaned is often not well used to match work with sufficient regularity to pupils' prior attainment, or to their differing ages. Teaching, otherwise often of good quality, is thereby somewhat reduced in its effectiveness. In science, particularly where this occurs, the curriculum taught is not suitably matched to both year groups or higher attainers within the same class. However, teaching of very good quality occurred in one lesson during inspection where this was not so and provides the school with a good exemplar. In addition, in many lessons, pupils are unaware of the lesson's targets. Therefore, they are deprived of some information to assist them with their learning and to judge for themselves how well they are making progress; consequently, the pace of learning is somewhat reduced. Homework is used well as preparation and revision prior to National Curriculum tests: it has most impact in English and science.

13. On the whole, teaching has a good impact on pupils' learning, and so they acquire new knowledge and understanding at least steadily and often rapidly. Nearly all of them try hard and produce work at mostly steady and sometimes good rates - rarely do any pupils work too slowly. Nearly all sustain concentration - except when disturbed occasionally by noise distraction from adjacent areas. Most pupils understand what they are expected to do - but only a few know clearly how well they have done and what they should do in order to improve. Across the school as a whole, most progress is made in English, and those pupils with prior higher attainment fare well, especially in end of key stage tests.

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

14. The school provides a curriculum which is broad and well balanced and includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities including sport, dance, chess and music in which a substantial number of the pupils participates. The school's own numeracy strategy is particularly effective - as is that for religious education - because of the good teaching which also adds considerably to the strong moral and social ethos. The literacy strategy is working well and impacting on standards. There is appropriate provision for personal, social, sex and health education, in line with governors' policies, and so statutory requirements are met. 'Circle time' - where children discuss events in their own lives and the feelings and emotions which arise - is

effective in engaging pupils where it occurs, but it is not a regular practice in all classes. All aspects of the National Curriculum are in place and religious education and other subjects fully meet statutory requirements - except for information technology - but plans to rectify this are being implemented. All pupils are accorded equality of opportunity, but in science some pupils are withdrawn regularly from important parts of the lessons for extra-curricular activities in music. This impedes their progress in these subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are not always well-supported in class which then slows their rates of progress and lowers levels of achievement. Most of the weaknesses arising from the previous inspection have been eradicated.

15. Good links are forged with the feeder and secondary schools which promote a smooth transition between the key stages. Also, there are strong connections with the local community through visits from the local chaplain, representatives of the Islamic Education Project and visits to local museums and other sites of educational interest which broaden pupils' outlooks. Links with the Church strengthen the Christian ethos and have a strong influence on pupils' attitudes to learning, because they feel recognition and worth as individuals and become willing learners. They also develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Nearly all parents say they tend to agree that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible, which mirrors the inspection findings.

16. There are some opportunities for pupils' personal development: for example, through running a school fair to raise money and, particularly, the magazine when they themselves take responsibility for the production. Spiritual development is well promoted in some lessons, particularly religious education and art and occasionally in English. Moral development is promoted well by the strong moral ethos and is consistently reinforced in lessons, particularly in religious education and English. The very good relationships between all adults and pupils, and their willingness to support and help each other, strengthen social development. There is proper awareness of the diversity of cultures which are within both the school and the wider world, and this gives pupils a clear sense of their own and other cultural heritages. This also is strongly promoted in religious education, art, music and sometimes in English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

17. Christ Church Junior School cares very well for its pupils - a further example of how the Christian ethos permeates all parts of its life. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the general level of care for pupils.

18. Some very effective procedures are now in place for child protection, health and safety, which result in a safe and secure environment in which children learn. Adults are trained in awareness, are knowledgeable about such matters and, in particular, all members of staff know the pupils very well: they provide very kindly and useful support both inside and out of the classroom. This includes the support of midday supervisors, who are effective members of the school team. Special educational needs assistants also keep a careful eye on the pupils with whom they work, and take appropriate steps to inform teachers if any concerns arise.

19. Most teachers maintain very full records of pupils' attainments and progress both in and out of school. Suitable records are kept for pupils with special educational needs, and individual education plans are clear guides to learning targets. Information ensures that teachers are able to monitor their pupils well and often to provide them with appropriate assistance for their personal development and achievements. Also, care is taken to ensure that pupils are well prepared to move into their secondary schools, and that any fears or uncertainties are discussed and alleviated.

20. Full and productive procedures are in place to promote and monitor attendance and punctuality. Consequently, most pupils arrive on time: there is very little lateness. The very good procedures for encouraging and keeping an eye on good behaviour help to highlight the high expectations for this aspect, as does the consistent and fair application of rewards and sanctions by all staff. These ensure that most pupils have a very good idea of right and wrong and are willing to be polite, friendly and to behave in an orderly manner.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

21. The good work between the school and many parents and carers ensures that many pupils are well supported at home for extra studies - particularly in the run up to National Curriculum tests. Many understand the importance of assisting their children at home with reading or specific school projects. This latter point is particularly evident in science where there has been a positive impact on attainment as a result of parental or carer assistance in the run up to the tests. Since the previous inspection, the school has built on its good relationships which were evident then. For example, where parents or carers provide support to teaching, particularly in music and information technology, their help raises achievements. Additionally, fund-raising by the Parent Teacher and Friends Association allows the purchase of additional resources. Also, the many interesting fund-raising events help to maintain good relationships with parents and the community. The school appreciates greatly the value of these activities, and is thankful for the extra monies that result.

22. Most parents and carers are satisfied with the quality and quantity of information that they receive and have positive views of the school. Many of them have signed up to the Home/School agreement. The regular newsletters keep them well informed of school activities and events. Of added value to parents are reports, which often contain useful developmental comments about what their children need to do to improve. However, there is often insufficient information on the rates of progress in core subjects. Parents with children who have special educational needs are particularly well informed and, as a consequence, say they are satisfied with the support provided.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

23. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher who assesses teaching quality and provides guidance: he makes suggestions to follow up his observations by providing written notes. These observations are supplemented by termly review meetings with subject leaders to discuss suitable targets and desirable improvements. Consequently, most curricular co-ordinators have an impact on their subjects because developmental work is well delegated and directed. In addition, their rôles are well defined, include responsibility for monitoring and assessing attainment, and so most respond well. Although the local format for appraisal is in abeyance, nevertheless, these forgoing examples show a good attempt at 'performance management' and that the process is having a strong impact on teaching and learning qualities. This rigorous monitoring and support for teaching makes the school a suitable place for initial teacher training. The school's priorities are laid out and drawn together well in the development plan. Often, matters for improvement have been well detected. For example, the need to improve science teaching has been grasped, and trials of new teaching approaches are already underway. The plan itself is well supported by a suitable range of data collection and analysis. This shows a good analysis of how many pupils attain the expected levels in National Curriculum tests, and an understanding of the inherent weakness in the entry group which rarely enters with attainments at

the higher levels. For example, resources of teaching time have been provided to attempt to accelerate attainments in English in the 'lower band' of Year 3/4 classes. The result is a school which is well focused on improvement, making gains and well poised to improve further. Nevertheless, some of the available data within the 'Autumn Package' is not well used and, consequently, some under-achievement remains undetected between the outset and Year 6, and targets in the development plan are less clear than needed to measure the school's improvement accurately.

24. In contrast to curricular co-ordinators, the rôle of deputy headteacher is not well delegated or defined, and so is having less impact than desirable on raising standards. That is not to say it lacks effectiveness completely. There are several indications that this is not so - such as work as English co-ordinator - but the rôle of deputy, other than as a curricular or 'band' co-ordinator, lacks clarity and is not well linked to improvement in quality and standards across the school as a whole. Governors, who have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses, are aware and have set targets related to homework for this rôle. Nevertheless, more clarity and clearly delegated responsibilities are needed.

25. Governors have an impact on standards because the good grasp of school is informed by some of them supplementing this with visits during school time. This provides them with a suitable base from which to be critical friends and more thoroughly understand the wide range of suitable information made available to them. However, as a group, they do not plan the budget well over time. Although they properly take account of information they are given, they do not sufficiently anticipate future events by planning the use of their budget strategically and, thereby, linking it very efficiently to the school's needs. For example, there are more pupils with special educational needs, particularly at the early stages, than the school is able to support well in class - not enough advice is made available to teachers to remedy this, and pupils at Stage 3 have too little support matched to needs. In addition, there is no long-term plan to address the school's needs in information technology regularly to update, repair, maintain and replenish computer hardware, or to attempt to eradicate the weakness in the building's design. The governors are also unaware of the full range of data available to them - but show their awareness of the issue in a recently drafted plan to establish a governor link to remedy this. On the other hand, governors take care to monitor the budget, ensure the spending of grants is properly discharged, and seek value for money whenever they can. Specific decisions have led to ensuring that pupils with statements of special educational needs are properly supported, and there is an emergent appreciation of the use of new technology.

26. Resources are, in the main, adequate. There are sufficient numbers of teaching staff and their knowledge and experience is suitable for most curricular demands - except music. However, there is less than desirable management time for special educational needs and fewer hours of teaching assistance than is often the case for pupils on Stage 3 of the Code of Practice. On the whole, learning resources are adequate, but there are too few books of quality to broaden pupils' knowledge of a suitable range, and too few resources in science - except books - to illustrate teaching points well and deepen interest. In design and technology, the resources are as yet too narrow in range to support the demands of this subject's curriculum. The accommodation is pleasing to look at; it is well kept and looked after. It is well used except that the 'shared areas' are somewhat underused, because most teaching approaches use whole-class teaching methods in the morning when groups are confined to class bases. It is thereby shown that the open design does not well match the preferred teaching styles or national initiatives, such as literacy and numeracy, which require whole-class teaching approaches. Because of this, there is a considerable number of occasions when pupils' concentration is broken by unavoidable but

distracting noises from adjacent areas. This happens despite considerable effort by teaching staff to manage the use of teaching spaces well and to reduce such occurrences to a minimum. In addition, practical sessions such as science, are difficult to organize well to ensure that the hubbub of practical activities does not impinge on other classes' learning. Nevertheless, most pupils cope well and are not unduly disturbed for long periods. There is insufficient evidence to show a clear and direct impact on standards, but very clear evidence that teachers face many challenges to overcome the difficulties, and spend considerable extra planning time in groups in order to do so.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

27. In order to improve further, governors, headteacher and teachers should:

- improve literacy standards further, although they are around national expectations, by:
 - teaching how texts have layers of meaning (2, 11, 30)⁸;
 - teaching more about reading and spelling skills (11, 31);
 - teaching how to apply reading and spelling strategies in independent reading and writing (31);
- improve pupils' work in science and bring National Curriculum test results in the subject closer to those in English and mathematics by:
 - linking expectations and desired standards to curricular plans (this work is underway) (12, 40);
 - reorganizing the way in which science is taught, so that teaching is better matched to prior attainment and National Curriculum years (there are already good examples of this in a few lessons and trials are already underway to solve this problem) (12, 39);
- improve standards in information technology by:
 - teaching more often about 'control' and how computers work and operate (59);
 - teaching more often about modelling and how computers can be used as tools to calculate data and patterns in many situations (57);
- improve the use of teacher assessments in order to:
 - provide more activities matched to prior attainment in 'sets' and year groups (12, 31, 35, 39, 51, 71);
 - provide more activities matched to National Curriculum expectations for the differing years in classes (35, 39);
 - set more precise curricular targets for groups (31, 34, 40);
- improve leadership, although already strong, further by:
 - arranging for governors to plan strategically over time - for example, to improve the poor acoustics and restrictions caused by building design (26);
 - improving the level of support for pupils with special educational needs at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice (26);
 - planning over time to provide resources, such as computers (26);
 - strengthening the rôle of deputy headteacher to focus it more on raising standards and quality across the whole school (24).

⁸ Brackets denote some of the paragraphs in which more detailed reference may be found in the main body of the report.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	21%	38%	28%	10%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	NA	286
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	NA	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	NA	56

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999 [98]	40 [38]	34 [34]	74 [72]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30 [28]	34 [37]	36 [35]
	Girls	27 [28]	25 [24]	26 [27]
	Total	57 [56]	59 [61]	62 [62]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 [75]	81 [84]	84 [86]
	National	70 [65]	69 [59]	78 [69]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30 [33]	36 [36]	36 [37]
	Girls	24 [25]	28 [26]	21 [23]
	Total	54 [58]	64 [62]	57 [60]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 [75]	77 [87]	65 [80]
	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	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	281
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.7:1
Average class size	28.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	41

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000 [98/99]
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	£
Total income	447,103 [455,622]
Total expenditure	449,055 [455,581]
Expenditure per pupil	1,570 [1,561]
Balance brought forward from previous year	39,852 [39,811]
Balance carried forward to next year	37,900 [39,852]

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	286
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	58	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	34	63	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	66	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	61	18	3	0
The teaching is good.	38	60	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	60	6	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	38	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	40	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	25	65	8	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	48	51	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	49	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	44	8	2	3

Figures are 'rounded' and may not add up to exactly 100

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

On the whole, parents have positive views about the school. However, they tend to agree that behaviour is good and, in contrast, inspectors judged it to be very good on the whole. On the question of homework, inspectors judge there is sufficient provided. Inspectors' and parents' opinions about teaching are similar - it is good when taken as a whole.

Other issues raised by parents

Other issues raised at the pre-inspection meeting or in written comment in addition to the returned questionnaires have been raised with the school without naming sources.

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

ENGLISH

28. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests indicate that by the age of 11 the percentage of pupils reaching Level 4 or better was above, and for those reaching Level 5 was well above the national averages. Compared with similar schools, results are around the average when taken as a whole. Work seen during the inspection period shows that a majority of pupils will attain Level 4 in the assessment tests for 2000. In view of the intensive programme to consolidate skills which the school follows prior to assessment tests, the indications are that a substantial minority of pupils will attain Level 5. Most pupils enter with below average attainments, but make quite rapid progress through Key Stage 2 and so achieve well. Most pupils who have special educational needs make steady progress; however, those who are supported individually or in very small withdrawal groups make good progress and achieve well.

29. Throughout the key stage, pupils make good gains in understanding writing skills. Nevertheless, there is still some underachievement in pupils of higher prior attainment. They write for a variety of audiences, and early in the key stage begin to establish a sound platform on which to organize their ideas. They use increasingly more complex punctuation, plan both factual accounts and fictional stories with care, use paragraphs and link ideas. They are familiar with many grammatical forms; for example, suffixes, prefixes, metaphors and synonyms. By contrast, spelling is often inaccurate; although, all are familiar with letter groups and revise spellings for homework. Despite practising them and assessing them in weekly tests, many still do not spell well enough in their written work. However, most practise handwriting, use it with care and so by the end of the key stage the majority of pupils writes speedily, using mature and legible styles. Although all pupils read with concentration during lessons for this purpose, most do not become enthusiastic readers. Thus, at the end of the key stage, too few pupils are familiar with the wide range of both modern and classical authors usually found in pupils of this age. Moreover, they are not able to compare the contrasting styles of authors to any great depth, or say what they like about different books - only a few read poetry for pleasure. Despite making quite rapid progress, by the end of the key stage, most pupils still do not have enough skills to read well independently, and so higher attaining pupils and others do not easily penetrate texts for layers of meaning. Similarly, skills are unrefined in reading, and although most use 'letter sounds' strategies and some grasp of letter groups to break up words into sound parts, few predict the meaning of words and fewer still see the different layers of meaning or subtleties in texts. Although dictionaries and thesauruses are made available, most pupils do not routinely use them to vary their vocabulary or to discover more effective words. Very few pupils are familiar with library classification systems other than indexes. Pupils' oracy skills are sound. Most speak well and communicate their ideas clearly, although they do not often extend their explanations and refine them by drawing comparisons.

30. Since the previous inspection, performance in English has improved, but reading standards have remained close to national expectations and there is still some underachievement in this aspect.

31. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good when considered as a whole, but varied - ranging from a very small proportion of unsatisfactory quality to a much greater proportion which was very good. The result overall is to ensure that progress is quite rapid and that most pupils achieve well. Most teachers successfully have introduced the Literacy Strategy lesson framework. Thus, most clearly define the learning objectives for each part of the session and continually re-enforce them. Moreover, expectations for learning are often high and instruction is usually clear and informative. However, there are two common weaknesses through many lessons. Firstly, although teachers identify strategies in teaching reading in 'guided' sessions, very few explain them clearly or provide enough examples and challenges for

pupils to practise and consolidate their independent reading and writing skills. This depresses literacy standards, because many pupils are unaware of their individual and group learning targets and what they must do in order to improve. Therefore, insufficient numbers of pupils apply reading skills well in their independent work, and rarely raise their work to the higher levels. Moreover, voluntary helpers - who hear pupils read - are not yet used well to support an improvement in pupils' reading skills by revising these with them and encouraging their use. Secondly, group work is not matched to varying levels of attainment within literacy sets. Consequently, higher attaining pupils are not presented with suitably challenging work and this restricts the quality of their writing. Similarly, pupils who are identified as requiring individual education programmes do not always have their specific reading needs met in class lessons, which slows their progress and lowers achievement. Information technology is not used well either to support learning or to enhance pupils' work. Nevertheless, good quality planning, consistent and friendly relationships, coupled with well structured lessons, result in most pupils being willing and productive workers. This results in progress for most pupils which is often quite rapid and never slow. Literacy is of similar quality across the curriculum; most pupils record their work clearly, but do not always extend it with telling comment.

32. The management of English is good with many strengths: there is a new policy to support and guide teachers, and all have completed literacy training and further in-service training provided by the co-ordinator. Consequently, most teaching quality is at least sound and much is good. Test results are analysed well to identify and remedy weaknesses. For example, the co-ordinator has already discovered that the teaching of reading merits strengthening, and that there is need for more in-service training for teachers, volunteers and parents. Resources for English are not yet satisfactory in quality or variety because they do not provide a suitably rich literary environment and this, coupled with the low incidence of library use, narrows pupils' experience of the full range of books advocated by the Literacy Strategy.

MATHEMATICS

33. At the end of the key stage, National Curriculum tests in 1999 indicate that pupils' attainments were well above the national average at age 11. These results also show above average performance when compared with schools having similar characteristics. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was above the national average, and the proportion achieving Level 5 was well above. There are clear indications that results at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved substantially over the last three years, and there is now a greater proportion of higher attainers in the Year 6 group. Several factors have helped to raise standards. Firstly, the school's participation in its own numeracy project, coupled with staff commitment to raising standards, has been effective. Also, pupils have practised samples of test questions as homework exercises. This has successfully helped their understanding of numerical problem-solving strategies. At inspection, the standards seen were above those expected for pupils' ages. For example, in number work in Year 6, pupils were able accurately to solve multiplications by 10, 100 and 1,000. Moreover, pupils confidently recognized equivalent fractions such as $\frac{6}{9}$ and $\frac{2}{3}$ and understood such aspects as 40 per cent is equivalent to $\frac{4}{10}$. Their confident knowledge of multiplication facts, and their facility to apply them, assist their calculations during lessons involving multiplication and division. Having properly grasped numerical strategies, pupils are then able accurately to solve problems involving words and numbers and to record their findings. The weakest aspect in mathematics is a regular use of information technology to gather and interpret data in the form of graphs and diagrams, to draw conclusions correctly. Moreover, pupils are unfamiliar with simple statistical vocabulary such as 'field', 'data', 'the mean', 'range' and 'mode'; and when, for example, pupils were introduced to the analysis of data relating to the personal characteristics of a class, they found it difficult to understand.

34. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen in comparison to national averages

from average to above average for pupils aged 11. And now, pupils who enter school with attainment above national averages achieve appropriately to leave with attainment still above the norm. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 has continued to increase, with two pupils achieving Level 6 in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 tests. This is in part owing to the quality of teaching which was judged as satisfactory in the previous inspection but is now good in the main. The greatest impact has been on higher attainers who now fare much better. Other improvements have accrued: assessment is stronger now. A subject portfolio shows detailed examples of the range of coverage and accurately judged assessment levels of pupils' attainments based on the National Curriculum criteria. This now assists teachers' understanding of expected standards. Consequently, appropriate targets are set for individual pupils' attainment in the National tests, but not for the school as a whole. However, these targets are not explained properly to parents and pupils to highlight desirable improvements in attainment.

35. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good on the whole, with some very good teaching observed: no unsatisfactory teaching was observed at inspection. In better teaching, high expectations are made clear to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This results in them understanding what is required and raises the standards achieved. Most teachers' grasp of mathematics is good, and so confidence is high in providing suitably detailed explanations and in posing searching questions to challenge thinking or explain ideas. Most planning is of good quality, and so most lessons follow the recommended structure of the National Numeracy Strategy well. However, the match of work provided within some 'sets' sometimes fails to provide work at an appropriate level for pupils with special educational needs, or is insufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Most marking of work is unsatisfactory because it rarely gives pupils sufficient indication of what they need to do to improve their work. All teachers' relationships with pupils are very good, as is their management of them; this enables them to establish and maintain high standards of good behaviour. Nearly all lessons observed during the inspection proceeded at suitably quick pace, and so the interest of pupils was sustained very well. Consequently, most pupils are productive, concentrate and try hard with very little loss of effort.

36. The subject is managed well by a suitably qualified, enthusiastic subject co-ordinator who works hard to support teaching in the upper band. Since the previous inspection, time has been allocated for the co-ordinator to match levels of pupils' work to National Curriculum expectations and to demonstrate and model teaching strategies in upper and lower bands, thus increasing all teachers' subject knowledge. The co-ordinator is very well informed about national standards, but information about pupils' attainment and learning is not always well used to work out plans for improvement. For example, the results of the National tests are not always analysed to identify areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the appropriate advice is not given for teachers to remedy any weaknesses. Nevertheless, the need to use test results to establish curricular targets for planning improvements is understood, and the intention is clear to raise performance further and to maintain favourable comparisons with all schools nationally and those with which this one is directly compared.

SCIENCE

37. Over recent years, standards attained by pupils in National Curriculum tests have improved steadily - similar to national trends - and are close to national averages. However, in 1999, more pupils attained the higher Level 5 than the norm nationally, and boys tended to perform better than girls. Pupils' class work tends to be of lower quality than expected, taking National Curriculum test results into account. Attainment is boosted for many by the regular revision of science and by the extra homework provided for those pupils whose parents wish it in the run up to National Curriculum tests. Pupils' work in Year 3 is below the standards to be expected from the statutory assessments made by teachers prior to entry. Pupils simply do not have the knowledge required, especially for those who were judged to attain Level 3 - yet work shows progress for most pupils is at least steady between September 1999 and January 2000.

The school's own assessments mirror these judgements, and so attainment at entry is below national expectations in Year 3. The oldest pupils know something of how plants and animals grow, how solutions differ from suspensions, how sounds are created and travel, and how light reflects. However, although most know how scientific experiments and investigations are carried out with some understanding of fair tests, most do not sufficiently question why events occur, or provide enough explanations in their written work about their scientific reasoning. Consequently, many pupils' work is not on course to match expected standards by the end of Year 6, and very few pupils' work exceeds expected standards.

38. The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with national averages: that is still the case. The school's improvement has kept pace with national trends. On the other hand, it was said that good progress was made in understanding investigations and experiments: that is not now the case - pupils are unable to draw conclusions from their work and give scientific explanations for what occurs. Since the previous inspection, a scheme of work has been established to guide teachers' planning, and the emphasis on practical work has been maintained.

39. There are some encouraging signs in some teaching, and it is sound on the whole. However, quality varies from most being sound or good to some being unsatisfactory and a little being very good. In particular, the approaches in three classes - two in the 'younger age band' and one in the higher - are meeting to some extent the challenge to provide a science curriculum and activities matched to pupils' prior attainment across two-year groups. In one lesson, science teaching was of very good quality. Here, the planning and teaching nailed the problem of providing teaching well matched both to pupils' differing years - in this case Years 5 and 6 - and to the full range of their prior attainments. The teaching was very knowledgeable and therefore properly challenged all pupils by probing questioning and good explanations. Consequently, the progress made by most pupils was rapid. Also in this lesson, the teaching was suitably strengthened by the very well informed and skilful special needs support assistant and so statemented pupils - as well as their peers - made rapid progress and achieved well. However, most teachers do not successfully overcome these problems. Nevertheless, most have a suitable grasp of the Programme of Study, except for the more advanced aspects of investigation and experimentation. In addition, most plan reasonably well - using a series of lessons to cover themes such as 'mixtures' - and have the sorts of relationships with pupils which result in their willingness to work and good behaviour. Some, otherwise adequate or good, teaching is somewhat weakened by failures to use enough illustrative resources to raise interest levels and to deepen knowledge and understanding. In addition, teaching is often aimed at the middle of the attainment range and results in work which is too easy for higher attainers and slows their pace of learning. Moreover, many pupils are not sufficiently aware of what their learning targets are in order to improve, which also has a similar effect.

40. Science is managed reasonably well - the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and conscientious. However, it is weakened by the decision to allow two core subjects - science and mathematics - to be managed by one teacher. Consequently, particularly as the school is attempting to implement the National Numeracy Strategy, science has improved only a little recently, because it has given way to other priorities. In order to improve teachers' planning, a good decision has been made to link the expectations laid out in the governmental agency's science guidelines to the school's scheme in an attempt to raise all teachers' expectations. However, because of the reasons given above, this work is understandably slow. There has been some positive impact on pupils' attitudes and attainments by the links established with the secondary school. However, the impact on attainment has been weakened by too little in-service training for teachers, a slowness in provision of guidelines to teachers about standards to be expected in different years, and a lack of understanding of the increasing demands in experimentation - particularly the standards expected at Levels 4 and 5.

ART

41. Most pupils reach standards in line with national expectations relative to age, with a few somewhat better. Most use a variety of media - paint, pencil, pastel and three-dimensional models - with varying degrees of success. An example of successful work was the study of other artists which resulted in variations of style in the pupils' efforts. Also, many pupils produce colourful and pleasing designs using a computer software program. A few pupils draw in fine detail from observations of musical instruments or natural forms using pencil with reasonable attempts at applying shading techniques. Most name the primary colours and colours which result when two others are mixed. Some can explain how they overcome problems, but others are unable to suggest what goes wrong, and so lack the wherewithal to make future improvements.

42. Since the previous inspection, little has changed. There has been some attempt to compile a portfolio of pupils' work, but this lacks attempts to judge quality against National Curriculum criteria, and so matching standards to expectations is difficult. Judging from the lessons observed at this inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. Sketchbooks have been introduced, but work in them varies greatly in quality with a few pupils using them properly to try different approaches, whilst many other sketchbooks are simply aimless scribbling pads. In addition, work in sketchbooks is undated; this limits them as pointers to progression over time. The result is that there is still no successful whole-school approach to assessment of pupils' work and the standards attained.

43. Only two lessons were observed; in these, teaching quality was good or very good. It encompassed good demonstration of the techniques to give pupils clear guidance as to what was required and how best to achieve it. Good planning and thorough preparation meant that the lessons ran smoothly and pupils remained on task without undue distractions. High expectations of good behaviour and very good relationships between teachers and pupils produced a productive atmosphere for learning. The emphasis properly placed on careful use of tools ensured that pupils did not damage themselves or others. The encouragement to experiment allowed higher attainers to extend their skills to some extent, but they were not always challenged well in order to reach their full potential. Sound subject knowledge and thoughtful questioning encouraged pupils to draw on previous knowledge, consolidate their skills and make some attempts at evaluating their own work and that of others. However, support for pupils with special educational needs was sometimes insufficient to allow them the opportunity to gain a sense of achievement. The choice and direction to use small sizes of paper resulted in them being too small for the task and so restricted most pupils' creativity.

44. Leadership in art is sound. There are some strengths and some weaknesses. The pupils' work is assessed informally by the class teachers, but there remains no whole-school approach to assessment of work or monitoring of standards to inform future planning. There are good cross-curricular links to religious education, history and English which allow pupils to continue to develop their skills during the half term when they are not being taught art as a separate subject. Spiritual development is quite often strengthened in art lessons where pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of wonder at the aesthetic quality of art. On the other hand, the scheme of work is rudimentary and lacks sufficient depth to give clarity in the progression in skills. Scrutiny of pupils' work displayed around the school shows that it is often too teacher directed, leaving little scope for individual interpretation of final versions. For example, too much work is simply colouring in photocopied drawings done by an adult, and this inhibits pupils' imaginative and creative development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

45. Standards of most pupils' work seen at inspection exceed the expectations for design and technology in most aspects of knowledge and understanding. Progress in these aspects is good. Insufficient evidence was available to arrive at sound judgements on pupils' dexterity in 'making' skills. Throughout the key stage, all pupils are suitably encouraged to record their work in detail. Most design thoroughly, take care with diagrams and label them neatly. They discuss the tools and ingredients/materials to be used, and list these in their initial plans. They record their work in progress and what they achieve in detail, consider the equipment they have used and whether they could have improved upon its selection. They examine their models carefully and so identify where improvements could be made. During the inspection, good work was seen in Years 5 and 6 where pupils were examining the effect of 'cams' and 'followers' in wooden toys of varying complexity. Whilst handling the toys carefully, with close observation and sensible discussion, they were able to understand and explain the mechanisms to each other and then to the rest of the class. Pupils at the beginning of the key stage do not have a sound grasp of the skills and techniques expected for their ages. Consequently, they do not have a firm knowledge of basic skills upon which they can build progressively to acquire a good understanding of techniques to join materials. Although there was not much evidence available at inspection, work seen showed that pupils often do not have sufficient opportunities to choose their own materials when making models, and this has limited their understanding of the properties of materials. Learning is inhibited to some extent by the poor range of resources available.

46. Since the previous inspection, design and technology has been given priority for development. Policy, scheme of work and guidelines are now in use, and teachers have a clearer knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum. This has raised standards, particularly in designing, planning and recording, and has ensured that the subject now meets statutory requirements. Additionally, some standards are better than expected in written work.

47. Four lessons were seen. In one, teaching quality was satisfactory; in two it was good; and in one it was very good. Most teachers were well prepared and had a sound understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum. The better teaching provided challenging and interesting tasks with excellent models to exemplify learning objectives: consequently, pupils were very well motivated and enjoyed learning.

48. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a sound understanding and knowledge of the requirements of the curriculum and, by providing support and guidance to staff, is endeavouring to ensure the improvement of design and technology throughout the school. Resources, some of which are not of good quality, are too little in quantity and narrow in range but are slowly being added to as teachers plan their work. The most recent purchases, which include construction kits and tools, are of good quality.

GEOGRAPHY

49. Attainment in geography is mostly in line with expectations relative to age and above these in some of the older pupils in Years 5/6. Observation of work through the years shows steady and often good progress. Most pupils identify the main features of a village and suggest who might live there and why. Some understand what causes a village to expand or become smaller over the years. Older pupils in Years 5/6 compare geographical regions with this country; for example, wet places, forested areas and Polar Regions. Most understand the effect climate has on how people live and work. Most read a simple map accurately or plan and use the key to identify buildings or other topographical features. Some pupils show a considerable depth of understanding in their written work, and there is good use of individual research to increase knowledge of topics - but only by a few.

50. Since the previous inspection, teaching as a whole has improved. It now ranges from a little unsatisfactory to a little very good. The lack of challenge to higher attaining pupils has been rectified to a certain extent in the upper two years of the key stage, but not so effectively in the first two years. Fieldwork remains a less well implemented aspect. Assessment has been discussed and, to some extent, attempted, but there is still no regular system in place to determine standards across the school or show the progress being made.

51. Four lessons were seen at inspection: in one, teaching was unsatisfactory in quality; in two it was satisfactory; and in one it was very good. Teachers use challenging questions in some lessons which help pupils to consolidate previous knowledge and stimulate further development. In most lessons, good class management and very good relationships between teacher and pupils ensure that there is a calm and orderly atmosphere which promotes learning. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in presentation which helps them to gain in self-esteem. Where teaching is strongest, clear explanations of the lesson's objectives help pupils to understand the work planned and to gain a sense of achievement when the objectives have been reached. Suitably, pupils are encouraged to use their own wording in answers, and this helps them to learn to express themselves clearly on paper. However, where teaching is weaker, discussions lack depth, and there is an imbalance between instruction and pupils' practical activity - too much talk cuts down the time available for practical application of the theory and planning. Written tasks for the older pupils often suitably require a greater depth than those set for the younger age group, but there is not always sufficient challenge and so the higher attaining pupils fail to achieve well. Sometimes, extra support is given to pupils with special educational needs, and when this is suitably sensitive it properly encourages effort and interest.

52. The subject leader was absent at inspection, and no overall judgement about leadership and management is made. However, clear advice has resulted in very good use being made of assessment tests in the upper years to monitor progress. This includes a useful self-assessment by the pupils which helps them to focus on how they can improve their own standards. Advice about planning ensures that lessons follow a similar pattern across the year groups and that opportunities for further research are built in. The wide range of topics studied, and clear guidance on the progression of skills, produce a sound foundation for further geographical studies in the next key stage.

HISTORY

53. Most pupils make steady progress and reach nationally expected standards relative to age, and have some grasp of basic historical facts in the topics they have studied. For example, they explain the main features of life in both town and country in Roman times, and recognize the differences between then and now. Most are aware that the topics studied - Romans, Saxons and Tudors - form part of Britain's past. A few higher attainers show independence in learning and have considerable depth of knowledge and understanding. Some deduce concepts from facts and are beginning to grasp that there is often a degree of informed guesswork rather than certainty in our interpretation of the past. However, the majority depends on recall of simple facts, which are accepted at face value, to give content to their work, and little is added by way of research from dictionaries or other reference books.

54. Since the previous inspection, pupils continue to respond well and are enthusiastic about the subject. Personal study is encouraged, but is not undertaken greatly and, therefore, many pupils lack independent learning skills. Informal assessment is sometimes well used by individual teachers to add depth to the summary at the end of lessons and to consolidate learning.

However, there is still no system to assess pupils' work in order to inform future planning and monitor progress. Therefore, teaching still does not plan sufficiently to take account of previous learning. Teaching remains satisfactory and occasionally good, but support for pupils with special educational needs is variable. Often, little extra help or guidance is provided and, as a result, progress is slow when tasks or help are not sufficiently modified to match such pupils' needs.

55. At inspection, four lessons were seen. In one, teaching was of good quality, and in three it was satisfactory. Most teachers' subject knowledge and planning are sound; some knowledge is good and gives structure and depth to the lessons. Site visits to local places such as Chedworth Roman villa, a Welsh Tudor house and Cirencester Museum are well used to add visual impact and freshness to topics and to stimulate the pupils' imaginations. Most teachers have very good relationships with pupils and their high expectations of good behaviour makes for quiet, orderly classroom environments conducive to learning. Pupils are properly encouraged to use their own words to give each piece of work individual characteristics. Whole-class summaries at the end of lessons are sometimes rather rushed, and so do not often give an opportunity for pupils to consolidate, and occasionally evaluate, what they have learnt. Where there is an appropriate amount of time, such sessions are valuable. Although different work is usually set for the older and younger age groups in each class, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to bring out their full potential in written tasks, or encouraged to contribute more significantly in class discussions, and this limits their progress. Some lessons are too directed, and their almost exclusively factual content prevents most pupils becoming aware of the part probability plays in our interpretation of historical events.

56. The sound management of the subject ensures that planning is consistent across the year groups although, suitably, teachers bring their own individuality of approach to each topic. Progress is built into assessment tasks in the scheme of work, although this is not formally monitored. There is much informal discussion among colleagues so that any problems in the delivery of topics are ironed out. The use of visitors to the school (for example, theatre groups and a 'Roman' lady) adds considerably to the interest pupils show, and the display of work throughout acts as a continuous reminder of topics studied. There are some good cross-curricular links with art and literacy which add to the intrinsic value of the work seen.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

57. At the end of Key Stage 2, the standards achieved by pupils in information technology are below national expectations. Most pupils know how to operate programs, store information, use a mouse, print and store work on their own files. They are familiar with the icons used in database programs and use these effectively to select certain fields for information. Pupils are competent at word processing, editing their own work and adopting a style to show they are aware of different audiences by using different typefaces and layouts. However, many pupils have little knowledge or understanding of how programs are used to give instructions to models such as programmable toys, or how to write a simple program to draw shapes by using a set of instructions. Moreover, the correct terminology is not well grasped by many, and little knowledge is shown about different graphs, the use of devices such as temperature probes or digital cameras, or how such information might be used to aid learning. Most pupils have too little knowledge about how computers use information to control devices; for example, traffic lights and burglar alarm systems.

58. Weaknesses in pupils' standards and learning in communicating and handling information were highlighted in the previous inspection report. To eradicate this weakness, a comprehensive and very appropriate scheme has been introduced recently to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements. Computers provided for the 'lower band' - Years 3 and 4 - which were hardly capable of running sophisticated programs, have been upgraded, and the networking of two computer suites has improved access in both the 'upper' and 'lower bands'.

59. Six lessons were seen: in four, the quality of teaching seen was good; in one, it was satisfactory; and in the remaining one it was unsatisfactory. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge of communicating and handling information, and are able to support pupils competently, when required. Good organization, coupled with effective recording of pupils' work, means that all have the same opportunities and equal access to computers in the newly created suites. Teachers' planning is good for most of the subject's requirements, but little is said about information technology to support learning across other subjects. High expectations of behaviour and independent work result in most pupils trying hard and working productively. Well deployed, knowledgeable parents in the computer suites often promote and assist good learning for many pupils, including those with special educational needs.

60. The enthusiastic, knowledgeable co-ordinator has clear and appropriate plans for the subject's development. Areas for improvement include aims to evaluate specific deficiencies in staff knowledge and limitations in the range of software to support pupils with special educational needs. However, strategic budget planning does not take account of updating computers or anticipate more sophisticated software in future years. Organization of literacy and numeracy hours predominantly in the morning sessions, and few using information technology to teach those subjects, means that the computer suites are often not used at such times. Therefore, the school does not get an appropriate return on its investment. It also results in excessive pressure on the use of the computer suites in the afternoons. The school is aware of this, and has plans to provide pupils with access to additional computers in or adjacent to classrooms to assist other work.

MUSIC

61. In the early part of the key stage, although standards vary between classes, overall the quality of performance in singing and playing, in composing, listening to and appreciating music meets expectations. Across the key stage, most pupils make steady progress. In the two lessons seen in Years 5/6, pupils' theoretical knowledge met expectations for their ages; however, their quality of performance in singing and playing, their composition and their musical appreciation skills, did not meet the expected standards normally found at this age. The quality and variety of extra-curricular music greatly enriches and enhances the musical life of the school, and to some extent compensates for some unsatisfactory teaching in lessons. Pupils' attainments in such sessions are good. Most of the pupils in the lower band enjoy creating musical dialogues and have a good understanding of the subtleties in volume which colour performances. All include different levels of volume in their singing, and higher attaining pupils are able to record these using the proper musical symbols in their scripts. Over one third of the pupils choose to take part in extra-curricular activities which include violin, cello, guitar, flute, clarinet, recorder, cornet, trumpet and euphonium. In these lessons, they concentrate well on musical disciplines and attain high standards. Many join together to form a 'wind orchestra' and thereby benefit from a variety of musical performances and opportunities; for example, in playing at the outset of school assemblies, as they did during the inspection.

62. The previous inspection found that there was a weak grasp of music and that the music curriculum was not fully implemented to meet statutory requirements. Strands are now all covered in curricular planning and a policy and scheme of work ensure teachers have basic guidelines. However, there are still some teachers who do not have sufficient musical knowledge and others who are unsure of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Extra-curricular musical activities have been strengthened in quality, increased in quantity and broadened in range. They have been made available to more pupils by the purchase of a substantial number of wind, string and brass 'school' instruments. This has improved standards in music.

63. Five lessons were seen at inspection: in Years 3/4, in one lesson teaching was of very

good quality, in one it was good, and in another it was unsatisfactory; in one lesson for Years 5/6, teaching was satisfactory and in the other, it was unsatisfactory. The variation in quality is directly related to teachers' own understanding of the requirements of the Programmes of Study. Some teachers are hampered by cramped conditions in the music room which do not allow pupils sufficient space to experiment with composition and foster frustration and mild disruptive behaviour. As a result of teachers' lack of musical knowledge, in the lessons observed in the upper band of the school, pupils often lacked both concentration and the disciplines necessary for successful performance. When singing, many paid scant attention to tone and pitch. Although some used phrasing successfully, particularly those who attend extra-curricular tuition, most pupils use of breath and control of diction was insecure. Furthermore, a substantial minority of pupils was inattentive and flippant in their attitudes to music lessons. Pupils' knowledge of the lives of composers and the music they created is narrow. However, where teachers are confident in their own knowledge of music, such problems rarely occur because very clear explanations and new information are given. There are examples of music used effectively in dance to develop mood and create atmosphere. In extra-curricular lessons, standards are above those expected for the eldest pupils in the age range.

64. The management of music is good. The co-ordinator has a sound understanding of the needs of the school to raise further the standards in music. She has produced detailed plans to support teachers and these are discussed in detail. She has introduced tests to assess achievement and has endeavoured to raise the perception of the value of music within the curriculum. Nevertheless, some teaching still suffers from a lack of support and guidance for some music lessons. Resources for music are satisfactory and those for extra-curricular music are excellent and greatly enhance extra-curricular activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

65. Overall, in physical education, pupils attain standards that are appropriate for their ages. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are able to perform a series of linked actions with appropriate control in response to a variety of musical rhythms. They use space with growing confidence, displaying good balance when performing rotating, balancing and rocking movements, usually with satisfactory levels of control. Owing to timetable arrangements, it was only possible to observe pupils undertaking a range of dance activities. However, there is firm evidence of the success that the school sporting teams have in competitive sports, including soccer and cricket. A large majority of pupils, by the age of 11, is confident in the water in swimming lessons and achieves 25 metres using a recognizable stroke. Learning in swimming is good, with most pupils showing clear improvements in water confidence and stroke development. This is further developed in Year 6 when pupils attend an outdoor pursuit activity at which they experience sailing and canoeing.

66. Since the previous inspection, the school has introduced a scheme to show the progression of skills to be taught in each year group; this has had a direct impact on learning and attainment. However, there is no consistent approach to the assessment of pupils' attainment as they move through the school. Therefore, assessment of skill development fails to inform teachers' planning. This remains a weakness.

67. Most teaching quality is satisfactory: most teachers have a good level of subject confidence and expertise, and so give clear, concise explanations and some demonstrations which improve pupils' learning. Most manage their classes well and plan lessons with suitable 'warm up' sessions at the beginning and 'cool down' sessions at the end. All teachers are good rôle models for their pupils; for example, all change for physical education, and they promote health awareness positively. Consequently, teachers and pupils enjoy learning together and pupils display very good attitudes to the subject. Their very favourable attitudes result in steady progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because they receive proper encouragement and so make steady progress in relation to their prior attainment. Although

teachers often inform pupils how to improve their performances, they do not give sufficient opportunities for them to analyse their own and each other's efforts, and so many do not make even quicker progress.

68. The management of the subject is good with more strengths than weaknesses. The co-ordinator works enthusiastically to provide pupils with a range of physical activities, including many opportunities for them to take part in extra-curricular activities. In these, he is ably assisted by staff members and parents. Resources for the subject are enhanced by the spacious hall, well marked hard play surfaces of good quality and an adjacent field used for field sports and football activities. These facilitate the development of good ball skills and teamwork in games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

69. Most pupils' attainments in religious education are above the expectations set out in the Agreed Syllabus, relative to their ages. They are assessed by the school as being in-line with the expectations at entry, so the present high level of attainment represents good progress and high achievement. Most have good knowledge of Bible stories and can remember the gist of these some years later. They understand the significance of religious symbols in Christianity and other religions; for example, the Cross, fish, dove of peace as well as various symbols connected to Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. Many see similarities and differences in festivals and ceremonies in Christianity and other religions. They empathise with feelings such as jealousy, guilt and characteristics of loyalty and forgiveness. Some show considerable depth of insight; for example, in the story of Joseph and his brothers. Most are able to talk well about how they feel, and many extend this to their writing. For example, in their prayers for the Millennium and for a better world, a good range of ideas and personal beliefs are evident.

70. Since the previous inspection, there have been some notable improvements. This inspection observed no unsatisfactory teaching and much that was very good. Attainment has risen in comparison with the expected standards, and the weaknesses noted in planning and assessment have been eradicated. The scheme of work has been reviewed, and is now much more detailed about age-related skills and understanding. Hence, the teaching is stronger and attainment is higher.

71. The good subject knowledge of many of the staff engenders enthusiasm and a very positive response in the pupils. Therefore, many of them take great pride in their work and presentational skills. The access to a wide range of resources, both within the school and by borrowing from local resource libraries, ensures that pupils have extended opportunities to learn through first-hand experience of appropriate artefacts, texts and pictures. The strong moral and spiritual content of most lessons underpins the school's ethos, and cultural understanding is successfully developed through study of faiths and attitudes other than those of Christianity. This heightens pupils' awareness that we are not all the same and that many things can be viewed in different ways. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in some lessons but not in others, which results in them not always being able to achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes challenged by set tasks to extend their knowledge and understanding. However, there are not enough opportunities for good quality, independent work to stretch them further; therefore, some opportunities are lost to give a greater depth of understanding through use of a wider and more diverse vocabulary. This is in part owing to whole-class sessions at the end of lessons sometimes being rushed; there is insufficient time to consolidate learning and reinforce teaching points.

72. Subject leadership is sound and so the subject is well planned and uniformly taught, which affords all pupils equal access to the curriculum. Assessment is informal, but effective in allowing for continuity and progression to be built in to the scheme of work. The scheme is kept

constantly under review by the subject co-ordinator, so that desirable adjustments are made. It closely matches the South Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus and, therefore, statutory requirements are fully met. The subject is suitably supplemented by visits from people of faiths other than Christianity; for example, the Islamic Educational Project, which forges good links with the community and strengthens multi-cultural awareness.