

INSPECTION REPORT

SWINLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Ascot

LEA area: Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Unique reference number: 109843

Headteacher: Mr M Byrne

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jane Wotherspoon
22199

Dates of inspection: 8 - 11 May 2001

Inspection number: 191797

Full inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: All Souls Rd
South Ascot
Berkshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Hazel Broad

Date of previous inspection: February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22199	Jane Wotherspoon	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Equal opportunities; Design and technology; Music; History.	Leadership and management; Teaching and learning; Standards.
18565	Moira Eminton	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Care of pupils. Partnership with parents; Financial efficiency; Staffing accommodation and resources.
1085	John Laver	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Geography; Information and communication technology; Physical education.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Assessment.
8056	Howard Probert	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Science; Religious education; Art; Special educational needs.	Learning opportunities; Provision for the curriculum and pupils' personal development.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	9
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	10
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	14
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

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

23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than average, with a roll of 141 boys and girls aged from five to eleven. There are more boys than girls and the imbalance is most noticeable in Years 2 and 5. About 13 per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, though most are fully competent in English. The school's population is derived from a socially mixed area, though some pupils travel from further afield. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is around the national average. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection but the proportion of pupils with special educational needs has risen. Thirty one per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs; this figure is above the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need and five pupils have been assessed and are awaiting a statement. The number with special needs is high in some classes and year groups. Pupils join the school in the term after their fifth birthday; most transfer from a nearby nursery school but a few have had no early experience of education. A high proportion of pupils join, or leave, the school at other times of the year. The pupils are organised into five mixed age classes, although pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in year groups for literacy and mathematics. Attainment on entry to reception is broadly average this year, but there are variations in this pattern from year to year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many strengths. Standards are rising by the end of Key Stage 2. Most pupils achieve well, making good progress in response to good teaching. Pupils with special educational make satisfactory progress, but at times during the day these pupils need more support. Leadership and management are good; the headteacher provides strong leadership. The school has undergone considerable staffing changes in the last two years, which had an unsettling effect. The staff team is now in a good position to make further improvements to provision. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher provides a clear direction for school improvement.
- Provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good.
- Pupils behaviour is good and they get on well with each other.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- There is a positive ethos in which all pupils are valued.
- The school makes good efforts to involve parents in the life of the school and in pupils' learning.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The use of time, to redress the balance of the curriculum.
- Provision for the pupils in the Reception class.
- The level of specific and general support for pupils with special educational needs.
- Provision for music, in order to raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997, when it was judged to be 'a school with many strong features'. Since then it has made a good level of improvement. Despite staff changes the school has forged ahead and tackled the key issues identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good; resources have been improved and standards have risen in information and communication technology; assessment procedures are sharper and are helping teachers to set targets for pupils, thus raising expectations of what pupils can achieve; a greater level of challenge is provided for more able pupils. Against a background of a mobile school population and increasing levels of special educational needs, the school has maintained its strengths.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	C	B	B
mathematics	B	C	B	B
science	C	E	D	D

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

This table shows that in tests in the Year 2000 standards were above average in English and mathematics but below average in science. Standards in the current Year 6 are average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. The fluctuation in the results is due to the differences in abilities of pupils from year to year, which is more noticeable when the year group is small.

Key Stage 1 test results in 2000 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Half the pupils in this year group, now in Year 3, have special educational needs. Attainment in the current Year 2 is broadly average in English and mathematics. In both key stages, pupils have good speaking skills; they are articulate and confident speakers. By Year 6, the presentation of pupils' written work is a strength.

Standards in music are erratic. Although singing is satisfactory and several pupils play musical instruments, general classroom music lessons do not offer enough opportunities to develop skills in composing, listening, and appraising music.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in the great majority of lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and friendly. There is a small number of pupils who have difficulty conforming to the school expectations of behaviour. However, behaviour at assemblies is exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and this contributes to an ethos in which pupils feel secure and valued. Pupils' personal development is good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are similar to the national average but unauthorised absence is too high.

Very good attitudes towards school, very good relationships and good behaviour underpin the secure and welcoming environment in the school. There is a high level of mutual respect. The oldest pupils display responsible attitudes towards helping others. A small number of parents persist in taking their children out of school for holidays.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 quality of teaching is good overall; this represents an improvement since the last inspection, when most teaching was satisfactory. Of the 29 lessons seen, teaching fell below a satisfactory level in only one; this was in music. In all other lessons teaching was at least satisfactory, and in almost 70 per cent it was good. In over a quarter of lessons at Key Stage 2, teaching was very good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, particularly towards the end of Key Stage 2. A particular strength in the teaching is the good quality of questioning that develops pupils' thinking and clarifies their understanding while extending their speaking skills; these factors contribute much to pupils' learning in other areas of the curriculum. There is some lack of confidence and expertise in teaching music. The school meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily within the constraints of the resources available. By and large, pupils are well managed and teachers have high

expectations of their behaviour and response. The purposeful working atmosphere is underpinned by the very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Pupils are interested and well motivated, maintain a good level of concentration, and have a genuine desire to improve and succeed; this helps them to learn at a good pace. They take pride in their work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad but slightly imbalanced. Reception pupils need more opportunities to learn through play.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory within the resources available. There is limited additional support for many of these pupils. The number of pupils with special educational needs in some classes is a challenge to their teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory support is given to pupils at an early stage of developing English. Pupils are integrated well and generally achieve at a level similar to that of their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for social and moral development is a key strength. Assemblies provide good opportunities for spiritual development but opportunities within the curriculum are missed. Cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils are well cared for throughout the day. Adults are sensitive to their needs.

The school has been successful in implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies, but at the expense of time spent on some other subjects. A good range of visits and visitors within the community and further afield enhances provision. The structure of the day results in small blocks of time that are not always used efficiently by teachers. Pupils in the reception class do not get enough opportunities to learn through active, practical activities, to choose independently, or to initiate their own learning. Restrictions of space and resources are a limitation of the provision. Day-to-day assessment is good and teachers know their pupils well. The use of assessment information to set appropriate targets for pupils and to influence teaching strategies is still developing, but is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. The school works hard to involve parents in school life, though not all respond in a productive way. Parents greatly appreciate the regular information and the ready willingness of staff to be available to meet them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides strong leadership, underpinned by a clear philosophy of education. Other key staff fulfil their roles conscientiously, giving good informal support to their colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are well informed and have a good knowledge of the schools' strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates outcomes, then plans and takes appropriate action to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Priorities for spending are well considered, and the school seeks to gain value for money when planning expenditure.

The number of teaching staff is adequate but the school would benefit from additional support staff with expertise in helping pupils with special needs and/or pupils of reception age. The accommodation places restrictions on activities for the youngest pupils and is a drain on the budget. In the past, governors have relied too heavily on the leadership of the headteacher, but there are signs that their role in asking challenging questions and in setting priorities for the school is developing soundly. The school improvement plan is well constructed and identifies appropriate priorities for improvement, but at present it spans only one year.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Based on the parents questionnaire returned and on views expressed at the parents meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are happy at school. • Staff are approachable when parents have queries or concerns. • The school has high expectations of pupils. • Teaching is good. • Pupils behave well and are learning to become responsible and mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of after-school activities. • Consistency in giving and marking homework. • Support for pupils with special educational needs.

The inspection team endorses parents' positive views and agrees that more support for pupils with special educational needs would be beneficial. The range of after school activities, though small, is similar to that in many schools and is in keeping with the size of the school. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning in class.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Baseline assessment of pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception class indicates a broadly average picture in the current year. However, there are variations from year to year, and some year groups enter with a lower than average attainment profile. Reception children make good progress in personal social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning. Most pupils are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage at the end of reception year.

2. Overall, standards are rising gradually year on year at the end of Key Stage 2 in line with the rise taking place nationally. When account is taken of pupils' starting point they are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress during Key Stage 2. In comparison with those of similar schools, standards are improving.

3. Results in Key Stage 1 tests in 2000 were lower than those of the previous year and show an apparent decline over the last four years. Results were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics and well below the results achieved by similar schools. Few pupils achieved standards above the expected level in reading, and no pupils did so in writing or mathematics. However, the last two cohorts, now in Year 3 and Year 4, contain a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. At Key Stage 2, test results improved overall on those of 1999 and they were above the national average in English and mathematics but below the average in science. The main reason for the disparity between the subjects was the proportion of pupils achieving above expected levels to gain Level 5. In English and mathematics this proportion was above the national figure, and in science it was below.

4. In both key stages there are slight variations in the results of boys and girls, but this is a complex picture that does not indicate a significant trend from year to year. In some years boys do better than girls and in other years the reverse is true. The small size of year groups means that comparisons with national figures, between year groups and between boys and girls, must be viewed cautiously. In addition, the school population is very mobile and pupils leave and join the school at various times during their school career. This causes difficulties in making comparisons over time and in setting school targets. For these reasons the school prefers to set individual targets and has now set up a comprehensive system for monitoring individual progress over time.

5. The standards seen during inspection were mainly in line with national averages in reading and writing, and above average in speaking. Pupils are on course to meet the school's targets at the end of Key Stage 2. In mathematics, the majority of pupils attain the levels expected for their age and an increasing proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 is beginning to achieve at the higher levels. In science, standards of work seen are good by the age of eleven and the school predicts that there will be an improvement in test results this year. In both mathematics and science, good attention is given to developing pupils' investigative skills, and this is enhancing their ability to apply their knowledge to problem solving activities. Overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress by the end of Key Stage 2, in relation to prior attainment. Some evenness in the standards

achieved and the progress made through Key Stage 2 reflects the current learning needs of the year groups. In Years 3 and 4, a significant proportion of pupils have special educational needs and the progress of these pupils is generally slower, though satisfactory. Learning is accelerated towards the end of Key Stage 2, where there is some particularly good teaching of the core subjects. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in response to the challenges set them, which represents an improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.

6. The quality of speaking is one of the strengths of the school. Pupils speak clearly and confidently in class, particularly when responding to questioning by the teacher. In Key Stage 2, these good skills are used effectively in question and answer sessions which help pupils to explain their thinking and understanding. Reading and writing skills are broadly average at the end of both key stages. By the age of seven the range of writing includes stories, poems and 'diary' entries, all of which show a developing vocabulary and increasing accuracy in letter formation and basic punctuation. The range of writing is extended well in Key Stage 2, and pupils learn to vary the style of their writing quite effectively to consider the purpose and audience. They research topics, write stories for younger pupils, and write concise instructional accounts, for example when recording the results of scientific experiments. Pupils also produce a range of play scripts and poetry which display a growing ability to use expressive language for effect. Higher achievers have good comprehension skills and become more adept at using technical vocabulary. Lower achievers still make frequent errors in basic punctuation and spelling. Throughout the school the quality of presentation of pupils' work is generally good and indicates a high level of care and pride.

7. In mathematics, pupils know by heart the number facts appropriate for their age. They use mathematical vocabulary correctly in response to the emphasis placed on this by teachers. They explain how they work out calculations mentally and begin to use what they know to help them solve every day problems. Older higher attaining pupils are developing a range of strategies for tackling open-ended investigations and approach their work in a systematic way. In science, pupils learn to carry out increasingly complex experiments; they develop good scientific knowledge from across the breadth of the curriculum and use this to make predictions. They observe their results carefully and record these neatly and accurately.

8. Standards in other subjects are mainly in line with those found nationally. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now broadly as expected. Provision for music is patchy and this is reflected in the standards achieved. Although pupils sing well and some pupils receive instrumental tuition and achieve a good level of skill, provision in class music is weaker. Pupils generally have too few opportunities to develop their skills in composing, playing instruments and evaluating their work. There are good examples of artwork being produced by the oldest pupils. In history pupils are gaining a good factual knowledge, but some pupils in the lower part of Key Stage 2 who have special educational needs have difficulty communicating their knowledge through writing.

9. The small proportion of pupils at an early stage of speaking English is given sound support, and they quickly grasp sufficient English to function adequately. The majority of pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully competent in English and achieve in line with their peers. Some of these pupils are among the higher attainers.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress where they have an appropriate level of support. This is achieved in literacy and numeracy, where the pupils are taught in year groups, and when there is focused support from the learning assistant. However, when pupils are taught in large mixed age classes in Key Stage 2, mainly during the afternoon sessions, the teachers are challenged to meet the wide-ranging needs. The small number of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are generally managed well and given sensitive support, but there are times when the quality of their learning is affected by their attitudes and behaviour despite the teachers' best efforts.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes towards the school are very good, and behaviour is good. These factors contribute to a secure and welcoming environment, complemented by very good relationships. As a result pupils are enthusiastic about coming to school and taking part in activities. The good behaviour and positive attitudes noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

12. Pupils' behaviour in the majority of lessons is good and at times it is very good. Pupils respect their teachers and are keen to do well. They also get on well with each other, for example co-operating sensibly when sharing the use of computers, and this assists their learning. Pupils generally respect each other's views, and listen well to one another. An example was seen in a Year 5 English lesson, where pupils who were learning to put together a persuasive argument on the duration of playtime listened to each other with respect and good humour. There are pupils who display challenging behaviour and find it difficult to conform consistently to the school's high expectations. Just occasionally their behaviour and lack of attention interrupts their learning and they need sensitive but firm management. These pupils are helped by the good model of behaviour from their peers. Equally noticeable is the good behaviour around the school generally, and outside the school buildings. Behaviour in assemblies is exemplary. At break times and lunchtimes pupils play sensibly, are polite, and respect their surroundings. There is a very low incidence of exclusions. Pupils feel secure in the school. A strong feature is the very good relationships which exist between pupils and between pupils and adults, and which give pupils the confidence to discuss a range of issues with adults.

13. The positive attitudes of pupils are reflected in other ways also. Older pupils, in particular, show a very responsible attitude towards helping others and making the school an orderly and happy community, whilst also fulfilling the school's aim of developing the pupils' self-esteem. For example, older pupils act as monitors of other classes during wet weather breaks. They carry out such tasks as helping with the library, picking up litter, and managing music in assemblies. Older pupils also read to younger pupils.

14. Attendance in the school is satisfactory overall. The level of unauthorised absence is above the national average, but the school has tried to address this and does follow up absences to the best of its ability.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good overall; this represents an improvement since the last inspection when most teaching was satisfactory. Of the 29 lessons seen, teaching fell below a satisfactory level in only one; this was in music. In all other lessons teaching was at least satisfactory, and in almost 70 per cent it was good. In over a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 2, teaching was very good.

16. Teaching of Reception pupils is satisfactory. The key strength is the day-to-day organisation of pupils and the high expectations of their behaviour. Positive attitudes are promoted and pupils settle well to life in school. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught soundly, though the teacher is stretched to pitch whole class sessions at a level appropriate to the wide-ranging needs and experiences of these pupils and to the Year 1 pupils in the class.

17. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Staff have adopted well the principles of both national strategies, which are fully embedded in daily practice. Across the school, teachers successfully promote oral language development and use suitable methods and strategies to develop good speaking and listening skills. These contribute much to pupils' learning in other subjects. Numeracy skills are taught well, and some opportunities are taken up in other subjects. Teachers match the work carefully to the different needs of groups of pupils by, for example, giving more detailed writing frames to less confident pupils in order to give more structure to their writing. A good feature of mathematics lessons is the way in which teachers assess at the end of each lesson what has been achieved and then use this information when planning future lessons.

18. A strong feature in all year groups and in most subjects is the skilful use of questioning to establish and reinforce what pupils know already before introducing to them new information. This engagement in discussion promotes and supports the development of good speaking skills. Discussions in subjects such as RE are dealt with sensitivity, with respect and understanding that is conveyed to pupils, who respond in kind. This use of question and answer is usually well balanced in terms of giving information and practical activities. Just occasionally, discussion extends for too long and then pupils become restless. Questions are often pitched at different levels to match pupils' attainment and to ensure a high level of inclusion for pupils of all abilities. This helps pupils to explain what they understand, and to apply what they know to their new learning. Pupils are encouraged to have a go even if they are unsure. Teachers build effectively on pupils' answers, reinforcing what they have said and taking the questioning a stage further.

19. In the main, teachers are successful in maintaining a good, purposeful working atmosphere, which is reinforced by the very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and want to do well; they are motivated to try hard and often make good progress. By and large, pupils are well managed and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour and response. Just occasionally, as in the music lesson in which teaching was unsatisfactory, the content of the lesson does not inspire pupils and their resulting inattention is not handled firmly enough. Teachers use

praise well to promote pupils' self esteem and to foster their positive attitudes to learning. The great majority of pupils respond with eager interest and contribute well, which enables them to make good progress in acquiring new skills and knowledge. The marking of pupils' work is generally helpful and constructive, giving suitable guidance on how to improve.

20. In literacy and numeracy, work is suitably adapted for pupils with special educational needs, but this practice is less common in other subjects. Where classes are large and contain pupils of different ages, the pupils with special needs do not always get enough support to help them make as much progress as other pupils. The behaviour and attitudes of a small group of pupils have a negative impact on their ability to maintain concentration and to sustain a good pace to their work.

21. It was not possible to see all subjects being taught extensively, but in the main other subjects of the curriculum are taught soundly. The teaching seen was good in physical education (PE) and religious education (RE), and satisfactory in art and design, and history. There are some weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and confidence in music, and there is a reliance on using commercial tapes as the basis for some lessons. These are not always appropriately stimulating or inspiring, and this restricts the development of a full range of musical skills.

22. Lessons are well planned and usually contain a good mix of whole-class, group and individual work. Pupils work co-operatively in pairs or groups, and this gives the valuable opportunities to learn from each other and to value others' ideas and efforts. Activities are well structured to build effectively on what has gone before. Teachers often, though not always, tell pupils what they are going to learn, and this helps pupils to focus on the tasks. Across the school, teachers make good use of resources such as historical or religious artefacts to enhance pupils understanding and to stimulate their interest. However, time is not always used fully during the day or during lessons. In terms of efficiency, there is some variability in the use of the short blocks of time at the end of the morning sessions in Key Stage 2. This time is most often allocated to reading or spelling activities, but where the focus is not sufficiently tight there is little constructive learning.

23. The research tasks and projects set for homework are challenging and open ended, and they encourage independent learning and the use of a range of skills. Homework tasks are used well to reinforce the learning from lessons.

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

24. The quality of learning opportunities provided by the school is satisfactory. The curriculum is broad but the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has created tensions in the balance of time given to RE and the foundation subjects. The school has already identified the need to review this balance and it is recorded as a priority in the school development plan. All subjects have policies and schemes of work that are based upon national guidance. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for information and communication technology since the last inspection, with a resulting improvement in standards and an increasing impact on other subject areas. There is a need to improve the provision for music in terms of the range of work provided and the opportunities to develop more instrumental work.

25. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adapted well to suit the pupils' needs. Targets for literacy and numeracy are developed across Key Stages 1 and 2 and they are regularly reviewed. When appropriate, some high attaining pupils are able to work for part of the time in older year groups in order to give them an appropriate level of challenge. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are well structured and they include targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour that are tightly focused and measurable. These pupils make satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress when learning support and teaching support is provided. Pupils are moved to a higher or lower level of support in response to their level of progress. The increasing numbers of pupils with special educational needs is a challenge for the school, particularly in classes and lessons with mixed age groups. Overall, provision is satisfactory. The school makes every effort to ensure that there is equality of opportunities and access to the curriculum.

26. Curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection, and it is regularly revised to take account of national requirements. All subjects now have clear guidelines to support teachers' planning. The quality of the teachers' medium and short term planning is good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers work hard to differentiate their questions and tasks to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in their classes. Planning for the Reception pupils is satisfactory, with literacy and numeracy activities based on the national strategies. However, the structure of these tends to be formal and over directed by the teacher, and there are few opportunities for pupils to choose independently from a range of activities, or to initiate their own learning. Activities are planned with reference to Early Learning Goals but stem from the curriculum content for the Year 1 pupils who are taught in the same class. Opportunities for outdoor activities are limited by the lack of outdoor facilities with appropriate climbing and large play equipment. Active and practical learning is limited by the size of the room and the availability of staff support.

27. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A visiting professional teaches football, and swimming is offered on site. Pupils are also able to attend an art club and a range of visits is made in the locality and further afield. Visits have been made to the Globe Theatre, and to the National Portrait and Tate Galleries. The school has also participated in a concert for pupils in the Albert Hall.

28. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is good. There are clear policies for health and sex education, which is taught as part of the science programme in the summer term. The school nurse also plays a key role in this aspect. Information about drugs is provided as part of healthy living in terms of their wider impact on health and fitness.

29. Substantial links with the church and the vicar are effective in supporting pupils' learning. In addition to using the church for functions like the Christmas concert, the school makes good use of visits to the building in subjects like art and RE. Volunteer readers give additional support for pupils with special educational needs, and parent helpers provide a good level of practical support for the work in the classroom. There are strong links with the two feeder nursery schools and the secondary school to which most pupils transfer, and a liaison programme helps to smooth the transition between stages of education.

30. Provision for pupils' personal development is good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Cultural development is good and social and moral development are very good. The school operates as a caring community with an ethos which aims to give pupils experiences to appreciate cultural diversity, to act responsibly and to value each other's contributions.

31. Spiritual development is promoted well through assemblies, in which pupils are given time for quiet reflection. In one whole-school assembly the question "What is the most valuable thing in the world?" was considered through the story of King Midas. Pupils were asked to consider the most important things in their own lives. During the prayer they reflected upon the importance of the kind of people they are, not what they possess. The assembly took place in an environment that was conducive to worship and there was a good opportunity for pupils to consider the more meaningful and significant sides of their lives and to be aware of the darker side of life. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils during this occasion was exemplary. However, opportunities for reflection are not widespread during the day, and teachers do not always capitalise on opportunities through the curriculum.

32. The provision for pupils' moral development is illustrated by the school's behaviour policy, which specifies what is expected of pupils at the start of school, in school, during lessons, and at play and lunch times. Pupils are given very clear guidance, which is linked to a merit system. The pupils respond positively to this system, which ensures that moral development is a very good feature of the school. The adults working in the school provide admirable role models of tolerance, consideration for others, fairness and good humour.

33. Social development is also one of the strengths of the school. Pupils have opportunities to take on a range of responsibilities which contribute to the smooth running of the school and the well being of the community. Pupils in Year 6 are given responsibility to help other classes during wet break times, to ensure that the school environment is kept clean and tidy and to prepare for assemblies by managing the equipment for music. In lessons, pupils are given very good opportunities to work successfully as individuals, in pairs and as members of a group. In many subjects, pupils develop co-operative skills through group work and show that they are able to listen and to respect the ideas and feelings of others. The school organises a residential visit to the Lake District for Year 6 pupils, who speak appreciatively of the value this gives them to develop their social skills and confidence.

34. The school takes a positive role in broadening pupils' appreciation of their own culture and the cultures found in other parts of the world. In RE, pupils are introduced to a variety of faiths and cultures as well as experience the strong links with All Souls Church. The school policy interprets culture in the widest sense and this reflects the diverse range of cultures represented in the school. Pupils talk openly about the way their lives are similar and yet different. In geography, studies of India and other countries help pupils to understand and respect the similarities and differences. In art they study the work of famous artists from other countries, and appreciate the way the different lives and countries of these artists contribute to their work.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a happy, safe and caring environment for its pupils. The good quality of the support it provides is helping to improve progress and raise achievement, and is enabling pupils to take the full benefits of their learning. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection.

36. Pupils are well supported throughout the day by adults who are sensitive to their emotional and intellectual needs. The day-to-day life of the school is well organised and routines are firmly established. Learning takes place against a background which is stable and non-threatening and where everyone is valued. Parents spoken to during the inspection clearly indicated that their children feel confident and comfortable at school. Of those who responded to the questionnaire, 98 per cent agreed that their children like coming to school.

37. The pupils' personal development is effectively monitored and supported by staff who, by formal and informal systems, share a common understanding of the factors which may shape a child's learning. The very good relationships which exist in the school, between all parties, play an important part in helping individuals to achieve. Pupils with learning difficulties are helped in meeting the targets in their individual education plans, and specialists who visit the school provide additional support. However, inspection findings indicate that the amount of support is low in comparison with the number of pupils involved. Additional support for pupils with special educational needs would further assist their progress.

38. Child protection procedures are in place and are appropriately followed. The staff and governing body have a good regard for the health and safety of pupils. Inspections of the site are regular and areas for improvement are identified and prioritised for attention. Continual efforts are being made to keep the premises well maintained, and to ensure that problems are dealt with effectively.

39. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour and follow a number of well-considered and well-implemented practices which guide the life of the school. Respect and tolerance for others are concepts which are firmly ingrained. During the inspection, the very good behaviour of the majority of pupils demonstrated a rock-solid understanding of what is expected of them. Measures to promote good behaviour are used to good effect. They are applied consistently and are successful in creating a positive working atmosphere. The small number of pupils who have behaviour problems are taught well to follow the example of their peers and to understand that good work and behaviour are to be celebrated and shared by everyone.

40. Parents are very clear that the school is a place of order and tolerance. Those who responded to questionnaires, attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting, or were spoken to during the inspection have emphatically endorsed inspection findings that the behaviour of the majority of pupils is very good (notably at assemblies), and that bullying and disrespect are not to be tolerated.

41. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to remind parents about the importance to their children of regular and uninterrupted learning. In particular it has striven to reduce the level of absence as a result of holidays being taken in term time. However, the number of unauthorised

absences is still above national comparisons. Most parents diligently inform staff of the reasons for their child's absence and follow the school's systems to monitor and follow up absence. However, the school records indicate that a small number of parents persist in disrupting their education by taking their children out of school for holidays.

42. The procedures for assessing pupils' work and the use made of assessment data to improve standards are good, and this represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils entering the school are assessed in terms of what they can do and the development of their personal and social skills. Regular assessment continues during their time in school. Good procedures are in place to identify and assess pupils who may have special educational needs.

43. Most pupils' work is marked regularly, and teachers meticulously record pupils' progress in the various subject areas. In literacy and numeracy this relates to how well pupils have met the weekly objectives of lessons, and in other subjects pupils are assessed at the end of a unit of work. The most significant feature of assessment is that the school uses the information to build up a profile of each pupil's progress. Individual targets are set for each pupil and, a particularly important feature; these targets are reviewed during the year so that realistic adjustments can be made. Annual test data is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. This system of tracking the progress of pupils is still being developed, but already it is having a positive effect upon standards and the progress of pupils in their learning. For example, the assessment data is used to help determine the groupings of pupils and leads to a more effective match of work to pupils' abilities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Since the last inspection the school has maintained its good links with parents. Ninety five per cent of the small sample of parents responding to the questionnaire says they feel comfortable in approaching the school about problems. Others spoken to during the inspection week have indicated that they are satisfied with the quality of their involvement with the school.

45. Parents are kept informed by good quality information, including regular newsletters. The Parents' Handbook and school prospectus are well presented and informative. Both provide helpful points of reference for parents. Contact with new parents is good. The pre-school sessions enable parents to meet representatives of the staff and governing body, while preparing them with their children for school routines. These meetings also help to introduce parents and children to the ethos and expectations of the school.

46. The involvement of parents in the life of the school makes a positive contribution to learning. While the school accepts that a small number of parents prefer to have minimal contact, it recognises that many do play an important part in raising achievements. Regular helpers come in to school and their assistance is both valued and encouraged. Parents help with reading, swimming, the art club and information technology sessions. Members of the School Association raise valuable funds, and these are instrumental in funding the upkeep of the swimming pool. The school works hard to enlist the help of all its parents, but events organised for parents to meet the School Association and governing body informally have revealed some disinterest from a small core of parents. However, a

joint parent-school literacy venture was successful and events involving the pupils are always well supported.

47. Parents' consultation evenings, held once a term, further consolidate parents' involvement with their children's learning. They are additionally invited to meet the teacher once a term to discuss their child's progress. Parents also have informal opportunities to meet with staff at the beginning of the day, occasions which they value. Throughout the inspection, parents praised members of staff for their unlimited access and openness. Parents are also invited to meetings to broaden their understanding of the curriculum, for example on the teaching of numeracy and literacy. Their attendance at school assemblies is high. The monthly 'sharing' assembly, held in the school in the week of the inspection, illustrated a supportive, interested community. Over forty parents joined staff and children to celebrate personal success. This friendly and strongly supported event sent out a positive message of shared pride, and the success of the school in trumpeting its achievements.

48. The involvement of parents in learning is also promoted by the use of home-school books, which provide them with informal contact with teachers. Pupils' reports also give useful indications of a child's progress. The evaluative commentaries and guidance on what a child should do to improve are well-regarded instruments for measuring the child's development.

49. Parental views, derived from a statistically small sample at the parents' meeting and by way of questionnaires, have focused on a number of areas of school life which are in need of improvement. Inspection findings confirm that additional support for pupils with special educational needs would be beneficial, but they do not support the negative view of out-of-school activities or homework. The inspection concludes that homework is a prominent feature of school life and a well-considered aspect of each child's education. A wide range of homework is being offered to pupils across the school to extend the learning, which has taken place in the classroom. The number and range of after-school activities are small but are in keeping with the size of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher provides strong leadership by setting a very clear direction for the school's work. His personal philosophy of education, which combines a commitment to academic achievement with an ethos of care and support, underpins the aims of the school. These are reflected in all aspects of school life. His high profile presence around the school is influential, as is his effective model of good teaching, which has a direct impact on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

51. This hands-on approach enables the headteacher to know each child and to have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, which are analysed and evaluated well. Assessment data is analysed carefully, and procedures have been set in place to help the school identify and measure the value added to pupils over time. This is seen as essential in a small school, where small year groups and high mobility can skew the picture of attainment measured by test results. The new target setting process introduced at the beginning of the academic year has the potential for raising expectations, and is a potentially good source of information to measure pupils' rates of progress over time.

52. The deputy headteacher gives sound management support and is developing well in his new role. His management of special educational needs is very good. Records are detailed and very well organised. The number of pupils with special educational needs has risen since the previous inspection, increasing the administrative burden. Subject co-ordinators fulfil the expectations of their role as set out in their job descriptions; each has several areas of responsibility. The small size of the school enables each to offer much informal support to colleagues through monitoring planning and sampling pupils' work. Several are new to the school and /or new to their roles, and there is scope for further development of their monitoring role as they become established. The quality of teaching is now monitored satisfactorily, having been an issue at the time of the last inspection. Following lesson observations, some useful and detailed feedback has been given to staff, along with clear, targeted areas for improvement. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.

53. The current school improvement and management plan is a useful focus for development in the short term. The priorities are well considered and relevant to the school's situation. Its one-year time-span was sensible, considering the staffing situation, but the school's former practice of identifying developments over the longer term could now be restored to provide scope for the review and development of some large areas, such as the curriculum. The headteacher has a high level of responsibility for formulating the plan, for undertaking action, and for monitoring the impact of actions. There is a recognition from the chair of governors of the headteacher's extensive leadership role and of the need for governors to provide more robust support. Historically, governors have tended to rely too heavily on the headteacher for detailed information about the school and for a lead in the decision-making process. However, the most recent minutes of meetings indicate that governors are beginning to gather their own information from visits and from working with co-ordinators, and are beginning to ask challenging questions. Having passed through a state of flux, when the governing body was several members short and meetings were poorly attended, the governing body functions satisfactorily, and meets its statutory requirements. However, much work still falls to a committed and hard-working core of members, and there is a need to recruit a parent member.

54. The school has undergone considerable changes in staffing over the last two years and this has led to a destabilising effect, which was a concern expressed by some parents. Despite these changes, the school has been able to make good progress in addressing the issues raised at the time of the last inspection and improve standards by the end of Key Stage 2. This is testament to the strong influence of the headteacher to drive forward necessary improvements. The staffing situation is more settled, and the school is now in a good position to move forward with developments.

55. Since the last inspection the school has continued its careful financial management, with spending decisions matched closely to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Financial control and administration are good. The last audit of the school's finances noted that the school's internal controls were effective and accurate, and the four minor recommendations are due to be implemented imminently. In the spirit of achieving value for money, several quotations are obtained and comparisons made before financial commitments are confirmed.

56. The school's extensive grounds and swimming pool, and the high cost of its supplies and services, relative to its size, have imposed significant restraints on budget management. However, expenditure has been prudent, and spending on information and communication technology, an identified priority, has had a beneficial impact on academic achievements in this area. Anticipated reserves for the current financial year are high but reflect the school's awareness that it needs to cushion its finances in the possible event of a decline in the numbers of its pupils.

57. The level of staffing is satisfactory overall, although the number of trained support staff is low, particularly considering the higher than average proportion of pupils in the school with special educational needs. The funds allocated specifically for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately. The school makes effective use of its teaching staff, including the headteacher and a part time teacher who are sensibly deployed to enable pupils to be taught literacy and numeracy in year groups. This organisation is helping to raise standards in these subjects.

58. The school is situated on an attractive site and has a stimulating outdoor play area, which includes a swimming pool. At present, Year 6 pupils are taught in the hall for literacy and numeracy because a spare classroom houses the computer suite. Plans to adapt part of the kitchen area into a computer suite will rectify this situation. The accommodation for pupils in the Reception Year is small and the lack of a secure outdoor play area with climbing and play equipment restricts opportunities to put in place the full curriculum for these pupils. A number of classrooms are small for the large classes they contain. Resources have improved in quality and use since the last inspection; the most significant improvement is in information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school improvement and management plan has already identified the need to improve the balance of the curriculum following the introduction of the latest changes in September 2000. This is the major task facing the school. The school needs to:

- Review the balance of the curriculum to ensure that sufficient time is devoted to all subjects to enable them to be taught in enough depth, and to ensure that time is used efficiently throughout the day;
(Paragraphs: 22, 24, 99, 126)
- Improve the provision for pupils in the foundation stage (Reception) by ensuring that they have regular access to a range of practical, active, structured play opportunities both indoors and outdoors, with adequate support from trained staff;
(Paragraphs: 26, 58, 61, 66, 67)
- Improve the support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly at the times when they work in large mixed age classes;
(Paragraphs: 10, 20, 37, 57)
- Raise attainment in music by improving the range of activities to develop pupils' skills and by supporting the development of teachers' confidence and expertise.
(Paragraphs: 8, 21, 114, 115, 116, 117)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	52	28	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	141
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	13	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total	17	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	77 (70)	86 (78)	77 (70)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total	10	15	8
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	45 (93)	68 (96)	36 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	5	13	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Total	15	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	83 (68)	72 (68)	83 (76)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Total	15	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	83 (52)	72 (68)	83 (72)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Separate figures are not given for boys and girls because of the small numbers involved.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	112
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	28

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	56

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	300484.00
Total expenditure	291380.00
Expenditure per pupil	1904.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	26141.00
Balance carried forward to next year	35245.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	141
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	44	10	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	44	8	3	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	59	10	5	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	44	26	8	3
The teaching is good.	49	44	0	5	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	38	8	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	36	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	41	10	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	34	53	8	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	61	24	11	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	33	15	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	33	18	26	10

Other issues raised by parents

Parents felt that the number of recent changes in staffing had disrupted the pupils' learning.

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

60. The children enter the school in the term following their fifth birthday, in accordance with the local authority's admission procedures. At present there are 11 pupils of reception age who are coming towards the end of the foundation stage. Nine of these joined the school in January and two more joined as recently as April. Most, but not all, have had some form of pre-school experience. They join, termly, a class of Year 1 pupils, some of whom entered the school straight from nursery in September. This organisation is managed satisfactorily by the class teacher who faces a particular challenge in catering for the wide range of needs, experiences and abilities within this class. It was not possible to observe in-depth teaching and learning in all areas of learning, and so judgements are supplemented by evidence from pupils' work, from discussions and from scrutiny of planning and assessment information. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress and the majority of pupils are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning by the end of this term. Their personal, social and emotional development is above average for their age. The results of baseline assessment carried out shortly after the children start school show that attainment on entry is broadly average overall but with a wide range of abilities and experiences reflected in what pupils are able to do.

61. There is a strong emphasis on personal, social and emotional development, and the teacher is keen to encourage pupils to become independent. Literacy and numeracy activities are based on the national strategies but tend to be taught in a formal way, with few opportunities for pupils to choose independently from a range of activities, or to initiate their own learning. It is difficult for the teacher to pitch whole class sessions at a level that will serve the needs of both Reception and Year 1 pupils. More use could be made of the learning support assistant at these times. Although willing, the support assistant is not trained in working with foundation stage pupils and is heavily reliant on the teacher for guidance. Activities are planned with reference to Early Learning Goals but are based on the curriculum content for Key Stage 1 pupils. The teaching is sound overall. The room is well organised but small, and this restricts opportunities for active and practical learning for reception aged children. Provision for outdoor learning is limited, and there is no coherent indoor and outdoor experience.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. The children settle quickly and happily into the routines of school life. They make good progress in personal, social and emotional development, which is underpinned by very good relationships at all levels. There is a warm and caring atmosphere in the class and that is its significant strength. As a result, the children adapt well to the changes from their nursery provision. They are learning to be independent and responsible for small tasks around the classroom. The teacher places significant emphasis on pupils doing things for themselves and, for example, the majority are able to dress independently. They are learning to concentrate for a good length of time on a particular task. They are confident to talk about their feelings. They behave very well, and in this they have good role models in the older pupils.

Communication, language and literacy

63. Children make satisfactory progress in developing communication, language and literacy skills. Towards the end of the foundation stage the children are developing early reading skills. They enjoy books and listen attentively to stories, sometimes read to them by older pupils. They begin to recognise familiar words, and to join in with key phrases that are repeated in the “big book” stories read during literacy activities. They enjoy learning about letters and rhymes and use what they have learned in their phonics sessions in their own reading. All children are encouraged to take home reading books and this helps them to make good strides in their reading. Most children have developed sound pencil control through tracing patterns, and they form letters correctly in preparation for writing. Some copy write from the teacher’s model but there is little evidence of independent writing even from higher attaining pupils. Speaking and listening skills are developed effectively and the children are encouraged to take part in answering questions and in giving explanations; this they do confidently.

Mathematical development

64. In mathematical development, most children count a range of everyday objects accurately up to ten and some are accurate with higher numbers. They make sound progress, and the majority are on course to meet the Early Learning Goals. Higher attaining pupils are challenged well by the teacher and know and use numbers beyond 20. They are beginning to practise early addition skills, using vocabulary such as more and less. They competently compare numbers, sort objects into sets, and use numerals in their correct order. When investigating the properties of three-dimensional shapes, such as whether or not they roll, the children use the correct vocabulary to describe the shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Children are given a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world, and they make sound progress in this area. They use computers with a good level of confidence, and know how to use a mouse to control the cursor. The local environment is used to good effect to teach children about their own lives and sometimes as a stimulus for other activities. Apart from studies in the school grounds, children get the chance to visit the local church. They investigate how objects can be pushed or pulled, and observe how runner beans grow. They are encouraged to think about times gone by and how people used to live. They talk about places they have visited that are different from where they live, such as the beach. The themes are mainly based on units from the Key Stage 1 programmes of study, with sensible links made to the Early Learning Goals where relevant.

Physical development

66. Children make satisfactory progress in physical development overall, but some aspects of the provision are unsatisfactory. Children have access to the school playground and hall, which they use to develop co-ordination and awareness of space. They increase their skills in handling and

balancing balls during PE lessons and develop fine, manipulative skills by using scissors, pencils and paintbrushes regularly. However, there are limited opportunities to develop the full range of physical skills required by the recommended areas of learning for this age group. There is no access to a special, enclosed outdoor play area, and no access to a range of wheeled toys and climbing apparatus to help the children develop skills in co-ordination, climbing, balance and movement, in a situation that helps them develop personally and socially. The school has plans to strengthen its links with the local nursery school and to use the outdoor facilities available there, but at present this is a gap in the school's provision.

Creative development

67. Creative development is satisfactory overall. Children explore colour and texture, using a variety of materials, and begin to investigate how things look, feel and smell. Children have limited access to activities such as role-play which offer opportunities to use their imagination. They do, however, create collages and paint and print, using a variety of materials, and during inspection they used a range of natural materials found in the school grounds to create a sculpture.

ENGLISH

68. Standards in English are satisfactory overall. In reading and writing they are in line with the national average for pupils both by the age of seven and by the age of eleven, whilst standards of speaking and listening are above the national average. The national tests for 2000 showed that standards in reading and writing of pupils by the age of seven were well below the national average for Level 2 and above, and also well below the average for similar schools nationally. These results were in the context of a school with a small entry and with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The results of national tests in 2000 for pupils at the age of eleven were above national expectations for Level 4 and above, and better than the average for similar schools nationally.

69. Achievement of pupils by the age of seven is satisfactory. Pupils began the current Year 1 with standards close to the national average in all areas of English, and have made good progress in developing their speaking, writing and reading skills. Pupils in the current Year 2, which consists predominantly of boys, achieve at a satisfactory level in relation to their prior attainment. By the age of eleven, pupils achieve well in developing all English skills. Although pupils in the current Year 6 achieve standards which are average in relation to national expectations, they achieve well in relation to prior attainment. Progress in learning throughout the seven to eleven age range is uneven, because of the varying ability level of the small cohorts in each year group, the relatively high proportion of pupils who change school, and the relatively high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in some classes, particularly Years 3 and 4.

70. There is not a significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls in any particular year group. Pupils with special educational needs mostly make satisfactory progress in developing their English skills, in all year groups. When they receive specialist support, which is comparatively rarely, these pupils sometimes make good progress. Most pupils with English as an additional language achieve at a rate commensurate with that of their peers; the small minority who are not

fluent in English receive appropriate support.

71. By the age of seven, pupils develop good speaking and listening skills. The quality of speaking is one of the strengths of the school. Pupils speak clearly and confidently in class, particularly when responding to questioning by the teacher, as seen for example in a Year 2 class in which the teacher was emphasising the conventions of recording direct and indirect speech. Reading skills are in line with the expectations for seven year olds nationally. Higher achieving pupils read with accuracy and enjoyment. Lower achievers have fewer strategies for recognising the range of words they encounter. Writing skills are also in line with national expectations for seven year olds. By the age of seven the range of writing increases to include stories, poems and 'diary' entries, all of which show a developing vocabulary and increasing accuracy in letter formation and basic punctuation. The quality of presentation of pupils' work is generally good and shows satisfactory progress between the ages of five and seven.

72. Between the ages of seven and eleven the majority of pupils continue to display good speaking skills, not only in answering questions but also in sustaining conversations, with a good command of Standard English. Higher achievers read a range of fiction and non-fiction appropriate to their abilities, and with accuracy and expressiveness. They also talk confidently about their reading. Lower achievers are less confident and fluent. By the age of eleven the range of pupils' writing is reasonably extensive. They show the ability to do research into a topic such as the animal kingdom and to record the results accurately, and to write a concise instructional account on a topic such as "How to make a sandwich". They learn to vary the style of their writing quite effectively, for example by writing stories for younger children to read, and by putting together 'mini-books' with careful attention to structure. Pupils also produce a range of play scripts and poetry which display a growing facility in the use of expressive language, and they learn the skill of summarising the plot of a text such as 'Macbeth'. Higher achievers show good comprehension skills and become more adept at using technical terms and they develop the ability, for example, to accurately alter a text from the first to the third person. Lower achievers still make frequent errors in basic punctuation and spelling.

73. The overall quality of teaching in English is good. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils between the ages of five and seven. The teaching of pupils between the ages of seven and eleven is always at least good, and it is very good in one out of two lessons. The good or very good teaching is characterised by several factors common to all year groups, but most notably evident is the combination of good questioning and explanation, which teachers use effectively to extend and reinforce pupils' understanding. This was very evident, for example, in literacy lessons for older pupils who were being taught how to write persuasive arguments. In most lessons teachers set clear objectives, making the desired outcomes clear to pupils. They then employ a range of effective teaching strategies which help pupils improve their knowledge, skills and understanding, such as matching the work carefully to the different needs of groups of pupils. For example, less confident pupils are given more detailed writing frames to give more structure to their writing, whilst higher achieving pupils in Year 4 learning about compound words are encouraged to use reference books to expand their vocabulary. Computers are sometimes integrated effectively into literacy lessons, so that pupils develop their word-processing skills alongside their capacity to write imaginatively. Teachers mostly succeed in maintaining a good, purposeful working atmosphere, reinforced by good relationships between pupils and between pupils and teacher, and this motivates pupils to try hard and often make good progress. Work done in class is supplemented by some challenging research tasks and projects, which encourage independent learning.

74. In the few instances in which the teaching is less effective, though still satisfactory, the

teacher's instructions are not made clear enough to pupils. For example, in one lesson younger pupils were confused about whether they were writing a story or focusing upon writing dialogue. Whilst most pupils take considerable pride in the neat presentation of their work, which is a strong feature of the school, sometimes this leads even more able pupils into working at a relatively slow pace.

75. Overall, the literacy strategy is being effectively put into practice throughout the school, although progress in developing language skills is more restricted in classes with large concentrations of pupils with special educational needs and who receive limited or no support. The literacy strategy is having a good effect, for example, on attainment in history, and the development of good verbal skills increases pupils' confidence in most subject areas.

76. The English co-ordinator is able to monitor some teaching in English and thereby share good practice. The marking of work in English is generally constructive and helpful in making pupils aware of how well they are doing and how they can improve further, whilst precise targets are set for individual pupils to improve their language skills.

77. Variability in attainment levels from year to year makes meaningful comparison with the situation in 1997 difficult. However, in so far as there is now some more challenging work set for higher achievers, more good teaching in English, and more monitoring of teaching, there has been good progress overall since the previous inspection.

MATHEMATICS

78. The standards of achievement in mathematics during the inspection were found to be broadly in line with national expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 and slightly above the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 but better in Year 1 than in Year 2, where there are a large number of boys. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have made good progress. The results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in the Year 2000 show that in comparison with those of schools nationally and similar schools, standards were well below the national average. At Key Stage 2 the overall performance in mathematics was above the national average and above the results of similar schools. Trends over recent years suggest that the standards have been consistently below the national average in Key stage 1 and consistently above the national average in Key Stage 2. When interpreting these results there are several factors to take into consideration. There are relatively small numbers of pupils in each age group and there is a relatively high level of pupil mobility for such a small school. In addition, there has been an increase in the numbers of pupils with special educational needs. In spite of all these factors there is evidence that the pupils made satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Contributing factors to the improvement in progress at Key Stages 1 and 2 are the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the arrangements for year group teaching during Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and good progress when additional support is available and pupils with English as additional language make progress in line with that of other pupils in their classes.

79. In Key Stage 1 pupils are gaining a sound grasp of the number system. For example, Year 1 pupils count, order and sequence numbers and learn to add and subtract 10 to any number up to

100. Knowledge of shapes and their properties is developing soundly as pupils in Year 2 draw lines of symmetry on various shapes and use mirrors to investigate reflections. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have secure knowledge of multiplication facts, which helps them to make calculations speedily. Their calculations are recorded neatly and accurately. They manipulate numbers mentally and are aware of a good range of mental strategies. Pupils in Year 6 were able to apply their knowledge of number when investigating sequences of numbers. In Year 5, pupils worked logically and systematically on an investigation into the possible combinations of numbers while reinforcing their understanding of decimals.

80. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 in the lessons observed during the inspection was good and the learning over time as evident from the scrutiny of work is satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching and learning is good over time. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at both key stages and in the best lessons they show real enthusiasm in response to the brisk pace and appropriate tasks set by the teacher. For example, pupils in Year 3 learning to find fractions of amounts were so engrossed in their work that they were reluctant to stop at break time. There has been an improvement overall in the quality of the teaching since the last inspection report. The Numeracy Strategy has provided a better focus in lessons, and there are better resources to support the teaching and learning. Teachers ask searching questions which assess the pupils' understanding and take their learning forward. A good feature of lessons is the way teachers assess at the end of each lesson what has been achieved and then use this information in the planning of future lessons. This regular assessment is based on numeracy strategy targets and weekly objectives from lessons, and their outcomes, are carefully recorded to provide an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil. On the basis of these records, targets are set for the end of each year and key stage. This is helping to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, and targets are modified as pupils exceed expectations. Resources are plentiful and used well to support pupils' learning. Regular homework effectively consolidates what pupils learn in class.

81. The subject co-ordinator has provided sound support and training for all staff on the use of the Numeracy Strategy, and there are clear plans for its continued development. Mathematics is securely represented in the school curriculum.

SCIENCE

82. Owing to the time constraints and the structure of the weekly timetable during the inspection it was possible to see only one lesson at Key Stage 2. Judgements are therefore based upon an examination of teachers planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with pupils and teaching staff.

83. Standards of attainment are in line with national averages by the age of seven and above the national average by the age of eleven. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were broadly average. The provision of booster classes for all Year 6 pupils has had a good effect upon standards of achievement and the range of work covered by these pupils. The school predicts that results will be higher in forthcoming tests than they were last year as more pupils will achieve and exceed the expected level. The quality and range of the work of pupils in Year 6 supports this prediction.

84. In the tests in science in the Year 2000, pupils' performance fell below the average for similar schools and the national average. When the three years 1998-2000 are looked at together, the performance was consistently below the national average. These low test results in science are due in part to staff changes and to a high level of pupil mobility. Although the numbers reaching the expected level, Level 4, were close to the average, few pupils achieved the higher level, Level 5.

85. The school has adopted national guidelines in science from September 2000 and very carefully mapped out what will be taught in each term in each year. The precision of this organisation to support teachers' lesson planning is ensuring better coverage of the programme as well as matching resources to the programme of units. In discussion with Year 6 pupils it was clear that they find science lessons interesting because of the very practical approaches adopted by the teachers. These are all improvements since the last inspection, when it was felt science needed a more structured and comprehensive scheme of work.

86. A scrutiny of the work in Years 1 and 2 shows that they are making sound progress in studying a range of topics to develop their scientific knowledge of physical processes. They learn, for example, that water expands when frozen and that water changes to steam when heated to a certain temperature. They also learn about physical changes to materials that are heated. Their written work shows that they are making satisfactory progress with their knowledge and understanding of science in their world.

87. In the one lesson observed in the class of Years 3 and 4 pupils, a good emphasis was placed upon investigative and experimental work, which enhanced pupils' knowledge and understanding. They were learning that plants need healthy roots, stems and leaves, and in particular were investigating what the stem of a plant is used for. An experiment with Plant 'A' and Plant 'B' had been constructed the previous week and they were observing the differences between the two plants. They noted that one was looking healthy and the other looked as if it was dying, and the discussion centred on their ideas. The lesson provided good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and to develop their ideas about a fair test. The teacher used searching questions to prompt the children's thinking, and good progress was made.

88. Scrutiny of work in Years 5 and 6 reveals that pupils are making good progress in extending their knowledge and understanding of scientific processes, with a broad range of work based on the programmes of study. The good focus on practical and experimental work underpins pupils' knowledge. For example, pupils used their knowledge of materials that conduct and insulate to test how to change the brightness of a bulb in a circuit. They used correct symbols to draw diagrams. When writing up experiments, pupils describe the process in a structured way and draw conclusions from their results.

89. The subject co-ordinator has made a significant contribution to the development of science and to the planning of lesson coverage. She has begun to monitor standards by keeping samples of work done by high attainers, average and lower attainers in each class. This is a useful resource for assessing the progress and coverage of work in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Standards of art work on display, and seen during lessons in Key Stage 1, are similar to those expected for pupils' age. By the age of 11, pupils' standards of attainment are good overall, with some very good features at Key Stage 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection and there is evidence to show that as the pupils move through the school they make good progress.

91. Work on display indicates that pupils have good opportunities to extend their skills and experience of different styles of art using a variety of media in both two and three dimensions. These include opportunities for pupils to study pattern using prints, texture using textiles and collage materials, and an impressionist style to create portraits of staff. Displays offer a valuable opportunity to celebrate pupils' efforts. Good links are made with other subjects such as history. For example, large bold pictures of Aztec gods and painted miniatures of Tudors adorn the walls in classrooms. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given the opportunity to join the art club, which meets weekly at the end of the school day. The pupils are keen to take part in this activity, and because the numbers have to be restricted there is a waiting list. Parents support the work of the art club.

92. In the lesson observed in the Reception/Year 1 class, the work was arising from a visit to the All Souls Church yard. Pupils were looking at different sculptures in stone and wood before making their own sculptures, using materials collected from the school grounds. They were able to talk about the shapes and colours of the gravestones and sculptures, the colours and the tones, the straight and interweaving shapes. The teacher made good use of the rich and varied school environment with its diversity of trees and bushes. Pupils were able to observe the different shapes and the yellow of the gorse bush before collecting a range of materials to make their own sculptures in the classroom. They used paint, glue and coloured paper confidently and explored a range of shapes and colours as they completed their sculptures.

93. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 design geometric patterns on fabric, based on ideas from African designs. Their design ideas were quite varied and original but they were not always well executed in paint. The finished products varied in quality but the majority of pupils gained from the opportunity to investigate and combine visual and tactile qualities using a wide choice of fabric paint, chalks, felt pens, puff paints in a range of colours, plus two types of fabric.

94. Good attention was paid to developing pupils' sketching and drawing skills in a class of Year 5 and 6. Pupils were using view finders and a selection of reproduction pictures of famous artists' work to make sketches in their work books prior to making a composition for their own painting on a large piece of paper. Working in pairs, pupils were showing increased confidence and skills in planning their work and looking critically at the work of famous artists. The pupils collaborated well together, discussing their plans and using a wide range of media appropriate to the work of the artist. Some of their sketches and colours were successful in catching the style of the work of the artist they were studying. The teacher played a vital role in providing a clear explanation of the tasks, good resources to match the needs of the work, and penetrating questions to explore pupils' level of understanding.

95. In all lessons, teaching was at least satisfactory and there were good features that combined to provide good learning opportunities for pupils. In the best lesson, the pupils were well managed and challenged throughout the session and remained on task to the very end. In all the lessons the teachers planned activities that offer interest and variety to develop pupils' skills.

96. The school has developed a scheme of work based upon national guidance. The co-ordinator has played an effective role in developing good resources to support the work and lesson planning. There is some monitoring of work, and the co-ordinator uses a digital camera to log examples of work at each stage of the school. The use of sketchbooks is not well developed. The good work observed during the last inspection has been sustained and developed, and the work at Key Stage 2 has improved.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. At the last inspection, standards of attainment were described as broadly in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. No lessons were seen during this inspection but the scrutiny of pupils' work on display suggests the school has maintained these standards and pupils continue to work at a level which matches that seen by most pupils of their age. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school.

98. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have looked at playground activities to consider what children like before using construction kits to make some models. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils use an increasing range of resources and tools. The good emphasis on using mechanisms to control movement can be seen in the finished models of moving monsters which use a pneumatic system based on a balloon or a syringe, and toys that use cams to make them move. These finished products on display indicate that pupils have chosen resources wisely to suit the purpose of the task, measured and cut the materials accurately and assembled them carefully. However, there is little evidence that information and communications technology is used in the subject at present. Older pupils have a growing awareness of the need to think through the process of making before beginning their task; they learn to plan their work carefully considering what will be needed, assembling appropriate resources and tools, and then identifying the main stages in making their design. Their diagrams are clear, neatly drawn and carefully labelled.

99. The subject is taught in half-termly units, chosen from national guidelines. These have been carefully mapped out to avoid repetition for pupils in mixed age classes and to provide a broad range of skills over time. However, the time allocation for the subject is low and this means that sometimes units are not taught in sufficient depth. For example, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 were unable to complete their project on moving toys owing to lack of time. Hence, although pupils talked about the changes they made to their models as they made them, the important aspect of evaluating and testing the finished product was limited in that project.

100. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides informal support for colleagues by checking that teachers' planning conforms to agreed practice, and she looks at samples of finished work on display. She has plans to develop a portfolio of work samples and photographic evidence as a resource for ideas and examples of standards.

GEOGRAPHY

101. There were no geography lessons taking place during the inspection, and relatively little geography work to be seen. However, the work that was available showed that levels of knowledge and understanding, and the development of basic geographical skills, are in line with the expectations nationally of pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils' work shows that both higher and lower achievers, including pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their skills during their time in the school.

102. By the age of seven pupils have carried out an extensive survey of the area around the school, and have learned how to produce a map and to carry out a simple traffic survey. These skills are further developed with a study of the characteristics of islands, a study that is effectively linked to other areas of the curriculum through reading and model making. By the age of eleven pupils have learned to compare the characteristics of urban and rural localities. Their geographical knowledge is extended by a detailed study of India, including both its physical and human characteristics. They also develop knowledge of areas of Britain. Older pupils show a good understanding of the characteristics of mountainous areas, and of how rivers are used, and there is a sound appreciation of the impact of people on the environment, for example through pollution.

103. Although there is relatively little evidence of extended writing by older pupils, the work seen is well presented and does display appropriate understanding. The work is constructively assessed.

104. The sound standards in geography achieved in 1997 have been maintained, and therefore there has been satisfactory progress in geography since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

105. Throughout the school, standards in lessons and in pupils' current work are broadly typical for their age. In all year groups, pupils are developing a good factual knowledge of periods of history, which average and higher ability pupils can recall from previous studies. Sometimes pupils' written work does not reflect their understanding, and this is particularly so in the classes where a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs.

106. Pupils in Year 2 show that they are beginning to recognise the differences between the lives of people now and in the past. They recall the key facts of the story of Florence Nightingale and compare the features of hospitals then and now. Key Stage 2 pupils are articulate when explaining the differences between the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times. They are learning the key features of the times and begin to draw conclusions about some of the evidence that is available. For example, they know that the houses of the Tudor rich that still exist because of the materials that were used to build them. By Year 6, pupils use their widening knowledge of the Aztecs to infer information from artefacts and from pictures. They are aware of the limitations of some sources, such as paintings completed after the events, which include a personal interpretation of the painter. They question the reliability of this source of information. Their past work reveals a broad coverage of factual

knowledge within the units studied, and a growing awareness of the link between why people acted as they did and the impact of their actions. Information is presented in an increasing variety of ways, such as newspaper reports, letters, booklets, and drawings, and always to a good standard.

107. Teaching is consistently sound, and on occasion good in Key Stage 2. Question and answer is used effectively in all lessons to check pupils' understanding and to build on their answers to get them to think. However, where this part of the lesson is over long, younger pupils begin to fidget and many who have special educational needs find it difficult to sustain concentration. Where the teaching is good, there is a carefully controlled balance between giving information, questioning, and practical activities, which combine to make a successful learning experience for pupils. Well-framed questions prompt pupils to use their knowledge to make deductions and to draw conclusions from the available evidence. In all lessons pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are naturally curious and interested in history, and teachers capitalise on this enthusiasm by providing an interesting range of artefacts and resources, such as the maps and photographic evidence used to trace the development of the village over time. There is some evidence of pupils using web sites to find out information about historical characters, but there is scope for more use of information and communication technology. Teachers make good use of extended homework projects in history to develop pupils' independence and to reinforce a number of history skills.

108. The subject policy and guidance has been updated to meet the latest changes in statutory requirements. The co-ordinator has devised a complex organisation of units to ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop history skills in a systematic way through the school without repeating any content.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. Standards in information and communications technology are satisfactory overall. They are in line with the expectations nationally for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven, and this represents very good progress since the previous inspection. Most pupils make good progress in relation to their previous attainment in developing their knowledge and understanding of computers, and in their practical skills, although pupils with special educational needs sometimes make only satisfactory progress when they do not receive sustained support.

110. By the age of seven, most pupils are able to assemble text confidently, word processing their stories and sometimes illustrating them with the aid of graphics programmes. They are confident in using the mouse, and most understand basic computer language such as 'icon'. Pupils quickly learn how to load and use programmes such as 'Lesson maker' and to save their work. Indeed, many pupils in the current Year 1 are quite dextrous in their ability to handle and communicate information and also show levels of knowledge and understanding which are above average for their age.

111. By the age of eleven, pupils continue to make good progress in developing and refining various skills. They make progress in the skill of combining text and graphics, are introduced to databases, can label and classify information, and learn how to produce and modify a multimedia presentation competently. Pupils in Year 6 talk confidently about the potential of

using information and communications technology in the modern world, with an understanding of its uses and drawbacks. They as yet have little experience of spreadsheets, but in other respects cover all the strands of the National Curriculum, which is a considerable achievement and is partly due to the recent acquisition of the computer suite.

112. It was possible to observe only one full lesson of information and communications technology during the inspection. It is therefore not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, although in the lesson observed the teaching was good. It was characterised by confident and knowledgeable explanations, good demonstration, and effective questioning, all carried out in a purposeful way and enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress in developing the confidence to experiment with ways of producing a multimedia presentation. Pupils are very enthusiastic about using the computers, and in most cases work co-operatively and productively, individually, in pairs, or in small groups. The enthusiasm is shown by regular attendance at the daily lunchtime computer club in which pupils were observed in a range of activities, including using the Internet confidently.

113. Information and communications technology is effectively co-ordinated. A key feature in the progress achieved is the growing confidence and expertise of teachers and support staff, as well as the provision of a computer suite, enabling effective whole class teaching as well as small group work. In 1997 standards were unsatisfactory; there were too few opportunities for pupils to practise their computer skills, and development of the subject was unsystematic. All these defects have been rectified, and so progress since the previous inspection has been very good.

MUSIC

114. The school's provision for music is not as good as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils make erratic progress in aspects of music. Pupils who receive music tuition from peripatetic teachers are reaching a good standard of musicianship for their age. They are beginning to read musical notation and time signatures and are gaining confidence in playing their chosen instrument. Weekly singing practices focus on the quality, tone and pace of singing and, as a result, pupils sing well. They are aware of dynamics and respond to the teacher's hand movements. Diction is good, especially when the teacher focuses pupils' attention on this aspect of a phrase. Singing is tuneful and well controlled. Annual musical concerts, held in the local church, capitalise on the singing ability of the pupils and are much appreciated by parents. A group of pupils participated in a concert at the Albert Hall.

115. In discussion, pupils from Year 6 recalled selecting instruments to create combinations of sounds to represent a journey to space, and they have written some lyrics for songs, using a rap rhythm. However, they were not familiar with some common musical terms. The school was unable to provide any samples of pupils' musical compositions, and there was no evidence of pupils using any kind of notation when composing. There are planned opportunities through the scheme to listen to and appraise music that reflects other times and cultures, but pupils have too little chance to appraise their own music and seek ways to improve their performance.

116. In the only lesson observed, the behaviour of pupils in Years 4 and 5 was a barrier to their learning. They were not inspired by the content of the taped radio programme, and participation levels were low. Initially, a few pupils were disruptive and this caused a ripple effect as pupils' enthusiasm waned, and the pace and flow of the lesson was interrupted. Pupils were unable to tap out a rhythm in a controlled way. The teacher lacked the confidence to use the content of the taped programme in any imaginative or stimulating way.

117. From September the school adopted national guidelines for music, and scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that these are followed in combination with taped programmes. The time devoted to music teaching is low, to accommodate the school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and there is an acknowledgement that the balance of time needs redressing in order to enhance provision. There is little musical expertise among the staff, for which the demands of the National Curriculum music are challenging, but there is enthusiasm and a willingness to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. Activities in PE during the inspection were observed only in games. The standards achieved are satisfactory overall. They are in line with the expectations of pupils nationally at the ages of seven and eleven in the levels of skill achieved, and in knowledge and understanding. Overall, pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment.

119. By the age of seven, the great majority of pupils display sound levels of physical co-ordination and can throw a ball with reasonable consistency and accuracy. They make more variable progress in learning how to catch consistently with two hands, although progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils also show sound knowledge and understanding of the effect of exercise on their bodies, for example talking about the benefits of good warm-up routines. By the age of eleven, pupils learn to refine their ball skills still further, achieving a satisfactory standard. In rounders they learn to bowl and to strike a ball more effectively. Pupils also progress to a rudimentary understanding of the tactics of fielding.

120. The standard of teaching in PE is good overall. It is always good for pupils between the ages of five and seven. The teaching of pupils between the ages of seven and eleven is always at least satisfactory, and is good in one out of two lessons. The most important characteristic of the good teaching is the way in which knowledgeable teachers, in the space of relatively short lessons, take pupils through a series of briskly paced, progressive activities which help to build up skill levels and keep pupils focused and enthusiastic about the tasks. The management of what are sometimes large classes is good. The teaching of practical skills is complemented effectively by good questioning to elicit and reinforce understanding, as was seen during warm-up activities in several lessons. Teachers use pupils to demonstrate good ball skills as a model for others to evaluate and emulate. Pupils' attitudes towards PE are good; even those who find tasks difficult generally persevere and make good progress in developing their skills. In the one lesson observed in which pupils made less progress, there was a substantial concentration of pupils with poor listening and concentration skills, and the teacher lacked the support to keep these pupils focused on the tasks.

121. Although only games lessons could be seen during the inspection, the PE curriculum is broad and balanced. The school benefits from having its own swimming pool and, although no swimming sessions were seen, the school's records indicate that all pupils are able to swim by the time they leave the school. Lessons are supplemented by swimming and football clubs. The football team is popular and successful, and pupils speak of their enjoyment of sport in the school. The positive attitudes of pupils contribute to the good progress they make.

122. Since 1997 the overall quality of teaching in PE has improved, and there is now more pupil activity in lessons. Therefore there has been good progress since the previous inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. There was limited evidence of recorded work, but in the lessons observed the pupils in both key stages demonstrated standards similar to those expected for their age. The planned programme of work complies with the recommendations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Since the last inspection the scheme of work has been improved and the resources for teaching and learning have been enhanced. The school now has a good range of religious artefacts and pictures to support the work in lessons. The scheme of work is more detailed and shows good coverage of the subject. However, the overall time allocated to RE is low, and this makes it difficult to ensure good coverage of the scheme of work. The school maintains good links with All Souls Church and with its vicar.

124. The Year 1 pupils, learning about the story of Noah and the Ark, were able to answer questions about the way the rainbow represents God's promise not to flood the land again. The teacher made an effective connection between the promises pupils could make in their own minds. The Year 2 class visited All Souls Church and were learning about the importance of different parts of the church, such as the altar, font, pulpit and lectern. One pupil was able to relate the twelve legs on the altar table to the twelve disciples of Jesus and described it as 'the big table'. They all learned that the font is where children are baptised when they join the Christian family. During the lesson, references to other religions were made and one pupil made comparisons with her visits to the temple. The pupils in Years 3/4 were discussing what kind of person Jesus was, on the evidence of extracts from the Bible. The teacher provided good support that enabled pupils to share their ideas and perceptions.

125. The quality of the teaching and learning was good in the three lessons observed. Teachers show sound knowledge of the subject and use this to good effect in offering clear explanations to pupils when introducing a new theme. Teachers engage pupils well in discussion, questioning them to determine their level of understanding and responding clearly to the questions they ask. Across the school, teachers make good use of religious artefacts to enhance pupils' understanding of the different beliefs and practices. Teachers develop close working relationships with the pupils, monitoring their progress well and supporting them when they encounter difficulties. These close relationships enable teachers to tackle matters of belief sensitively and with a respect and understanding, and this gives pupils the confidence to share their feelings and beliefs.

126. Overall, the RE curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced and there are good arrangements for the study of the beliefs and practices of many faiths. It is not clear that sufficient time is allocated in the timetable over the year to cover the intended programme. The subject does make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding.