

INSPECTION REPORT

**BLADON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Bladon

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123119

Headteacher: Mrs. S. Hawker

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. Thompson
25372

Dates of inspection: 13 – 16 March 2000

Inspection number: 191730

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Park Street Bladon Woodstock Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX20 1RW
Telephone number:	01993 811192
Fax number:	01993 811192
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. K. Banks
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mike Thompson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Science; Art; Design and technology; Physical education; Religious education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Barry Wood	<i>Lay inspector</i>		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?
Pat Lowe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Under fives; Special educational needs; English; Information technology; Geography; History; Music.	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

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The Registrar
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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bladon Church of England Primary School is a small school, founded in 1858 and occupying a listed Victorian building in the centre of the village of Bladon, some seven miles to the north of Oxford. The school is popular with parents. There are 59 pupils on roll, one third of whom come from outside its catchment at parental request.

Although its pupils are from a broad range of backgrounds, many parents are of professional or managerial status. Unemployment levels are low relative to other areas of the country, and just five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. Seven per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This is well below the national average. No pupils have statements of special educational needs and almost all pupils are of white ethnicity.

Pupils are admitted to the school at the beginning of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were no under fives on roll. Attainment on entry to the school varies widely from year to year. Overall, it is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. It successfully develops the potential of its pupils so that by the age of eleven they are confident, learn independently and achieve good academic standards. Pupils are eager to learn, are interested in their work and behave well. The quality of teaching is good. The headteacher, staff, governors and parents all work closely together in partnership. Although the school has above average income, it provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information technology are above average at the end of both key stages.
- Teaching is good or better in over two thirds of lessons.
- The school successfully encourages the very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of all its pupils. Attendance rates are very good.
- The school is very effective in providing for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school enjoys an excellent partnership with parents.
- The school is very well led by a hardworking and committed headteacher and governing body.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Planning for religious education.
- The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher.
- The length and timing of some sessions.
- The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made very good progress since its last inspection in 1996. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have all improved. Attendance is significantly better. The curriculum, previously satisfactory, is now good, and the school's partnership with its parents is excellent. Two of the three key issues from the previous report related to mathematics, and the school's response to these has largely been replaced by the way in which it has now implemented the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. However, part of one of the issues related to the time allocations for mathematics lessons, and inspection findings indicate that the school needs to review the length and timing of some sessions, including the new numeracy lessons. The third key issue related to standards of presentation of work at Key Stage 1, and this has been satisfactorily addressed.

STANDARDS

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

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

Owing to the small size of the groups of pupils tested in 1997, 1998 and 1999, grades are not reported, since variations in attainment of individual pupils can disproportionately affect the overall grading. The school's published targets for 1999 were considerably lower than the percentages achieved in the national tests, but this discrepancy can be explained by the improved performance of just one pupil. When averages of the scores achieved over the past four years are considered, the school is shown to be improving at roughly the same rate as the national trend.

Inspection findings show that standards achieved in English, mathematics, science and information technology are above average. In design and technology, geography and history, pupils achieve standards above those normally expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, while in art, music and physical education standards are average. In religious education pupils' attainment matches the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy to come to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Generally very good. Behaviour improves markedly as pupils grow in maturity.
Personal development and relationships	A major strength of the school. Pupils greatly benefit from the well-integrated, family atmosphere in the school. They grow in confidence and become independent learners.
Attendance	Very good. Significantly improved since the previous inspection.

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development contribute strongly to the quality of learning and the good progress made in lessons. A particularly good feature of the school is the way in which pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, so that by the time they are in Year 6, pupils work independently and have a very sensible, mature outlook on their work. Sometimes, the length and timing of lessons results in some pupils becoming tired and restless.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Not applicable	Good	Good

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

The good quality of teaching reported at the previous inspection has been sustained. Teaching in 68 per cent of lessons was good or better, including 15 per cent of lessons where teaching was very good. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. In English, three quarters of teaching was good and in mathematics all lessons were good or better. A particularly good feature of teaching is the skilful way in which work is planned to provide suitably challenging work for all age groups of pupils. This is possible because teachers know their pupils very well and monitor their progress carefully. Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Basic skills in numeracy and literacy are well taught, and teachers give pupils good opportunities to practise the skills learned in other areas of the curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum has been well adapted to the very special circumstances of a small school. There is excellent equality of opportunity for all pupils within the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision results in good progress for pupils with special needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very well reflected in the life of the school. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. A strong moral code underpins the work of the school. There are very good opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and those of other societies. Spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils well within a safe environment.

The school's partnership with parents is excellent, and the strong commitment of parents benefits the school in many ways. A particular strength of curriculum planning is the way in which a two-year cycle of work is used, especially in the Key Stage 2 class. This enables pupils in Years 6 and 5 to be taught the same topics, but at a more advanced level to pupils in Years 3 and 4. Planning for religious education has not been reviewed recently and therefore does not reflect the changes made to the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There are very good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' personal and academic development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher manages the school very well and provides very clear educational direction. The very good teamwork between all staff is a significant strength of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are knowledgeable and are very active in supporting the school. Their role in shaping the school's direction is excellent.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Staff and governors are very good at critically appraising their work and in seeking ways to improve.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of available finances and its strong links with the local community. While ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are fully met, the school constantly has to work hard to overcome the limitations of its building.

The headteacher and governors share a clear view of the future development of the school and work in close partnership. The commitment of the Chair of Governors is considerable. Governors are particularly good at providing practical help for the school. Staffing ratios are good. Learning resources are adequate and are well stored, although storage space is at a premium within the school's cramped accommodation. Good improvements have recently been made in the quality of information technology equipment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The behaviour of pupils. • The way in which the school helps children to develop mature and responsible attitudes. • Homework. • The approachability of staff. • The way that the school is led and managed. • Teachers' expectations of their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors' judgements support all parents' positive views. In particular, the school is effective in providing a good quality learning environment in which all pupils are valued as individuals. With regard to the area that some parents would like to see improved, inspectors' judgements are that pupils are given a range of additional activities similar to those provided in much larger primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds showed that the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 in English and mathematics was well above average. However, the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was only average. Overall, attainment in these subjects was above average. In science, all pupils achieved Level 4, but the proportion achieving Level 5 was well below average. Overall, attainment was average. When these results are compared with those of similar schools, with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in 1999 were average in English and mathematics and below average in science.
2. Conclusions drawn from these results may not be reliable, since the groups of pupils assessed at the end of both key stages were very small. This means that a considerable percentage change can occur through a movement of one level by a single pupil. Similarly, an analysis of trends in results over the past four years shows considerable variations, since the year-on-year differences in the attainment of a very small number of pupils are magnified when each individual pupil represents a large proportion of the overall total.
3. At Key Stage 1, an analysis of the 1999 test results shows that the school was very successful in getting pupils to reach the national target of Level 2, but few pupils were successful in higher level work. In reading, all pupils achieved Level 2, but the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was below average. In writing, the proportion achieving Level 2 was above average, but no pupils achieved Level 3. In mathematics, all pupils achieved Level 2, but the proportion achieving Level 3 was well below average. In comparison with those of similar schools, standards were average in writing, below average in reading, and well below average in mathematics.
4. The teachers' assessments of seven year olds in 1999 were fairly accurate, and were close to the results achieved in the tests. Science results, based on teacher assessments, showed the same pattern as the tests in reading, writing and mathematics. All pupils were credited with achieving Level 2, but no Level 3 assessments were made.
5. As is the case at Key Stage 2, the small numbers of pupils tested means that interpretations placed on the results need to be treated with caution.
6. On entry to the school, the majority of children achieve standards above those expected of children who are almost five. In most cases, they have already achieved the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children's Learning and are ready to start work on the National Curriculum programmes of study as soon as they start school. At the time of inspection, there were no pupils under five on roll.

7. The evidence from scrutiny of past work, observations of pupils who are just of statutory school age, and discussions with teachers shows that children under five in the reception classes are taught the value of listening carefully. They listen to stories well and respond clearly when asked questions. Most speak confidently, usually answering questions with a sentence, and using correct language structure. Most of the children form letters correctly and write their own names. In mathematics, most count confidently to ten and above, and talk about the features of simple two- and three-dimensional shapes. The personal and social development of the children under five is good, as they relate well to each other and to adults and quickly learn to co-operate in pairs and groups. The children develop a good knowledge and understanding of the world. They know where they live and have a good awareness of the local community. They are aware of how things grow and change and they use computers confidently. The children's physical and creative development is good. They develop their balancing and climbing skills well as they use large apparatus in the playground. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically and maintain rhythm accurately. Colour mixing skills are good, as is the use of brushes and pencils.

8. By the age of seven, pupils achieve standards above those expected nationally in English, mathematics, science and information technology. In religious education pupils achieve the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus. In geography and history standards are above average, and in all other subjects they are average when compared with what is normally expected of pupils of this age. At the time of the previous inspection standards were described as being in line with those found nationally in all subjects except information technology, where attainment was above average. Standards at Key Stage 1 have therefore risen in English, mathematics, science, geography and history.

9. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing develop well. They listen carefully, and show understanding by being able to follow instructions. By the time they are seven, they become confident, fluent speakers for their age. Good teaching and the pupils' enthusiasm for their work contribute to the development of pupils' love of literature and their good knowledge of phonics. Pupils write well because they are confident readers. In most cases, sentences are correctly punctuated with capital letters, full stops and speech marks, and the spelling of basic words is generally secure.

10. Pupils make good progress in mathematics throughout Key Stage 1. For example, younger pupils develop skills in adding single-digit numbers, initially by using counting apparatus to help them. They then move on to more complex work with the introduction of two-digit numbers and, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils in Year 2 are competent in basic addition. They can accurately add two-digit numbers and understand that multiplication tables are a quick way of carrying out multiple additions.

11. Skills learned in numeracy and literacy play an important part in the development of pupils' skills in science at Key Stage 1. At this key stage pupils make good progress in developing skills of scientific enquiry, and learn to make simple hypotheses as part of their work. For example, following a walk in the school grounds to examine plants, pupils suggested possible conditions needed for plant growth. These hypotheses are then tested out through planting a variety of seeds in different media. Good use is made of practical activities, for example in developing pupils' understanding of simple electrical circuits.

12. In Key Stage 2 pupils build well on the firm foundations laid in Key Stage 1, and by the age of eleven they maintain the good standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment is above average in English, mathematics, science, information technology, design and technology, geography and history. In art, music and physical education, pupils achieve standards normally expected of pupils of the age of eleven. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have improved in English, mathematics, geography and history in comparison with those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

13. At Key Stage 2, pupils are divided into two groups for part of each school day, as Years 3 and 4 are taught separately from Years 5 and 6. This strategy has much to commend it as it reduces the size of teaching groups and enables much more individual teaching to take place. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make the best progress because teaching is of a higher quality, they are more mature, and they have more sensible attitudes towards their work. At both key stages, progress in some subjects is sometimes affected by the length and timing of lessons. When sessions are over-long, some pupils become restless and find it difficult to sustain concentration.

14. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in all aspects of literacy. They speak very clearly with good intonation and use vocabulary that is appropriate to the occasion. Many read very fluently, and by the end of the key stage they confidently talk about what they are reading, using the text to support their view. Many Year 6 pupils read texts that are at an adult level. Higher level skills of skimming and scanning are well used in many subjects as pupils take essential points from text to help with their work. Pupils' attainment in writing is above average because of good teaching at both key stages and the sound base which is established in Key Stage 1. By Year 6, pupils write extended stories, which are carefully developed in paragraphs and very well constructed.

15. Pupils' skills in using and manipulating numbers improve at a good rate as they progress through Key Stage 2. The very good emphasis placed on investigative work helps pupils to understand that one of the key skills in mathematics is the ability to identify patterns of numbers. The important skill of estimation is also very well developed throughout the key stage as pupils learn to make sensible estimates of length, weight and capacity. As pupils get older they become more skilled in applying skills in estimation to everyday calculations. By Year 6, many pupils have good levels of skill across elements of the mathematics curriculum, ranging from working with fractions, percentages and ratios to the measurement of angles, using protractors, and the construction of triangles by using compasses.

16. In addition to skills in numeracy and literacy, pupils' skills in information technology help them to make good progress in science throughout Key Stage 2. Pupils of all ages and abilities are able to offer hypotheses and to draw simple conclusions from their work. Older pupils in particular have a good understanding of the principles of fair testing. By the time they are at the end of the key stage, pupils achieve good levels of understanding in all areas of science.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils have shown improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils are very happy to attend school. The calm and purposeful way in which most pupils work enables the school to function very well, within its limited accommodation. Pupils, staff and parents work together as a family unit, with a strong ethos in which mutual respect and harmonious relationships help to promote an effective teaching and learning environment.

18. Pupils have very good attitudes, are keen to work, and realise that hard work will produce good results. Pupils respond sensibly and well to the range of teaching styles and strategies, which the mixed age group classes demand. They move quickly between tasks without undue fuss or noise, and their patience, good humour and flexibility, in sometimes congested conditions, allows the school to operate efficiently. The pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions, concentrate on tasks, listen well, and are interested in all aspects of their work. Pupils' attitudes improve as they progress from reception to Year 6, and a distinctive feature of the school is their increasing self-confidence and independence in learning, which allows them to attempt new work and experiences with enthusiasm. However, the very long morning periods of intensive literacy and numeracy are extremely tiring for young pupils in Key Stage 1, and can lead to distraction and boredom prior to the mid-morning break.

19. The behaviour of the pupils throughout the school is very good and very few aspects of poor behaviour were observed. Pupils clearly understand what their teachers' expectations are, so that there are no incidences of raised voices to disturb the calm and productive working atmosphere. The discreet and clear control demonstrated by all staff means that pupils rarely over-react. There are no displays of sulking, tantrums or rough behaviour, and only pupils' shouting out, in their enthusiasm to please, at Key Stage 1, is a problem. Pupils are very aware of the need for self-discipline. with the result that behaviour around the school is also very good. Neither bullying nor bad language were observed, and there have been no exclusions in the last three years.

20. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils, and between older and younger pupils, is very good. Staff are very good role models and there is consistent evidence of trust and empathy. The pupils genuinely value each other, respect each other's opinions, and work together amicably. They share resources with one another and are courteous, polite and helpful. Boys and girls play well together and represent the school in joint teams, where their ability to work together brings success. The pupils welcome visitors to the school easily, engage them in conversation, and take pride in their appearance, in their school and in their work. They are mindful of the impact of their actions on each other, and of particular note was the advice given to an inspector to avoid being hit by a football in the playground.

21. The personal development of the pupils is very good throughout their time in school. The school is a very caring community in which pupils are encouraged to take responsibility from an early age, and grow in self-esteem. Pupils quickly settle into class routines within Key Stage 1 and, as a result, work safely within limited space. In Key Stage 2, pupils' organisational skills and self-confidence develop rapidly. This enabled year six pupils to plan and conduct a whole school assembly, in which the headteacher was able to play only a passive spectator role. All pupils display a well-developed sense of moral and social awareness, which is particularly important in such a small community.

22. The school has consistently improved its level of attendance since its previous inspection, so that it is now very good. Both classes have attendance levels well above the national average and many pupils have exemplary attendance throughout their time in school. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average, but family holidays in term time are a significant reason for authorised absence. Pupils are punctual in arriving at school and lessons begin promptly. There are no indications of any truancy.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout the school. Teaching in 68 per cent of lessons is good or better and in 15 per cent it is very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. Standards of teaching have been sustained at the level reported at the time of the last inspection. Seventy five per cent of lessons at Key Stage 1 are good or better, including 12 per cent which are very good. Sixty four per cent of lessons at Key Stage 2 are good or better, including 14 per cent that are very good. The best practice is in classes taught by full-time class teachers.

24. Teachers throughout the school have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach. They teach the basic skills effectively and use their expertise well, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. In the best lessons, teachers make intellectual and creative demands upon all pupils. This was particularly evident in a literacy lesson in Key Stage 1, when pupils as young as five years old gained valuable experience in planning a story, including the key elements of character, setting and plot. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lessons, pupils in Year 6 were challenged in their work to calculate the area of a room, while Year 5 pupils found the work on scaled plans of a bungalow demanding. One of the strengths of teaching is the way in which teachers plan for several year groups within a class, basing their planning on two-year cycles of work to ensure that pupils do not repeat work at the same level in succeeding years. In another very successful lesson in Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 2 worked above the level expected for their age when they controlled a programmable floor robot to achieve a planned outcome. They directed it to draw squares, rectangles and other shapes by giving a series of instructions entered in sequence, one at a time. In lessons of this calibre, pupils work productively to achieve new learning at a demanding pace.

25. The teaching in literacy is good. Lessons are planned well to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy, with clear objectives. In the best lessons these are made known to pupils and revisited at the end of the lesson so that pupils can assess their own progress, but this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Questioning is used well to enable pupils to demonstrate methods and reasoning and to explore reasons for any wrong answers. The teaching in numeracy is good, and teachers have worked hard to adjust their teaching to meet the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. A range of teaching strategies is used to ensure that pupils work with purpose and self-confidence. The good teaching has a positive effect on standards. Teaching in science and information technology is also good.

26. Teachers' lesson planning is good, with pupils' levels of understanding accurately judged and with an appropriate level of challenge in the tasks set. The good medium-term curriculum plans clearly set out the way in which themes are to be developed, and provide a good framework for lesson plans. Teachers use 'baseline assessment' information and other tests and tasks to monitor the progress of each pupil and to guide them when planning future work. Pupils' interest and concentration are motivated by good teaching and helped by good marking which, in the best cases, advises pupils about how they can strive for further improvement. A particularly good feature of the marking at Key Stage 2 is the portfolios of examples of pupils' work, carefully annotated by the teacher and matched against National Curriculum levels. These are a very good benchmark against which to measure pupils' progress. However, marking is not always consistent across the school, and the presentation of work is sometimes variable in quality.

27. From the time that they begin school, pupils are encouraged to become independent learners. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, work hard and make good progress because of good teaching, effective grouping, and tasks that are both demanding and achievable. Teachers interest pupils in their tasks and as a consequence pupils concentrate hard and maintain a good work rate. During written work, teachers circulate to monitor progress, correct misunderstandings, present new challenges and draw together ideas.

28. Class routines are well established and help pupils to learn effectively because they all know where to find equipment and how they are expected to organise themselves. Teachers' expect and generally receive good standards of work and behaviour. Occasionally, some pupils do not remain on task because the pace of the lesson is slow or because pupils cannot maintain concentration through long periods of demanding work in which there is no opportunity for a break. The relationships between teachers, learning support assistants and pupils are excellent and this enhances learning. Pupils have good work routines and, as they mature, they increasingly select a widening range of resources, including the Internet, and

effectively develop their enquiry skills. Learning support assistants and other adults help pupils very well. All adults work very closely together and pupils benefit from this. The effective interaction between pupils and adults is one of the contributory factors to the good progress made by pupils. Lessons start promptly and, in the best lessons, pupils are notified of the time available for each task. This encourages them to work at a productive pace. Resources are used to good effect to help pupils in their work; these include computers, which are well used in most areas of the curriculum. Parents play a significant role in supporting the work of teachers. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is excellent.

29. There is potential for the quality of teaching to be even better, but because the headteacher is currently unable to monitor the quality of teaching, good practice is not observed and then shared.

30. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support. Class teachers' planning ensures that work is carefully matched to the different abilities of these pupils, and careful records are kept of the progress they make. There is good liaison with the local education authority's special educational needs support staff. Individual education plans contain clear targets and are implemented well by teachers and classroom assistants. They provide an appropriate blend of challenge and help, enabling pupils to make good progress from the reception class through to Year 6.

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

31. The school provides a broad range of curricular and other opportunities which meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

32. The curriculum for children under five is sound. On entry, the majority of children achieve standards above those expected for their age. If, as occasionally happens, children enter the school and have not yet achieved the nationally recommended Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning, teaching is then focused on the six recommended areas of learning for under fives. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy and on developing pupils' personal and social skills. Children successfully follow the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies.

33. The curriculum for pupils up to the age of seven in Key Stage 1 and eleven in Key Stage 2 is good and covers all required elements of the National Curriculum. However, planning does not fully meet the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus for religious education because it has not yet been adjusted to reflect recent revisions made to the syllabus. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the time allocated to each subject is generally appropriate, although the amount of time devoted to science is low, due to the generous allocation of time for literacy. Nevertheless, results in science are good. The amount of time devoted to numeracy is generally appropriate. However, the timings of some lessons sometimes result in some pupils becoming a little tired and restless, for example when a numeracy lesson follows immediately after the literacy hour. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and governors have been fully involved in appropriate training.

34. The school has a sound policy for teaching sex education, which is sensitively introduced at appropriate times as an integral part of the curriculum. The dangers of drug and substance abuse are also dealt with well through the school's personal, health and social education lessons, which effectively promote pupils' personal development.

35. Curriculum planning is good, and the use of two-year cycles of work helps teachers to plan appropriately for different age groups within the class. For example, in the Key Stage 2 class the two-year cycle for Years 6 and 5 is taught at the same time as the cycle for Years 3 and 4. Similar topics are covered in both cycles, so that although pupils may visit a particular topic more than once, they will re-visit it at a higher level than previously. This results in pupils continuing to make good progress as they move through the school. For each key stage, there are 'curriculum maps' that set out in very brief terms what is to be taught in each term. These are underpinned by more detailed medium-term plans, which provide a sound basis for detailed short-term planning. Most short-term plans have clear learning objectives, with specific planned activities for different age groups or ability groups where appropriate. Individual policy documents are in place for all subjects and for most aspects of the curriculum and school life in general. The headteacher monitors planning for other groups and classes, but she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching. Ongoing assessment is good, and long-term assessment is very comprehensive. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is very good.

36. Provision for equal opportunities is excellent. Among all staff there is a strong awareness of equal opportunity issues, and they provide good role models. All pupils have equal access to activities appropriate to their stage of development. The school provides a broad range of opportunities to meet the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of all pupils. Effective strategies are used to teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The classroom provision is also well organised to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Arrangements for individual education plans are effective and enable pupils to have full access to the curriculum. There is a commitment to the most able pupils and they are challenged to become mature and independent learners.

37. There are very good relationships with other local schools in the 'Woodstock Partnership' which help to sustain some areas of the curriculum. An example is the sharing of a programmable floor robot with another school, to enable the information technology curriculum to be fully delivered at Key Stage 1. The school benefits greatly from the use of the sports hall at a neighbouring secondary school and the hall of a local primary school for physical education lessons. It also benefits from the strong links with the Education Centre at Blenheim Palace. Good use is made of the grounds of Blenheim Palace, as well as the school's garden, to enrich work in science.

38. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, and educational trips and visits extend the curriculum. Sporting activities include football, netball and cricket. The school is very successful in the local schools' football and netball leagues. The football and netball teams are open to both boys and girls. Many parents are very appreciative of the good, extra-curricular sporting activities, and they feel that good use is made of the premises and the locality to support the curriculum. During the summer months, there is a gardening club. Approximately one fifth of pupils learn the recorder after school and one pupil learns the clarinet. There are many visits to local places of interest, and pupils share residential trips

with a neighbouring school. The local church and the village are well used to enhance the work in religious education, history and geography. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop 'life skills'. For example, first aid is taught by one of the governors, pupils take cycling proficiency lessons, and there is a 'junior citizen' course. There are regular partnership activities with other schools in areas such as music, art, and sport, and the school is fully involved in village life.

39. The school offers a secure, welcoming and caring environment. Its aims are clearly stated and are followed in its daily work. All members of staff provide good role models by showing respect for the individual and concern for the school as a community. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, thus maintaining the position at the last inspection. Parents generally express support for the school in this area.

40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It is fostered mainly through assemblies, the programme for religious education, and other subjects such as English, science, history, geography, art, music, dance and drama. Assemblies create an atmosphere that encourages spiritual awareness. An act of worship takes place daily for the whole school, despite the very tight space into which the children are closely packed. The acts of worship satisfy statutory requirements and provide some opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others, for example as they think about the role of the 'Good Samaritan' in this day and age. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to develop a thoughtful awareness of the changing seasons, the wonders of the natural world and the creation stories. Kindness, love and care for others are emphasised in assembly, and pupils empathise with the injured man to whom the Good Samaritan ministered. A photographic record of the pupils' work in the construction of the wildlife garden reveals the awe and wonder in their faces as they study the tadpoles and frogs, watch the weather and measure rainfall. Similar opportunities for pupils to experience moments of wonder are provided through activities such as a visit by 'Gill's Animal Road Show' or the discovery of minibeasts in a woodpile. Pupils' studies in the school garden enrich all areas of the curriculum. For example, they produce reflective poems about the butterflies they see, carefully drawn plans of the garden, good quality drawings of flowers, and well thought out writing about the planting and growing of flowers.

41. The way in which the school ensures the moral development of pupils is very good. Differences between right and wrong are emphasised throughout the school. There is a strong commitment to sharing, and children develop a respect for themselves and others. Expectations of very good behaviour help to support pupils' moral development. The school aims to foster in children a sense of dignity, value and worth, and an appreciation of achievement in themselves and others. Pupils' moral development is reinforced in assemblies and religious education lessons, as they consider the life of Jesus and other religious figures. Pupils know the school's expectations and understand their significance.

They are encouraged to think of ways in which they can help each other in school, in the community, and in the wider world. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 recently organised a cake stall to raise money for flood relief in Mozambique and raised over £100. Pupils learn about the moral codes associated with major world faiths. There are few school rules, and the emphasis is on positive action, rather than on what is forbidden. Relationships between all members of the school community and the wider community reflect a strong ethos of friendship and support. The openness of the school, the excellent links with parents, and links with the community create a real sense of belonging.

42. Provision for social development is excellent. Pupils are given many opportunities to respond to the needs of their peers. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs take a full part in school activities. In personal, health and social education lessons, pupils are encouraged to express their views, knowing that they will be given respect. Similarly, in literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils are encouraged to make an active contribution to discussions and, in the best lessons, to assess their levels of achievement in relation to the objectives of the lesson. All pupils are given opportunities to take on responsibilities within their class as monitors for various tasks. These responsibilities are extended as they mature, providing opportunities to develop social skills and confidence. Paired and group work feature frequently in lessons and this helps to foster collaborative learning and team participation. Pupils have opportunities to perform before an audience, for example at Christmas and in a play about water, linked to their studies in geography. They develop independence and social skills outside the school, during their participation in village events, in their visits to Blenheim Palace where, for example, they recently carried out a survey of tourists, and in their linked activities with pupils in other schools. There are strong links with the adjoining playgroup, and its children come into school regularly to join in activities with the children in Key Stage 1. Older pupils look after younger ones and all pupils have a sense of responsibility towards pupils with special educational needs. Pupils regularly take part in collections for charity, charitable events, and events at the local church. Many visitors are frequently seen in the school. This is a further aspect of the way in which pupils develop a wider sense of their place in society.

43. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. The school promotes the cultural traditions of its own area very well, and those of other parts of Britain and the world. Visits to places of interest such as Blenheim Palace and Warwick Castle, visitors to the school, and the celebration of events such as May Day play an important part in developing children's sense of their own cultural traditions. Visits to the local church and visitors from the Baptist and other local churches help children to learn about Christian values and beliefs. Opportunities to learn about other cultures occur in history, geography and art. Pupils learn about early invaders, ancient Egypt and Greece, and Tudor and Victorian times. In learning about the way of life earlier in the twentieth century they draw on the personal experience of local people. They develop a sense of their place in Europe and learn about the Third World, through their study of worldwide weather conditions and other cultures. Many of the texts used in the literacy hour are based on other cultures, and the school library is well stocked in this respect. The school reading schemes also focus strongly on a range of cultural traditions. The study of famous artists broadens pupils' cultural perspective.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to provide good support and guidance for its pupils in line with its stated aims. The school's commitment to pupil welfare positively contributes to the good progress and development of all pupils. The premises are small, and therefore all staff have daily contact with all pupils and, as a result, know them very well. This knowledge is further reinforced by the close relationships that exist between parents and staff, and by their frequent daily contact. The headteacher and her colleagues accept their pastoral role with enthusiasm, diligence and real commitment. Pupils feel constantly supported within this integrated community without any loss of their independence. Parents in turn feel that the school is a safe, sensitive and caring environment, which they trust and value.

45. Teachers are able to match work closely to the needs of individual pupils because of their very good, systematic procedures for monitoring progress and development. These track all pupils from entry to the school through to transfer to secondary school. Assessment records in the core subjects, including information control technology, are thorough and contain targets for each pupil. Skills and attributes are assessed well in areas of physical development. This comprehensive overview of pupils' development is extremely useful whenever outside professional agencies become involved, for example for the very few pupils with special educational needs. The school provides effective support for pupils with special needs. Individual education plans for these pupils are good, and include clear targets for improvement which are reviewed termly with parents. 'Record of Achievement' files, for each pupil, are satisfactory, and contain reports and awards from the pupil's time in the school. Information about pupils is carefully collated and regularly updated by the efficient school secretary, and is sufficient in case of any emergency.

46. The school has a good range of support, guidance and welfare policies, which guide and underpin its actions. These are implemented consistently across the school by all staff. The school welcomes outside agencies to support the pupils on a routine basis or if there are specific problems. The school nurse has had a long relationship with the school and is used well in teaching some aspects of personal and social education. Child protection procedures are generally satisfactory. Although the headteacher has received training in these procedures in the last three years, she feels the need for some 'refresher' training. Staff have not received formal training, but through their regular daily contact with the headteacher any concerns could be quickly registered. Presently, there are no pupils on the child protection register.

47. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and its procedures for monitoring and promoting this are totally appropriate to a small school. The headteacher's clear insistence on good behaviour influences all pupils and produces very good results. Pupils have been involved in developing school rules, but the accent is on self-discipline and mutual respect so that pupils are trustworthy in all situations. The close proximity of good adult role models throughout the school day has an undoubted very positive effect on the pupils. The school has few displays of school or class rules, but has appropriate rewards and sanctions in place. A strong emphasis is placed on pupils understanding the significance of

good behaviour within the context of their own personal development. The school is very vigilant in detecting any poor behaviour in the school or in the community, and has been very effective in minimising instances of bullying or conflict. Attendance procedures are very good and have produced good results over many years. Unauthorised absence is at a very low level due to the zealous efforts of the school secretary in telephoning parents once pupils are absent. Parents are very aware of their statutory obligations and both pupils and parents are determined to attend school at the start of the day. However, the incidence of parents requiring holidays within the term is high, despite the school's best efforts.

48. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, as evidenced by the very low level of accidents. There is a very good complement of first aiders, and even pupils are trained in first aid procedures by a governor. Health and safety procedures are good and are carefully monitored by an enthusiastic parent governor. Some minor health and safety issues noted during the course of the inspection have been discussed with the school. The cramped accommodation means that there are no facilities for pupils who become unwell during the course of the school day. Efficient procedures for contacting parents are therefore essential.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. As indicated by the last inspection, the well-developed relationships with parents are a major strength of the school. It has a very good reputation in the locality, with a growing number of pupils on roll. Approximately a third of all pupils are from outside the catchment area. Parents now express an exceptional level of approval for the school and they recognise and value the efforts of the headteacher, staff and the governors. There is only one area of significant parental dissatisfaction, and that concerns the lack of an interesting range of activities outside lessons. An inspection of this issue indicates that some parents have very high expectations, which the school is unable to satisfy due to financial or time constraints. The pupils have access to a rich mixture of activities including competitive netball and football against other schools, a gardening club, cycling proficiency lessons, music lessons, first aid, 'junior citizen' work and charity work. They undertake many trips into the community, including visits to Blenheim Palace, and also journey further afield to places such as Ironbridge to add further interest and relevance to their work in school. Every other year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taken on a residential visit to an outdoor pursuits centre in Wales. The school works hard to provide all of these 'enrichment activities' and, in this respect, gives pupils opportunities similar to those experienced by pupils in much larger primary schools.

50. The aims of the school, as developed in its policy for parents and the community, are very well implemented so that the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is excellent. The school has an 'open door' policy, whereby all parents are encouraged to enter the school at the beginning and end of the day, and to come and help within the school. Parent volunteers and friends from the community regularly help both inside and outside the classroom. Parents run the successful football and netball teams comprising both boys and girls. They help with swimming, provide computer and gardening expertise and teach first aid. A friend of the school voluntarily teaches advanced mathematics to more able older

pupils. Parent governors are enthusiastic, hold positions of real responsibility in practical terms and work hard to reduce the headteacher's workload. All governors interviewed had a very good understanding of the future challenges for the school. The Friends of Bladon School Association are an essential element in promoting and developing the distinctive happy family ethos of the school community. They are very hardworking and benefit the school, both financially and in terms of the integration of parents into its life.

51. The quality of information given to parents is only satisfactory, as it sometimes lacks essential detail. Both the prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are documents that are well presented, but they do not contain some points of statutory information. Other written communications are satisfactory and, if necessary, give parents enough time to respond. A major strength of the school's communications with parents is its commitment to be welcoming, to listen, and to try to reduce parents' anxieties. This allows informal communications to flourish, particularly at the end of the day in the school playground or in classrooms, and as a consequence minor problems generally do not develop into major ones. All formal open evenings are well attended except for the annual governors' meeting for parents. The pupils' annual written reports are innovative, as Year 5 and 6 pupils produce their own 'parallel' reports. Reports at both key stages give comprehensive and perceptive feedback into pupils' abilities in all subjects of the national curriculum, but do not include targets, or provide space for parents' written responses. Good opportunities are provided for parents to discuss the content of reports with teachers.

52. The growth of its partnership with parents is a very good feature of the school. The majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement. The school has kept parents well informed about developments in literacy and numeracy, and all parents are welcome to view their children's work. Most parents approve of the present homework arrangements and support their children at home. Reading diaries also help to keep parents informed about the frequency and quality of their children's reading. The school works well with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and provides pupils with useful individual educational plans, which contain agreed targets for future progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The school is very well led by the headteacher. She effectively manages the school in close partnership with the governing body, and has established excellent links with parents. She knows her pupils very well and has a clear view of the future development of the school. All staff and governors ably support her. Teaching staff are committed to improving pupils' attainment and are good at reflecting critically on their practice. There are very good relationships within the school and a strong sense of teamwork among all staff.

54. The commitment of the Chair of Governors is considerable. Under his leadership the governing body is effectively organised and successfully fulfils its obligations in monitoring the work of the school. Its role in shaping the direction of the school is excellent. Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school; they frequently visit, and many work hard to provide practical help. For example, the governor with responsibility for the premises not only discusses premises issues, but also ensures that routine maintenance tasks are carried out, thus enabling the headteacher to concentrate on teaching and leading the curriculum. Governors successfully fulfil their role as 'critical

friend' to the school. They are very active in holding the school to account for its performance and discussing ways in which standards may be improved. For instance, the 1999 national test results were analysed in detail by the governors, and targets for an improvement in the number of pupils achieving Level 5 in English were set. Inspection evidence indicates that these targets are likely to be met this year. All statutory requirements are fully met with the exception of those relating to the governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus. The principal shortcoming in the prospectus is the way in which national test results are published, while the principal omission in the governors' annual report concerns details about the school's policies and facilities for disabled pupils.

55. Following the last inspection in December 1996, an action plan was prepared in response to the key issues identified for future improvement. Most of the points contained in these key issues have been successfully addressed. They are as follows:

56. **Key Issue 1:** *'Review the topic approach to the teaching of mathematics to ensure that all aspects of the subject are taught on a regular basis, helping pupils to retain mathematical knowledge and skills over time.'*

57. Initially, the school sought advice from the local education authority and modified teaching methods. However, since the previous inspection the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy have been published. The school has responded well and has adapted its planning in mathematics to reflect these recommendations within the context of a small school. All aspects of mathematics are taught regularly. Pupils are making good progress and achieve standards above those expected nationally at the end of both key stages.

58. **Key Issue 2:** *'Further improve the pace of work in mathematics lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1, for example by increasing the number and reducing the length of lessons.'*

59. Again, advice was sought from the local authority and, as with Key Issue 1, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy replaced the improvements underway. Mathematics is taught daily at Key Stage 1 and is taught well. However, the length and timing of the lessons sometimes results in some pupils having difficulty in sustaining concentration.

60. **Key Issue 3:** *'Improve the quality of the presentation of written work, especially in Key Stage 1.'*

61. The school responded to this key issue by placing an increased emphasis on handwriting, particularly at Key Stage 1. Work scrutinised during the course of inspection varied widely in the quality of its presentation, but in general most pupils take care with the way in which they set out their work.

62. While improvement in terms of the school's success in addressing the key issues has been good, the overall improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Standards have risen in English, mathematics and science, and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have all improved. Attendance is significantly better. The curriculum, previously satisfactory, is now good, and the school's partnership with its parents is excellent.

63. The school development plan is satisfactory. It sets out clear priorities for the future development of the school. The plan is securely based on evaluations of previous progress and contains adequate detail of targets to be achieved during the current year, though medium-term and longer-term targets are far less detailed. The plan is not easy to follow, since the user constantly needs to cross-reference the plan against the large amount of supporting information, but it is nevertheless a useful working document for the school.

64. The only significant shortcoming in the school's monitoring procedures lies in the way in which the quality of teaching is monitored. Funding for additional teaching support, which in many small schools is used to free the headteacher for a short period of time each week, is used to reduce the size of teaching groups at Bladon School. This initiative considerably benefits the pupils and enables Years 5 and 6 to be taught separately from Years 3 and 4 for most of their English, mathematics and science lessons. However, the result of this decision is that the headteacher is only able to monitor the quality of teaching in an informal way, through discussions with teachers and occasional glimpses of what is being done in the other classrooms. The school's 'link adviser' carries out formal monitoring, followed by written reports to the school. The weaknesses of this system are that visits to classes are far less frequent than those made by a headteacher and that some staff might not be observed. Inspection findings show that while the quality of teaching is good overall and while no unsatisfactory lessons were observed, there are nevertheless significant differences in the quality of teaching.

65. The school makes very good use of its resources. Staff are effectively deployed and all available space is very well used. Very good use is made of the resources of the local community, including the skills and talents of its governors and parents. Good links with local schools through the 'Woodstock Partnership' help to enrich the curriculum for pupils and provide a forum for professional development for teachers. Finances are carefully managed and the effects of spending decisions are closely monitored. Issues of 'best value' are always pursued. For example, recent work carried out to upgrade the school's computers was evaluated and found to have shortcomings; the installation has now been changed. The hard working secretary efficiently manages the day-to-day administration of the school and plays a wider role in supporting school initiatives such as securing a grant to help to re-instate the school garden. This additional funding has been very well spent.

66. The school constantly has to work hard to overcome the limitations of its building. The lack of proper facilities for physical education are overcome by transporting pupils to nearby schools, while the lack of good facilities for cooking is resolved by one of the learning support assistants who uses her own kitchen. Storage space is at a premium, and all available areas are very well used for this purpose. Overall, stocks of books and equipment are adequate and enable all subjects to be taught effectively. The recent investment in information technology is giving pupils access to the Internet for research and is broadening their horizons through contact with children in a school in the United States. The school is well staffed, and all teachers regularly attend in-service training in a variety of subjects to ensure that their skills are constantly updated.

67. A wide range of indicators, including the quality of teaching, the improvement since the last inspection, the quality of leadership, and the good standards achieved, show that the school is effective. Although unit costs are high, they are typical of most small schools and therefore the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- review medium-term and long-term planning in religious education to ensure that it reflects the newly revised Agreed Syllabus;
(Paragraphs: 33, 166)
- ensure that the headteacher has opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching provided by both permanent and part-time staff, and use information gathered to share good practice and provide support where needed;
(Paragraphs: 29, 35, 64)
- review the length and timing of teaching sessions within the school day;
(Paragraphs: 13, 18, 28, 33, 59, 75, 98, 150, 165)
- ensure that the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements.
(Paragraphs: 51, 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15	53	32	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	59
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4

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	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	4	6	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	4	3	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (86)	90 (86)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (86)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	4	5	9

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	8	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	89 (60)	89 (60)	100 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	8	9	9
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	89 (60)	100 (60)	89 (100)
	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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	57
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.4
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	29

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	119040.00
Total expenditure	117000.00
Expenditure per pupil	2295.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	802.00
Balance carried forward to next year	2842.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	39	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	53	0	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	47	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	63	8	3	0
The teaching is good.	53	45	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	58	8	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	53	5	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	68	29	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	58	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	42	21	11	0

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

68. Children enter the school at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Most children come from the adjoining private playgroup. They are introduced to the school through regular pre-visits and quickly settle into school life, making an effective transition from home to school. On entry, the majority of children achieve standards above those expected for children of this age. In most cases, they have already achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes in the six areas of learning for young children, as defined by the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Baseline assessments, carried out shortly after admission, confirm inspection judgements. At the time of the inspection there were no children in the Key Stage 1 class under the age of five. Inspection evidence comes from scrutiny of past work, discussions with staff, and observations of pupils recently of statutory school age. If, as occasionally happens, children enter the school and have not yet achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes, teaching focuses on the six areas of learning. Children receive a good, stimulating learning experience that caters for their individual needs. By the end of their time in reception all children, including those with special educational needs, have made progress in all areas of the National Curriculum and their attainment is above what would normally be expected. Teaching is good and there is effective support from the learning support assistants.

69. Children enjoy coming to school and make very good progress in the acquisition of social skills. They behave in appropriate ways and are aware of right and wrong. They are taught to be independent and to show respect for others by caring and sharing. Children show initiative and are able to select an activity or resource independently. They are motivated and work to achieve success. They treat resources and the environment with care, and demonstrate their concern for living things. Personal and social skills are carefully developed, for example in dressing and hygiene.

70. Language development and communication skills receive a high priority so that children learn to listen attentively, speak clearly and extend and enrich their vocabulary. They confidently take part in discussions and talk about their own experiences and those of others. The daily 'literacy hour' helps to increase their vocabulary, enabling them to express thoughts and convey meanings. Children enjoy books and read simple text fluently and with understanding. They communicate meaning through the writing of simple words and phrases. Some words are spelt correctly and others are recognisable. The children show increasing control over the size, shape and orientation of writing.

71. Mathematical development also receives a high priority. During the daily ‘ numeracy hour’ children are taught to count, add and subtract numbers up to ten, to read and write the numbers involved, and to recognise and make repeating patterns, counting the number of objects involved. They learn to describe properties and positions of simple two- and three-dimensional shapes, and to measure and order objects by direct comparison. Children sort and classify objects, justifying their methods. They develop mathematical language such as, ‘bigger than’ and ‘next to.’ They develop mathematical reasoning and ask the questions: ‘What will happen if...’and ‘Why?’ during activities such as considering the behaviour of a programmable toy.

72. Through gymnastics, dance, movement and games children learn to move confidently and imaginatively with increasing control and awareness of space and of others. They use balancing and climbing apparatus with increasing skill and have access to a play area with large apparatus. Children use a range of large and small equipment with increasing skill. They handle appropriate tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. They handle apparatus carefully and safely and show an awareness of space and others. Along with pupils in Years 1 and 2, children under five go to the swimming pool once a fortnight.

73. Children develop a good knowledge and understanding of their environment. They talk about their families and about past and present events in their lives. They describe where they live, their environment, and the purpose of some of its features. All children are familiar with the layout of the school and the people within it. They describe the internal and external environment, using geographical and directional words, and explore features of living things in the wildlife garden. Children make use of technology, such as tape recorders, programmable toys and computers, to support their learning. They explore and select materials and equipment to employ skills such as cutting, joining, folding and building, and have firm ideas about what they want to achieve.

74. Under fives confidently explore sound through music and speech. The use of music in assemblies contributes to this aspect of their development. They work with unpitched percussion instruments in producing a musical accompaniment. Children know which instruments are most appropriate for the sounds that they wish to express and the feelings that they wish to communicate. They use a widening range of materials, suitable tools and other resources to express ideas. They explore colour, texture, shape, space and form in two and three dimensions through music, art and physical activities. The children recognise basic colours, such as red, blue and yellow and know how to mix colours. In role-play, they use their imagination well. They respond positively to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel.

75. Leadership is good. Children are encouraged in a sensitive and warm manner to accept responsibility for themselves and their own learning. Resources are of a good quality and are used well. Good use is made of the teaching area. However, the accommodation is very cramped. The small classroom dictates the way that the furniture can be arranged and restricts movement. The way in which the timetable is currently arranged also creates constraints. Younger pupils are very tired when sessions are too long, for example when a literacy hour lesson is followed immediately by numeracy work.

76. On the positive side, the strong family atmosphere encourages learning. The links with the community are very beneficial, particularly the strong links with Blenheim Palace Education Centre and with the community volunteers who come into school to help pupils to change their library books and to hear reading. Good teaching and the use of community facilities help to overcome the restrictions of the building to some extent. Pupils' progress and achievement are regularly assessed and built upon. Overall, the provision for pupils of reception age is good.

ENGLISH

77. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests all pupils achieved the national target of Level 2 in reading, but the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 was below average. In writing, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 was above average, but no pupils achieved Level 3. Overall, attainment in reading and writing was above the national average. When compared with that of similar schools, with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, attainment was below average in reading and average in writing.

78. The previous inspection report commented that attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 was in line with the national average. Since then, test results in reading have been significantly above average and, despite a decline between 1998 and 1999, remain above average. Results in writing have remained consistently above the national average. Inspection findings confirm these trends. The attainment of pupils now approaching the end of Key Stage 1 is above what is expected nationally.

79. The 1999 test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 was well above average, while the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was about average. When compared with those of similar schools, standards were average.

80. The previous report noted that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in English was above the national average. Since then, results have fluctuated wildly from year to year. This is because the group of pupils tested each year is very small and an increase or decrease of just one grade by an individual pupil can significantly alter the overall score. The attainment of pupils now approaching the end of Key Stage 2 is above what is expected nationally.

81. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use speaking and listening skills with confidence across the curriculum and make use of a wide range of vocabulary. The literacy hour is used well to develop their speaking and listening skills in word and sentence level work. Pupils show application and enjoyment. They listen attentively and respond readily to questions and discussions. In the shared reading sessions, they listen carefully to the teacher, often joining in the familiar text. They volunteer opinions, knowing that the teacher and pupils will respect their contribution. The very good relationships and the ethos of the school enable pupils to speak with confidence within a group situation.

82. Pupils enjoy reading, and by the end of the key stage most are able to read accurately and fluently and with good expression. About 30 per cent of pupils read above the expected level. All pupils are able to use appropriate strategies to decipher challenging words. They recall the main points, answer literal questions and read a variety of texts independently. They enjoy books and describe events with enjoyment and humour. Pupils in Key Stage 1 increasingly use books as a source of information. They understand the use of alphabetical order and are able to use an index or glossary. A significant majority of pupils can explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction.

83. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are able to write in complete sentences and many can present their ideas in a series of sentences. In most cases, sentences are correctly punctuated with capital letters, full stops and speech marks. Spelling of basic words is generally secure. From reception age, pupils are taught to write a simple plan for a story, including the key elements of character, setting and plot. During the inspection, pupils in the Key Stage 1 class read the book, 'Over in the meadow' together and, after discussing it thoroughly, wrote a story plan. With help, children of reception age filled in a prepared framework of a plan. They decided what was going to happen and tried writing one or two sentences themselves, then they illustrated their work. Pupils in Year 1 were able to decide on a title, the setting, the characters, how the story will develop and how it ends. Year 2, unaided, completed the planning sheet with their own ideas. In the plenary session, they explained that they found the most difficult part to be the development of the story in that they were tempted to start writing it out in full, instead of giving an outline. The task was challenging. This good training for pupils of this age leads to good quality writing in Key Stage 2.

84. In Key Stage 2, pupils regularly use discussion in pairs, small groups, and whole class situations to express opinions and evaluate their own work and the work of others. The positive ethos of the school gives them confidence to express their ideas, knowing that they will be respected. The great majority of pupils speak very clearly, with good intonation, and use vocabulary which is appropriate to the occasion. They listen very well to stories and explanations and to the views of others.

85. About a third of the pupils read very fluently. They grasp the essential points, talk about the key characters, predict what might happen next, and use the text to support their view and read texts that are at an adult level. Many pupils get deeply involved in reading a whole series of books, such as the Narnia series, or books by a particular author, such as Tolkien. Pupils research confidently, both from books and on the Internet, thereby extending what they learn in school. They use multi-media computer discs to obtain information on a variety of topics. They are taught to skim and scan, in order to grasp the essential points from a variety of sources and to compare and contrast them. Good use is made of home-school reading diaries, with parents and teachers commenting on pupils' progress and, in the case of older pupils, using them as a reading record. These diaries are regularly signed and checked and contain helpful comments. The system is an effective dialogue between home and school, which contributes well to pupils' progress.

86. Pupils' attainment in writing is above average because of good teaching at both key stages and the sound base which is established in Key Stage 1. Pupils' extended writing is good. Several pupils in Years 3 and 4 were so keen on writing an extended adventure story in several chapters that they stayed in at break time to do so. Pupils in Year 6 write extended stories, which are carefully developed in paragraphs and very well constructed. They are helped by the fact that their teacher marks their work very well. Much of their work is annotated and a National Curriculum level is assigned for purpose and organisation, style, punctuation, and grammar. For example, there are comments such as *'You have structured what you have written well (Level 4/5); punctuation is good (Level 5), but make sure that you include brackets and hyphens; style is good (Level 4/5), but try and mix long and short sentences; remember all the connecting words that you can use, however, although etc.'* These enable pupils to know what standard they have reached and how they can improve. Pupils write formal and informal letters with ease and write interesting poems on a variety of subjects. The range of writing for different audiences is well developed and interesting, and includes persuasive writing, play-scripts, character description and diary writing. Higher attaining pupils have a wide and sometimes rich vocabulary, which enables them to write both imaginatively and reflectively.

87. Pupils respond well to good teaching and the high expectations of work and behaviour. They are usually very attentive and apply themselves to their work with enjoyment and enthusiasm. Pupils remain on task, sustain concentration and work well both independently and collaboratively. They form very constructive relationships with teachers, other adults and with one another. Pupils are courteous, trustworthy and show respect for resources. They respect other people's differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs. They are independent learners, showing initiative in their selection of resources and taking responsibility, in many cases without being asked.

88. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is good in three-quarters of lessons and satisfactory in one quarter. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In Key Stage 1, all of the teaching is good. In Key Stage 2, two-thirds of the teaching is good and one third is satisfactory. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they show technical competence in teaching the basic skills. Lessons are well planned, with clear objectives and differentiated tasks for the various age groups within the class, enabling pupils to make good progress within the lessons. Teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour and provide a good level of challenge for pupils. Questioning is used well to target individual pupils and to provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate methods and self-confidence. Class routines are well established and help pupils to learn effectively because they know where books and equipment are kept and what is expected of them. Consequently, they get on with their work without needing help. Time and resources are generally used well. They are used more rigorously when pupils are made aware of how much time they have for each assignment. Teachers give clear explanations and instructions,

and pupils are clear about what they are expected to do. The use of the plenary session to assess the knowledge and understanding of the group and to review progress is variable. In good sessions, pupils themselves assess their progress and decide on what steps to take next; other sessions are too brief and pupils have little input. Pupils who are given the opportunity to evaluate their own work do so thoughtfully and critically. Work is marked regularly. Marking is encouraging and usually offers indications of what pupils need to do to make further progress. Pupils' presentation of their work is variable, and many less able pupils present it in an untidy manner, with no date or heading and little indication of what it is about.

89. The subject is well managed. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been effective. The progress of pupils is clearly charted, in order to identify under-achievement and to predict National Curriculum levels. Across the curriculum, standards of literacy are good. Pupils write in different styles to meet the demands of the curriculum and use subject vocabulary well. In all subjects, the use of technical language is encouraged, and this is well supported by displays of key words. A portfolio of assessed and annotated samples of pupils' work provides a good reference point for teachers when making assessments. Information technology is not used very much in the literacy hour, although pupils make good use of the Internet and CD ROMs when adapting their literacy skills to other subject areas. There is a small but well stocked library, which is well used. All classes have the opportunity to use it on a regular basis and to change their books once a week with the help of community volunteers. Library skills are developed during class sessions. The facilities are widely used by pupils and have a positive impact on the development of reading and research skills.

MATHEMATICS

90. Results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that all pupils achieved the national target of Level 2 in mathematics, but the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. When these results are compared with those of similar schools, with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards are very high in terms of the school's performance at Level 2, but well below average at Level 3.

91. Key Stage 2 results for 1999 show that the proportion of pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 was well above the national average, while the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was about average. When compared to similar schools, the proportion of pupils at Level 4 was above average, but the proportion achieving Level 5 was below average.

92. These results need to be viewed with some caution because of the very small number of pupils tested. Since each pupil represented 11 per cent of the total, the movement of just one individual to a higher or lower level would significantly alter the results. This effect is evident when results over the past four years are examined. There are considerable year-on-year variations because small differences in the attainment of small groups of pupils are magnified when compared to the national trend.

93. Inspection judgements are that attainment in mathematics is above average at the end of both key stages. The proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 who are likely to achieve Level 4 is about average, but underlying attainment is above average because a significant number of the pupils in line to achieve Level 4 are also likely to achieve Level 5. There are no significant differences in attainment between girls and boys.

94. Standards have improved since the previous inspection, when attainment at the end of both key stages was judged to be in line with national expectations.

95. As a result of good teaching and their very good attitudes to learning, within a well-planned curriculum, pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1. For example, younger pupils develop skills in adding single digit numbers, initially by using counting apparatus to help them. They then move on to more complex work with the introduction of two digit numbers, and by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils in Year 2 are competent in basic addition. They can accurately add two-digit numbers and understand that multiplication tables are a quick way of carrying out multiple additions. Skills in using money are developed in a similarly systematic way. Younger pupils learn to count and shop with coins, and by the time they are in Year 2 they have a good understanding of the value of coins and are able to correctly make amounts such as 20p in a variety of different ways. Older pupils confidently solve simple problems, for example: *'If I have 19 flowers in the garden and pick eight of them, how many are left?'* They have a good knowledge of many two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes and can produce analyses of three-dimensional shapes by counting the faces, edges and corners. Simple data-handling skills are well developed, enabling pupils to produce careful bar graphs about the weather.

96. Overall, pupils continue to make good progress at Key Stage 2. Progress is best in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' mature attitudes to learning and their confident independence are significant factors underpinning their good levels of attainment. Skills in using and manipulating numbers are improved. Younger pupils become confident in counting on or back in tens and hundreds from different starting points and work hard to learn their multiplication tables, with many showing quick recall of the two, three, four, five, six and ten times tables. Pupils use their tables knowledge well in Years 5 and 6 as they confidently solve problems involving division or long multiplication. Skills in halving or doubling are also well developed, so that pupils in Year 6 are able to use these skills in mental mathematics sessions to solve problems such as 49×15 . They explain their method of first multiplying 49 by ten and then adding on half of the answer to make the final total. The very good emphasis placed on investigative work helps pupils to understand that one of the key skills in mathematics is the ability to identify patterns of numbers; this is done well, for example in an investigation about triangular numbers. The important skill of estimation is also very well developed throughout the key stage as pupils learn to make sensible estimates of length, weight and capacity. As pupils get older they become more skilled in applying skills in estimation to everyday calculations. For instance, pupils in Year 6 who were calculating the floor area of the classroom made a sensible estimate of the likely answer before multiplying measurements expressed as decimal fractions. This estimate helped them to place the decimal point correctly in their answer. By Year 6, many pupils have good levels of skill across elements of the mathematics curriculum. These range from working with fractions, percentages and ratios to the measurement of angles, using protractors, and the construction of triangles by using compasses.

97. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported. They follow the same curriculum as their classmates, with work very well matched to their differing abilities. They have positive attitudes to their work and make good progress.

98. Most pupils enjoy their work in mathematics. They are keen to learn, and develop an ability to concentrate for increasingly lengthy periods of time as they progress from reception to Year 6. The very good 'family' relationships within the school are evident in the way in which pupils work very well together irrespective of gender. As pupils develop in maturity, their attitudes and behaviour improve. Overall, attitudes and behaviour are very good. They range from good in Key Stage 1, where a very small number of pupils have difficulty in self-control, to exemplary in Year 6, where pupils behave responsibly and work independently with confidence. On some occasions, for some pupils, the length and timing of mathematics lessons at both key stages results in difficulty in concentrating and restless behaviour. A key issue for action from the previous inspection was the reduction of the length of lessons at Key Stage 1; although some progress has been made to this end, some of the lessons at this key stage are too long.

99. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is never less than good at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, two lessons were observed, both of which were good. At Key Stage 2, half of the lessons were good and half were very good. Particular strengths of the teaching of mathematics at both key stages lie in teachers' subject knowledge, their technical competence in teaching basic skills, and their high expectations of what pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils are given a secure grounding in the subject, achieve good standards, and grow in confidence as they learn to transfer their skills to other areas of the curriculum. Where teaching is best, teachers sustain a crisp pace to learning and match work to pupils' abilities so well that work becomes not only very challenging but also just achievable. Teaching of this quality was observed in a Year 5 and 6 lesson about fractions and ratios. The lesson started and ended with mental arithmetic work that made considerable demands on the pupils, both in terms of speed and of the difficulty of the calculations. During the main part of the lesson, less able pupils competently worked on ratios, while the most able overcame challenging problems involving the scaling down of measurements. All pupils were engrossed in their work; they persevered and worked hard before finally succeeding in meeting the teacher's high expectations.

100. A key issue raised in the previous inspection was coverage of the mathematics curriculum, and the school has successfully addressed this. The curriculum is well balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The school has successfully adapted its planning to strike a good balance between the way in which the curriculum needs to be planned in a very small school and the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers skilfully ensure that all pupils at each key stage experience similar coverage of the curriculum, but at very different levels. For instance, when pupils in the Key Stage 1 class were given the task of weighing everyday objects, Year 1 pupils used non-standard units such as counters while Year 2 pupils weighed in grams. Very good links are made with other areas of the curriculum. Skills in numeracy are regularly practised in subjects such as science and design and technology when pupils take weather readings or design mathematical games. Conversely, skills in subjects such as information technology are well used to support work in mathematics.

101. The subject is well managed. Resources are adequate. They are well stored, easily accessible, and generally in good condition.

SCIENCE

102. At the end of Key Stage 1, the school's results of the 1999 teacher assessments of seven year olds show that all pupils achieved the national target of Level 2 in science. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was well below the national average. When compared to similar schools, with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 was very high, but was well below average for Level 3.

103. At the end of Key Stage 2 a similar pattern emerged, with all pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 in the tests, but the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was well below average. Comparisons made against similar schools were the same as those made at Key Stage 1, with a high level of achievement at Level 4 but below average performance at Level 5.

104. However, conclusions drawn from these results may not be reliable, since the groups of pupils assessed at the end of both key stages were very small. This means that a considerable percentage change can occur through a movement of one level by a single pupil. Similarly, an analysis of trends in results over the past four years shows considerable variations, since the year-on-year differences in the attainment of a very small number of pupils are magnified when each individual pupil represents a large proportion of the overall total.

105. Inspection findings are that attainment is above average at the end of both key stages and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There is no significant difference in attainment between girls and boys. In Key Stage 2, the proportion of the small number of Year 6 pupils who are in line to achieve Level 4 by the end of the academic year is average. However, a significant number of these pupils are likely to achieve the higher Level 5 and, for this reason, attainment overall is above average. These findings represent an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2.

106. A particularly good feature of science is the way in which the subject is managed and the curriculum is constructed. Good use is made of an additional part-time teacher at Key Stage 2. This enables pupils to benefit from working in smaller groups, with Years 6 and 5 being taught together by one teacher and Years 3 and 4 by another. The curriculum is based on this structure, with work being planned in two-year cycles throughout the school. Work at Key Stage 2 is particularly carefully planned so that the same theme is followed in both teaching groups at very different levels. For example, when working on the topic of 'rocks and soil', pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced satisfactory analyses of soil samples, while pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in learning about the composition of the earth. They confidently named the inner core, outer core, mantle and crust, and used a modelling medium to make good three-dimensional models of the earth. Segments of these models were then cut out to show the different layers.

107. At Key Stage 1, work in science is well integrated with other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils' mathematical skills of sorting helped them in classifying items of electrical equipment, while skills in drawing and colouring were used to produce posters warning about the dangers of electricity. Recording tasks enable pupils to practise their handwriting, while elements of history were included in pupils' discussions about developments in ways of lighting our homes. At this key stage pupils make good progress in developing skills of scientific enquiry and learn to make simple hypotheses as part of their work. For example, following a walk in the school grounds to examine plants, pupils suggested possible conditions needed for plant growth. These hypotheses are then tested out through planting a variety of seeds in different media. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good understanding of the growth of plants and can name the main parts of a plant. They group plants according to simple criteria and are able to describe the basis for their groupings. Good use is made of practical activities as pupils develop an understanding of simple electrical circuits, and all pupils are able to light bulbs by correctly connecting them to a battery with wires and clips. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to decide whether or not a circuit is likely to work, by studying a drawing of the ways in which connections are made.

108. At Key Stage 2, science is also well integrated with other areas of the curriculum. For example, numeracy skills are well used when pupils gather data, and their confident use of a spreadsheet program on the computer helps them to quickly record weather readings. Throughout this key stage, skills of scientific enquiry develop further. The best progress is made in Years 5 and 6 as a result of the pupils' greater maturity and independence, together with good quality teaching. Pupils of all ages and abilities are able to offer hypotheses and to draw simple conclusions from their work. Older pupils in particular have a good understanding of the principles of fair testing. By the time they are at the end of the key stage, pupils achieve good levels of understanding in areas of science as diverse as the study of light, the basic classification of materials, and investigative work such as methods of separating materials from solutions through filtration.

109. Pupils enjoy their work in science. Their positive attitudes contribute greatly to the quality of learning. The presentation of work in their books varies considerably from pupil to pupil but is generally of a good standard.

110. Evidence from the two lessons observed, together with examination of teachers' planning, discussions with teachers, and a scrutiny of pupils' work, indicates that overall the quality of teaching is good. Of the two lessons observed, one was good and the other satisfactory. Where the teaching was good, the teacher shared the purpose of the lesson with pupils at the start of the activity and linked this with a reminder of what pupils had already learned in previous lessons. This introduction heightened the interest of the pupils and made them keen to learn more. Good classroom routines and high expectations of pupils' behaviour resulted in a good working atmosphere in which pupils were able to learn without disturbance. The teacher's secure knowledge of the subject and good assessment of pupils'

prior knowledge enabled her to set achievable challenges for all. Pupils responded well to these challenges and concentrated hard on their activities. At the end of the session, the teacher made very good use of the plenary session to consolidate through well-directed questions what the pupils had learned. Where teaching was less successful, but satisfactory overall, the objectives of the lesson were not clearly shared with pupils at the start of the lesson and opportunities for pupils to offer hypotheses were missed. As a result, pupils were less focused on what they had to do and, for some, sustaining concentration became a problem.

111. Resources for science are adequate. They are well stored, in good condition, and easily accessible.

ART

112. No art lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. However, evidence from samples of pupils' work indicates that, throughout the school, pupils make satisfactory progress and, at the end of both key stages, achieve standards expected of pupils of similar ages. Standards achieved are broadly similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

113. At both key stages good links are made with other areas of the curriculum. For example at Key Stage 1, pupils produced simple designs inspired by work in science about light, and carefully cut them out from black and white paper.

114. The way in which the results were displayed is a good illustration of reflective symmetry in mathematics. At Key Stage 2, well-coloured pictures created from interlocking shapes are a good example of mathematical work in tessellation. Well designed brochures advertising Blenheim Palace combined skills in design and technology and art. Finely detailed 'mobiles' of life cycles of insects and of butterflies took their inspiration from the Butterfly House at the palace and combined studies of science, art and design, and technology. Good quality 'tie-dye' work was stimulated by the study of water in science.

115. The curriculum in art is satisfactory and gives pupils a good range of experiences in the use of various media. It is enhanced through the good use made of the locality to provide stimulus for pupils. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 produced colourful paintings of Blenheim Palace and its contents. This theme is further developed through simple polystyrene prints of houses, showing good detail and definition. At Key Stage 2 pupils produced some well-proportioned watercolour landscapes of the palace lake and the grounds, as well as carefully-drafted, detailed observational drawings of the palace façade.

116. Pupils identified as having special educational needs enjoy equal access to the curriculum and make satisfactory progress.

117. The satisfactory development of pupils' skills in art appreciation is evident through their careful interpretations of work by famous artists as diverse as Monet, Constable, Gauguin and Hokusai.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged no lessons in design and technology were observed during the course of the inspection. Inspection evidence from planning, discussions with teachers and close scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and achieve standards normally expected of pupils at the end of the key stage. Skills develop more rapidly at Key Stage 2, and by the end of this key stage pupils achieve standards above those normally expected. This represents an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when standards were reported as being average at the end of both key stages.

119. At Key Stage 1, the good integration of work in all subjects includes design and technology. For example, activities such as cooking also involve pupils in the practical application of skills in mathematics as well as including elements of the science curriculum. Early design skills are developed through activities such as the production of Christmas cards. These are further enhanced by the good application of technology to produce simple sliding mechanisms, for example to make a figure of Father Christmas appear out of the top of a chimney.

120. Much of the evidence of achievement at Key Stage 2 came from the high quality work displayed at Blenheim Palace in celebration of the school's achievement in winning the 1999 Duke of Marlborough's Heritage Education Prize. Inspired by tapestries at the palace, pupils in Years 3 and 4 produced good, neat pieces of weaving using wool of different colours. The samples showed uniform tension in the weave and were well finished. Taking a tapestry theme of a special event in the life of the first Duke of Marlborough, pupils in Years 5 and 6 produced very high quality pieces of needlework to illustrate aspects of their lives at school. They used a variety of stitches to illustrate activities such as information technology, mathematics and sports. Other pieces of work displayed included very good, detailed mathematical games produced by all pupils at Key Stage 2 and based on the theme of the Blenheim maze. Good work in designing was evident from photographic evidence of the preparation of a 'Millennium Tapestry', which is now displayed at the school and to which all pupils contributed. The tapestry is well made and consists of a number of colourful scenes made from carefully sewn pieces of fabric.

121. As at Key Stage 1, work in design and technology at Key Stage 2 is closely integrated into other subjects. For example, the use of 'product disassembly' techniques to look at the construction of toothpaste cartons led to the development of mathematical skills of measuring and the construction of nets of solids as pupils made their own containers. The construction of water-powered models such as water wheels gives pupils a simple understanding of hydraulic power, while good use is made of the expertise of a local firm to demonstrate to pupils the way in which a wind turbine works.

122. Pupils identified as having special educational needs are thoroughly integrated into design and technology activities and receive the same curriculum entitlement as all other pupils. They make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2.

123. The school has to work hard to overcome the difficulties presented by the shortage of room for design and technology activities, particularly cooking. On occasions, this aspect of the curriculum is taught off-site in one of the houses locally. Resources are adequate, but because of the very limited amount of storage space there is only a small selection of constructional apparatus available for pupils at Key Stage 1.

GEOGRAPHY

124. Owing to timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe geography being taught in Key Stage 1. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of work, teachers' long- and short-term planning, photographic evidence, current displays, and discussions with staff and children. Inspection evidence shows that pupils achieve standards that are above those normally expected of seven and eleven year olds.

125. At Key Stage 1 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. As part of their two-year cycle of work, they learn to identify the physical and human features of Struay in the Scottish islands. Their maps of the island show the main features and places mentioned in the story of 'The Two Grandmothers'. Pupils identify how the island differs from the mainland and know about the types of transport used on the island. They recognise that the world extends beyond their own locality and illustrate the similarities and differences between Bladon and Struay by making a collage. They correctly list the similarities and differences under the headings 'houses', 'physical landscape', 'people' and 'traffic'. Pupils use reasoned arguments and discussion to make an informed personal choice of what they would like about living on a small island and what they would miss. They study the local area, their school and the village, and draw plans and maps. They look further afield to Blenheim and Woodstock, and examine aspects such as physical features, houses and amenities.

126. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn about the Bible lands, in conjunction with their studies in religious education. As part of their four-year cycle of work in geography, they learn about a contrasting area in Britain and study a developing country such as Mozambique, making full use of information from the Internet. They study the grounds of Blenheim Palace, the school locality, local weather and world weather, entering their information on the computer by using a spreadsheet program. At the time of inspection the topic studied concerned water in the environment. In Key Stage 2, pupils worked out for homework how much water they use during a week at home. For example, they calculated that the pupils in two classes and their families use 95 litres of water a week just for cleaning their teeth. The pupils show an awareness of the need to conserve water, because of climatic changes and the increase in population. Drawing on their literacy and artistic skills, they produce well thought-out leaflets which encourage people to save water.

127. Pupils use their knowledge of a recent visit to a local reservoir to support their work. In one of the lessons seen, pupils looked at the causes of the floods in Mozambique and their consequences. They used their literacy skills to draw up an article about the floods for a newspaper and scanned items in recent newspapers to ensure that they had the main facts. Pupils talk knowledgeably about erosion and deposition. They develop their enquiry skills and focus on geographical questions, such as 'How did it happen?'

128. Geography is taught as a separate subject, which at the same time has links with topic work. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of 'place' and to use geographical enquiry skills. They are taught to consider geographical issues through problem-solving, testing hypotheses, using primary and secondary evidence, and reviewing their findings. Pupils carry out fieldwork wherever possible and are encouraged to search for similarities and differences. Information technology is used to record, plot, design and store new data on transport, weather and building surveys. The aim is to build up a bank of useful data for other pupils to use in the future. Pupils have recently undertaken a study of nearby Rowel Brook. They studied samples of soil and water, measured the depth of the water, the height of the bank, and how fast the stream was flowing, and produced graphs of the results

129. The teaching is good and is based on secure subject knowledge. Pupils are encouraged to link cause and effect and to reason for themselves, and they are challenged, in order to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Teachers use questions skilfully to enable all pupils to learn effectively. As a result, pupils apply intellectual effort to their work, develop their ideas, and learn for themselves. Class routines are well established and there are high expectations of work and behaviour. This results in attainment which is above average, in that pupils are able to undertake geographical investigations by asking and responding to questions and by using a range of geographical enquiry skills and resources.

130. Leadership is good and promotes good practice throughout the school. The long-term plans are comprehensive and ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are continuously and progressively developed. The scheme is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study. Resources are good and are managed well. Good use is made of information technology.

HISTORY

131. During the inspection no lessons were observed in history because of the way in which the timetable was arranged. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of work, teachers' long- and short-term planning, photographic evidence, current displays, and discussions with staff and children. At the end of both key stages pupils achieve standards above those normally expected nationally.

132. At Key Stage 1 all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning about some aspects of British history. They develop their knowledge of chronology and their historical enquiry skills by learning about aspects of the periods covered, from a range of sources of information such as books, maps, plans, photographs, artefacts, newspapers, visits and visitors. Pupils know about some of the important changes over the past seventy years, in their own locality and nationally. Starting with a personal history of themselves, they develop a simple time line. Pupils know something of what life was like in their parents' time and in their grandparents' time, using the recollections of their families and local people as a primary source of information. They

learn about the history of their village and its connections with Blenheim Palace, which they visit frequently to learn more about its buildings and history. Within the village, pupils look at buildings and note the loss of the shops and the fact that there is no bank. They know some simple facts about life at home during this century and about changes in transport. Within their two-year cycle of work they learn about important events such as the Great Fire of London and famous people such as Florence Nightingale. The early development of a sense of chronology and sequencing of different events provides pupils with a sound basis for more challenging work by the end of the key stage.

133. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress. In their four-year cycle of planning, they learn about the effects of the Roman invasion on Britain. Pupils recognise that some people choose to leave the place where they were born and others are forced to leave. They begin to understand why the Romans invaded Britain, and look at evidence that has survived of the Roman settlement of Britain. Pupils know where the Vikings came from and why they invaded Britain. They know some of the changes that the Vikings made and that the origins of many place names in the north-east of Britain are of Viking origin. As a millennium project, they made a residential visit to Ironbridge, to look at inventions and transport over the past two hundred years. During the course of the visit pupils visited a variety of 'period' shops and businesses and a school, and learned the modern value of seemingly small denomination coins in Victorian times. Following this visit, two very impressive folders of their work were produced. Pupils also learn about the Mayans, Ancient Greece, the Tudors and the two Great Wars. They continue to learn about local history through visits to the church, the village, Woodstock, and Blenheim Palace, where their prize-winning work is currently displayed.

134. History is taught as a separate subject, which at the same time is closely linked to topic work. Pupils are encouraged to develop communication skills both orally and in written form, and they use the Internet well for research purposes. They use evidence from both primary and secondary sources and draw conclusions from it. Pupils are taught to frame historical questions, such as 'Why did it happen?' and 'Is it true?' and understand a range of historical terminology.

135. Though no teaching was actually seen, it is clearly based on secure knowledge. It provides pupils with first-hand experience of sifting evidence and gives them opportunities for them to reason, compare and contrast. It caters for the abilities of all pupils, in that work is differentiated and often imaginative. Pupils are encouraged to research information from a number of sources. Work in class is well supported by relevant homework. The ethos in which history is taught promotes good learning, and pupils respond well. They enjoy history and talk with enthusiasm about what they have learned.

136. Leadership is good and promotes good practice throughout the school. The long-term plans are comprehensive and ensure the step-by-step development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The scheme of work is based on the National Curriculum programmes of study. Resources are good and are managed well, and good use is made of information technology. The strength of the subject lies in its emphasis on pupils learning from first-hand experience as far as possible.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

137. Information technology (IT) is a rapidly developing subject in the school. Each class has two computers, and these are used effectively. Pupils make good progress in all National Curriculum programmes of study. Standards are above national expectations at both key stages.

138. In reception, pupils begin to develop control and measurement skills, using a programmable floor robot. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand how to program a device to follow instructions. They make the robot move set distances and back again, and record their instructions, using agreed notation. Pupils in Year 2 look at computer printouts of these instructions to draw a square and discuss whether they can use the same format to write the instructions to draw a rectangle. Pupils respond positively to the task set. They become engrossed in their work and make effective use of the time available. They respond to mistakes by learning from them and pursuing different approaches. Year 1 pupils attain at the national target of Level 2 in controlling the robot by entering instructions and describing what happens. Pupils in Year 2 also attain above the level expected for their age. They all achieve Level 3, in that they control the device to achieve a planned outcome by giving a series of instructions to draw a rectangle and other shapes, entered in sequence one at a time.

139. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use information technology to generate and communicate ideas in different forms, such as writing stories. However, word processing does not usually take the form of composition of text on screen, but merely the production of a 'best copy' of a story which has already been drafted. Pupils confidently produce tables of results and create pictures or pieces of music. During the inspection, pupils of reception age successfully used a musical composition program. Having first looked at symbols on the computer screen, they drafted out their idea for a tune on paper and then, with help, copied their tune on to the computer and listened to it. They then discussed their tunes and gave reasons for their preferences.

140. Key Stage 1 pupils learn to handle information. They confidently explore information held on information technology systems, such as the multi-media computers. Year 2 pupils use information technology to store and save data and to access information. For example, they enter information into a pre-prepared database about members of the class and then search databases to find information. Their attainment is above average.

141. Lower Key Stage 2 pupils develop their keyboard skills well and are confident in using computers. They know how to load a program, and enter their text using various styles of fonts. These are changed by using the bold, italic underlining functions. Pupils confidently use graphics programs, print out pictures, and save to disc. They enter data into computers and then retrieve the information in a variety of forms, such as graphs and pie charts.

142. Pupils in Year 5 use their word processing skills for a variety of purposes. For example, they process reports for the 'Daily News', write information for a millennium book, and produce a newsletter for parents. Together with pupils in Year 6, they produce information leaflets about various aspects of Blenheim Palace. By the end of the key stage, pupils have developed their word processing skills further. They know how to enter text and manipulate text by changing font size, style, and colour. They know many of the functions of the word processing program used, and confidently demonstrate the use of the spell checker. However, opportunities to further develop skills are missed because pupils seldom compose on screen, but merely process 'prepared' notes.

143. Key Stage 2 pupils confidently use a program designed to develop skills in control and monitoring. They are able to use functions such as 'repeat' to shortcut strings of instructions, and create images on screen and manipulate them, for example by rotating them. However, this element of the curriculum is generally restricted to the use of a single program, and pupils at Key Stage 2 have limited experience of simulation packages and sensing technology. Control technology was well used to produce some of the high quality work on display at Blenheim Palace. On the theme of the palace maze, pupils had mapped out movement through a maze, and had written and printed out the directions.

144. During a visit to Blenheim Palace, pupils interviewed visitors and put the information obtained on to a spreadsheet program. Graphs and pie charts were then produced to show information about different modes of transport or the facilities used at the palace. Pupils who use a program for recording weather readings make further good use of spreadsheets.

145. Pupils are familiar with the functions of a graphics program, including 'flood fill' and 'spray' techniques. They are confident in the use of clip art. They use a digital camera to photograph one another, then download the pictures and size and position them on the screen, before adding text.

146. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident users of the Internet. They all have an e-mail address, and they send messages internally from classroom to classroom, or externally. They correspond with a school in the United States, the contact having been established by a learning support assistant. They regularly use the Internet for research purposes, for example to research Mozambique regarding the flood disaster.

147. Teaching overall is good, leading to good learning by pupils. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In the best lessons, the teachers understand the software well and are able to intervene effectively to help and to introduce pupils to it. Good quality questioning is used to extend pupils' understanding. Learning support assistants are well briefed and promote learning very well, as happened in Year 2 when pupils were encouraged to program a floor robot to draw a rectangle. Pupils are encouraged to correct their own mistakes, and

teachers encourage the use of information technology across the curriculum as a tool for learning. They keep good records to inform them of pupils' achievements, and this helps them to plan the next activity. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good, enabling them to offer good explanations. In the best teaching, there is effective intervention by teachers to improve the standard of work or to support pupils through difficulties. Teachers carefully develop pupils' basic skills by breaking down the learning into small, achievable parts and then providing time for all pupils to consolidate their skills. Resources are deployed well, and good use is made of the time available to maximise pupils' learning.

148. Pupils respond very well and strive hard to complete the tasks. Many have computers at home and are very interested in the subject. The school recognises this in its planning. Teachers carry out regular monitoring and evaluation of work in information technology and are preparing for the introduction of the revised curriculum at the start of the next academic year.

MUSIC

149. During the inspection, one lesson was seen at each key stage. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve standards normally expected of seven and eleven year olds.

150. At Key Stage 1, most pupils listen attentively to music and respond to its mood, although two or three pupils were tired and unsettled during the lesson observed. This was because of the timing of the lesson after a swimming session. Pupils listen to rhythm and clap in time to the beat. They listen carefully to a 'Follow my leader' activity on a tape and then clap the different rhythms very well. They know the names of the instruments played on the tape such as the drum, tambourine, sleigh bells and guiro, and point to the instruments on the carpet, as they recognise them on the tape. Pupils correctly explain the difference in sound between instruments such as the triangle and the Indian bells. They listen to the echo of the Indian bells and suggest that the teacher will hear the echo longer, because she is the closest to it. After listening to music played by the teacher on the piano, pupils join in the chorus, singing tunefully and in unison. Most pupils co-operate well, although a few of the younger ones are sometimes reluctant to part with their instruments.

151. During a lesson in Key Stage 2, different groups of pupils composed a fanfare. They thoughtfully discussed what made the ceremonial or festival quality of the music. They recognised the characteristic use of timbre and texture, and were challenged by their teacher to compose a fanfare based on different combinations of just a few notes. Several groups successfully demonstrated their tunes after working very well together to compose them. The pupils discussed them sensibly and made useful comments and suggestions about ways in which they could be improved. Pupils also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of the instruments used and the 'texture' of the music. They listened carefully to each other, sustained interest, and showed respect for the contribution of others. One group produced a good rhythmic pattern, which other pupils commented upon. Pupils are generous in their appreciation of the efforts of others. They improvise rhythmic and melodic ideas, explore, create, select, combine and organise sounds in musical structures, and use sounds and structures to achieve an intended effect. They express ideas and opinions, using musical knowledge and vocabulary to support their views.

152. Music makes a contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It encourages them to reflect upon the mood of the music, to work together socially, and to listen to a variety of styles of music from different cultures and from well-known composers and performers. Music is helping to develop pupils' skills in literacy through speaking and listening, performing and composing, and writing about different composers and a variety of music. Work in music links closely with numeracy as pupils count beats and discover repeating patterns. Pupils add sounds to their work when using information technology.

153. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with some good teaching in Key Stage 2. A visiting specialist teaches music lessons. Lessons are well planned and build on pupils' prior learning. The pace is brisk and pupils are actively involved in the lesson. The ethos promotes learning, and pupils are clear about the purpose of the lessons. Pupils are given opportunities for active involvement in composing and performing activities. They experience these in groups and as a class in annual school performances, at events such as harvest and Christmas. A range of strategies is well used to try to ensure that all pupils work with confidence and purpose. Teaching develops pupils' ability to make positive comments in relation to the musical element. Resources are appropriate for pupils of all abilities and are used well. The good relationships promote learning. Music successfully develops pupils' creativity and aesthetic understanding. A recent performance of 'The Silver Pearls' included singing, drama and accompaniments on the theme of water. This linked closely with pupils' current studies about water, and pupils also listen to music on the theme of water, for example 'Water Disc' and 'Yosemite'. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 compose their own water music and decide which instruments are appropriate to perform it.

154. A useful scheme of work, on a four-year cycle, provides a basis for pupils to make progress. There are some opportunities for pupils to extend their musical experience through learning an instrument after school. Currently, about a fifth of pupils learn the recorder and one pupil learns the clarinet. Resource provision is satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. During the course of the inspection, it was possible to observe only one physical education lesson and therefore no overall judgement can be made about the quality of physical education teaching. Other inspection judgements are supported by further evidence obtained from discussion with teachers and scrutiny of planning.

156. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and, at the end of both key stages, achieve standards normally expected of pupils of similar ages. Inspection findings are broadly similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1996.

157. The school works hard, in partnership with parents and local schools, to overcome the difficulties presented by the lack of a school hall and playing field, and it succeeds in providing its pupils with a broad and balanced physical education curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. All pupils need to travel to nearby schools and to the swimming pool in Witney for most lessons. In addition, whenever appropriate, good use is made of the grounds of Blenheim Palace nearby for some sports activities. The school works closely with other schools in 'The Woodstock Partnership' to share resources and expertise. For example, schools within the partnership share sets of basic equipment for different team sports as part of the national 'Top Sport' initiative.

158. The single physical education lesson observed took place in the sports hall at The Marlborough School in Woodstock. Very good use was made of the large indoor space to give Key Stage 2 pupils the opportunity to develop their hockey skills. Good routines were evident in the way in which pupils warmed up before the lesson began. Pupils' very good behaviour, together with their good skills in listening, enabled the lesson to progress at a good pace despite the difficulties presented by the acoustics of such a large building. The teacher placed good emphasis on the correct way to grip a hockey stick and made clear her expectations of the way in which the ball was to be controlled. The pupils responded by concentrating hard as they practised walking and then running with a ball. Pupils in Year 6 showed good levels of control, and many were able to move at speed with the ball in close contact with their stick.

159. Attainment in swimming is above average. All pupils swim once a fortnight. The good foundation of 'water confidence' and early skills in swimming, started in Key Stage 1, is further developed at Key Stage 2. Records provided by the school show that by the time they are in Year 6 all pupils have achieved the national target of being able to swim 25 metres and many are working on higher level skills in water safety.

160. The enthusiasm and expertise of parents is very well used in enabling pupils to experience competitive sports activities. Football and netball teams, run by parents, compete regularly against local schools. There is good equality of opportunity, with girls and boys taking part in both activities. Good quality coaching has resulted in the football team and the netball team winning the local league. Once every two years, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given good opportunities to take part in a range of outdoor and adventurous pursuits during a residential visit to The Woodlands Centre in Glasbury.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. Only one lesson was observed during the course of the inspection. Additional inspection evidence was obtained from discussions with teachers, scrutiny of pupils' work, and analysis of curriculum planning. This evidence indicates that, at the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected in the local Agreed Syllabus and similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection.

162. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, experience a broad curriculum in religious education and make good progress throughout both key stages

163. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a good understanding of some of the important features associated with Christian worship, and by the end of the key stage they can name a number of the features found in a church, such as the lectern, font and Bible. They understand that there are other major religions as well as Christianity and they know about other prayer rituals, such as those observed by Muslims. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge of Christianity has broadened as they learn more about the important festivals of Easter and Christmas, and about other festivals associated with saints of the Christian faith, such as St . Valentine. They know about the place of artefacts and symbols in relation to both Christianity and Islam and have a developing knowledge of rituals such as those associated with the Jewish celebration of a bar mitzvah.

164. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching can be made on the basis of a single lesson observation. In this lesson, at Key Stage 1, the teacher carefully planned the lesson around the theme of artefacts for Christian worship, so that each of the three year groups within the class was given separate and suitably challenging activities. There were good opportunities for pupils to learn and to practise skills in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, while Year 2 pupils needed to use skills learned in literacy lessons to complete their activity, pupils of reception age learned more about the use of scissors and glue when producing 'stained glass windows' made from coloured cellophane stuck on to a black paper framework. As the basis for the lesson, the teacher made good use of pupils' observations during a previous visit to St. Martin's Church. This ensured that all pupils were very attentive and keen to answer during the introduction to the lesson, when the church visit was reviewed. The teacher gave clear instructions about the activities and checked that pupils understood before they started their tasks. The result of the clear instructions, together with the good day-to-day routines established within the classroom, was that pupils set to work confidently and without fuss.

165. While almost all pupils in the class were very well behaved, the immaturity of a very small minority became evident as the lesson progressed. One or two pupils found it difficult to put up their hands before answering and tended to call out, while two or three had difficulty in concentrating on their tasks for longer than a few minutes at a time. Since the teacher knows all pupils very well she was able to minimise the disturbance caused by this very small minority. However, the length of the session made her task more difficult.

166. The local Agreed Syllabus, on which all curriculum planning is based, has recently been revised and a new version was put in place from the start of the current academic year. Unfortunately, the school's curriculum plan for religious education has not yet been reviewed to reflect the changes made in the Agreed Syllabus, particularly at Key Stage 2. As a result, some of the work scrutinised in pupils' books does not match the new requirements of the Agreed Syllabus.

167. The subject is well managed, and good use is made of the resources of the local community, including the expertise of parents, in adding variety and interest to the curriculum.