

INSPECTION REPORT

**RANDWICK CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Randwick, Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115645

Headteacher: Mrs F Montacute

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Morley
25470

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th June

Inspection number: 192299

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Lane Randwick Stroud Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL6 6HL
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Appropriate authority:	Local education authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Wicks
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs J Morley	<i>Registered inspector</i>	English; science; art; design and technology; children aged under five; equal opportunities; special educational needs.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs H Barter	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How high are standards? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
Mr C Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; information technology; religious education; geography; history; music; physical education.	How good are curricular opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Randwick Church of England Primary School is a voluntary controlled school. Most of its pupils live in the parish of Randwick, Gloucestershire. A few come from other villages nearby and from Stroud, the nearest town. The school was built in the Victorian era and is situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty. It caters for pupils aged 4 to 11.

With a roll of 75, it is a small school. Fewer than 3 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This proportion is below the national average. Twenty two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is broadly average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need. There are no pupils from homes where English is not the first language spoken. Data from previous years shows that the attainment of children on entry to the school is above average overall, although this is variable because of the small number of children involved. Pupils come from a socio-economic background which is generally above average. Most live in privately owned accommodation.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is effective in most areas. Standards in science are high, while in English and mathematics they are satisfactory. All are lower than those recently achieved by the school but relate specifically to the current cohort of Year 6 pupils and do not reflect a reduction in the quality of education provided. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is best for the oldest pupils in school. Learning support for children in the Reception year is very good. The headteacher, staff and governors work conscientiously to provide sound direction for the work of the school. The school has an income that is slightly above average. It provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The standards achieved in science at the end of Key Stage 2 are good;
- A significant proportion of the teaching to the oldest pupils in school is good;
- The quality of learning support to the youngest pupils in school is very good;
- The school offers a good range of extra-curricular opportunities to pupils;
- The school knows its pupils well and monitors their progress very closely;
- The financial management of the school is good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The arrangements the school makes to teach literacy and numeracy;
- The amount of unsatisfactory teaching;
- The quality of behaviour and relationships.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress on the key issues identified at the time of the last inspection in February 1997. Prior to the year 2000, which is non-typical, standards have risen in mathematics and been consistently high in science. Those in English have remained fairly static. The school pursues improvement vigorously, although within this there is a tendency to be over zealous and to sometimes introduce change with excess haste and insufficient thought.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	C	C	E
Mathematics	C	A	A	B
Science	A	A*	A	A

Key	
<i>very high</i>	A*
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

When compared with those of all schools nationally, the standards achieved in national tests have consistently been at an average or better level over the last three years. The school's result in the science national test of 1998 placed it in the top 5 per cent of schools in the country. When compared with similar schools, the school achieves results that are well above average in science, above average in mathematics, and well below average in English. Inspection findings do not reflect the good test scores achieved in previous years in mathematics and science. Currently, the proportion of pupils likely to achieve the national target of Level 4 in English and in mathematics is average. The proportion in science is likely to exceed the national average, but by less than in recent years. This relates to the group of pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2, several of whom have special educational needs. It is very unlikely that the school will meet its Level 4 targets of 82 per cent and 91 per cent in English and mathematics respectively.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory overall but variable.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory in and around school. In lessons, it tends to relate directly to the pace and intellectual challenge provided by the teaching.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are satisfactory, although pupils can occasionally be aloof and unwilling to help a classmate who needs their support. Pupil-teacher relationships sometimes lack warmth.
Attendance	Satisfactory, although some pupils are frequently late for school.

The majority of pupils in this school thrive on learning at a fast pace. Most enjoy work that is challenging yet achievable. When lessons provide these ingredients, pupils have good attitudes and behave well. When the pace slows, the effort that some pupils put into their work is reduced and there are occasional displays of truculence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Of the teaching observed, 5 per cent was of the highest quality, 9.5 per cent very good, 24 per cent good, 52 per cent satisfactory and 9.5 per cent unsatisfactory. The best teaching is to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Learning support to children aged under five is very good. The one feature that separates the very best from the weakest teaching is the pace of lessons and, linked to that, teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve in a lesson. The setting arrangements that currently operate for teaching English and mathematics from Year 2 onwards are not functioning effectively. The school intends to review its action. Evidence suggests that outside this recent change, there is a basis of sound provision for pupils of all abilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum with some valuable extra-curricular experiences.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory, although some very recent changes have caused temporary disruption.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils learn much about their own culture, and there are worthwhile links with children from other cultures. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff know pupils well. There are good procedures for ensuring their health, safety and welfare.

The partnership between home and school is sound. The school supplies parents with good quality information, and parents make a positive contribution to their children's progress. Several parents provide valuable help in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Since the last inspection the headteacher has worked very diligently and has been successful in raising academic standards in some areas of the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good understanding of most strengths and weaknesses of the school but not all are aware of the fall in the standards of pupil behaviour.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school reflects very critically on its work. However, the potential impact of planned change is not always carefully considered before its introduction. In addition, the pace at which change is introduced is not always appropriate to the small size of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally well used, although the school has been very slow to use additional literacy support funding specifically for the programme to which it was allocated.

Resources are sufficient for the needs of the school. There are sufficient teachers and support staff. Classroom accommodation is adequate but space in other areas of the school is very cramped. There is no area suitable for physical education, but regular use is made of the village hall. The school considers its spending decisions carefully and generally makes appropriate use of specific grants.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress; • Staff at the school are approachable; • The school expects children to work hard; • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reduction in the number of adults by whom their child is taught; • The school is a less caring community than it used to be; • The amount of homework; • The partnership between school and parents, including information.

Inspectors endorse some of the positive views of parents. The progress pupils make is variable. It is never less than satisfactory and is good for children aged under five and for the oldest pupils in school. A significant number of pupils are taught by too many teachers during the course of a week. The school *does* lack some warmth in relationships. The amount of homework given is satisfactory. Also satisfactory is the information given to parents and the partnership with them.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements.

1. When children enter the school, most have above average attainment. By the time they start Year 1, their attainment is very good in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and personal development. Attainment in both physical and creative development is satisfactory.

2. There are currently just three pupils in Year 2 and it is therefore not possible to make a secure judgement about attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. However, careful scrutiny of the work of pupils of a range of abilities in each year group suggests that the good standards are just maintained through Years 1, 2, 3 and 4. In Year 5, standards in mathematics and science are lifted to become well above average, while standards in English remain unchanged. The 1999 national test results indicated that standards were well above average in both mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2, while those in English just met national standards. Current standards in Year 6 meet expectations in English and mathematics, and exceed them in science. This apparent discrepancy is the result of differences between one cohort and another and, given that 45 percent of the current Year 6 pupils are on the register of special educational needs, these standards represent no change in the quality of the school's provision. The greatest strides in learning are made by children in the Reception class and by pupils in Years 5 and 6.

3. Over the last three years, standards in science have been consistently high, while those in mathematics have improved steadily. Standards in English have remained broadly static for several years and at about the expected level. This represents sound progress overall. The school has not fully embraced the literacy hour and has been slow to use Additional Literacy funding for its intended purpose. Very recently the school has adopted a setting structure for English and for mathematics which has several unsatisfactory features. It wisely intends to review this arrangement in the very near future.

4. When compared with those of schools in which a similar proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals, standards attained are well above average in science, above average in mathematics, but well below average in English. There are two features that have contributed to the relatively weak performance in English. One is the lack of a properly structured, daily literacy hour. Another is a frequent lack of pace in the teaching in Years 1 to 4. The newly introduced setting arrangements for English and mathematics have not had time to make an impact on standards. However, they involve a significant proportion of pupils being taught by three or four different adults each week in each subject, and the grouping does not take account of pupils' maturity levels.

5. In the current year, the school set very challenging targets for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve Level 4 in the end of Key Stage 2 tests. At 82 and 91 per cent for English and mathematics respectively it is very unlikely that these will be met. The school did meet both targets of 73 and 82 per cent in 1999.

6. Current setting arrangements for English and mathematics do not serve the pupils with special needs well. The programme for Additional Literacy Support does not always operate in the way that it should. However, much of the support provided for pupils with special needs is appropriately targeted. The more able pupils in Years 5 and 6 receive valuable additional support in mathematics. There is no difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls.

7. Standards in information technology are good and in religious education they are satisfactory. Owing to timetabling and other constraints, it was not possible to make judgements on pupils' progress in art, design and technology, geography and music. Pupils make the progress expected in history, and good progress in physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour, and their personal development are satisfactory, although the standards now are not as good as those reported at the last inspection. In the questionnaires completed before the inspection, most parents agreed that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible, and most feel that behaviour is good. Parents appreciate that their children are encouraged to care for others, particularly the younger members of the school. On the whole, parents say that their children like coming to school.

9. Although many pupils have regular patterns of attendance, there are a few who are frequently absent from school and others who have occasional absences or who are taken on family holidays during term-time. Overall, attendance levels are in line with national averages and are therefore satisfactory. However, some pupils are frequently late for school, and every day there are a few pupils who arrive late for the start of registration or assembly. This disrupts the start of the day for teachers and other pupils.

10. Overall, pupils' attitudes to their work are satisfactory. Most of the pupils in the school thrive on learning at a fast pace. They have particularly good attitudes to learning when they are involved in interesting activities which offer stimulation and challenge appropriate to their age and ability. They respond enthusiastically to imaginative and lively teaching, for example when investigating patterns formed by triangular numbers in a mathematics lesson. Pupils particularly enjoy physical education and dance. They sometimes get excited about their work and are very keen to contribute ideas, although this is not always done in a disciplined manner. When the pace of lessons slows, it has a negative impact on pupils' attitudes; they put very little effort into what they are doing and show a lack of enthusiasm for, and interest in, the tasks set for them. Some pupils have a 'throw away' attitude to their work. They are careless and do not try hard enough. In some lessons, even when pupils know the answer to a question they cannot be bothered to give it. These less satisfactory attitudes often occur when pupils are working in groups containing pupils from Years 2 to 6. Pupils sometimes have difficulty in coping with teaching strategies that are inappropriately matched to their age and level of maturity.

11. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory. In lessons, the standard of behaviour is a direct response to the pace and intellectual challenge provided by the teaching. When pupils are involved and enthusiastic about the work they are given them they behave well. However, some pupils find it difficult to listen for more than a short period of time.

They call out inappropriately, become over excited and noisy, and have little regard for the code of conduct expected in the classroom. Behaviour at lunchtimes and in the playground is satisfactory. Most pupils get on well with each other and enjoy playing with small play equipment such as balls and skipping ropes. However, they are slow and disorderly when lining up to go back into school, and they pay too little attention to requests to be quiet. The school has recently had two temporary exclusions relating to two pupils who exhibited aggressive behaviour.

12. Overall, pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They are developing satisfactory levels of independence and responsibility. Younger pupils are learning to look after their own possessions and to organise themselves when they come into school in the morning. All are willing to take on jobs in the classroom and to assist in assembly. Pupils value the system of awards for achievements in their work, behaviour, and attitudes towards others, and are learning to recognise how they can make improvements in these areas. In lessons, they are developing the skills of self-evaluation and of thinking about what they need to do to improve. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to take responsibility for their learning; they discuss solutions to problems and are able to appraise the success of their own work and that of others. However, the closely directed atmosphere around the school weakens these positive aspects of pupils' personal development. Too often, pupils do not have the chance to use their developing maturity and independence to think for themselves or to contribute ideas about school activities.

13. Relationships between pupils are mostly positive, and they usually get on with each other. Some older pupils care well for the younger members of the school and try to help them or play with them in the playground. Pupils are mostly willing to work in groups or pairs when directed by the teacher. Sometimes they work co-operatively, particularly the younger pupils in Key Stage 1, although many older pupils prefer to work for themselves. There is an element of arrogance amongst some of these pupils. Some are unwilling to share resources or to help others who are having difficulties; for example, when searching the Internet on the computer. Although pupils get on with each other satisfactorily, there are times when they lack feelings for others and make unkind remarks about their work. Relationships between pupils and staff are satisfactory. However, some pupils speak inappropriately to teachers and can be cheeky. While the school atmosphere is organised and business-like, it does lack the warm and positive relationships that are often to be found in small village schools.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged as sound overall and sometimes good for Reception children, sound or better in Key Stage 1, and good in more than half of the lessons in Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching was never less than satisfactory. In this inspection, the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to that of the very highest quality. Nine and a half per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory, 52 per cent satisfactory, 24 per cent good, 9.5 per cent very good and 5 per cent excellent. All teaching that was very good or excellent was observed in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6.

15. Although the overall quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory, there are weaknesses in both the current curriculum and the teaching arrangements for literacy and numeracy. None of the lessons in English or mathematics was, in itself, unsatisfactory. However, the arrangements for the lessons are. There are four contributory factors. Firstly, the school places the 48 pupils in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 into three ability groups for the first three days of each week. They return to their two class groups for the last two days and are taught by one of their class teachers each Thursday and by their other class teacher on Friday. Over the full week, one-third of all pupils are taught English by either three or four different adults. The situation in mathematics is very similar. Secondly, a part of this setting arrangement is additional support, through a system of withdrawal, on one day during the week, for the pupils who find the work difficult. This involves 16 pupils in English and 11 in mathematics. While the pupils withdrawn from a group do work matched to their specific needs, they nevertheless miss the work their peers are doing. Thirdly, the range in age between the youngest and the oldest exceeds four years in three of the six groups. Pupils have been grouped by ability, but their maturity levels remain very different. In the lessons observed, teachers instinctively pitched their language and 'style of delivery' to the younger pupils in the group. This is inappropriate for those who are older. Finally, the school is not adhering fully to the literacy and numeracy lesson structure, particularly the former, not least because the number of adults involved makes it difficult to do so. Of the last two 'literacy' sessions in the week, for example, one is timetabled as 'extended writing' and is set aside for pupils to produce a longer length piece of written work, while the other is used for working on spelling and vocabulary.

16. Overall, teachers' subject knowledge is good in all areas of the curriculum. All teachers are able to teach the basic skills. The learning support worker is particularly skilled at teaching early reading, writing and number skills, and children in the Reception year benefit significantly from her work.

17. Teachers know pupils very well and can make an accurate assessment of their work. They use this knowledge effectively when setting targets for pupils, all of which clearly demonstrate a very precise understanding of their ability. This same knowledge is used to identify those who find their work particularly difficult – or easy. The school makes appropriate provision for these pupils in English and in mathematics through a system of withdrawal. The quality of this support is, in itself sound although the withdrawal arrangements that feed it, are not.

18. Homework is used effectively to reinforce what pupils learn in school. The school ensures that homework is regularly set but that it does not intrude excessively on pupils' time outside the school day.

19. The feature which separates the best from the weakest teaching in school, concerns teachers' expectations of what pupils can – and should – achieve. Where lessons are less than satisfactory, they are sometimes typified by a very slow pace. In a science lesson, for example, two lists of materials were produced over a 45 minute period when this could have been easily accomplished in one third of the time. This is sometimes the result of lack of planning. In one literacy lesson where the content bore no resemblance to the work planned for the week, it was because the planned work was not to start until the following day. The teacher was having a 'mop-up' session, and the lack of a clear learning focus resulted in virtually no learning taking place. In teaching of high quality, lessons move at a very brisk

pace. Reception children, for example, were delightful to watch when, for the first time, they sang *Heads and Shoulder, Knees and Toes*. Their concentration was total as they sang through all the verses, remembering to 'keep quiet' for one extra body part in each verse. A Year 5 / 6 science lesson also moved at a rapid pace, with timed sessions in which pupils had to make a judgement on the brightness of a bulb in a circuit completed by wires of different lengths, thicknesses and materials.

20. Management of pupils varies but is satisfactory overall. Teachers insist that pupils listen attentively, but they are not consistent in insisting that they put up their hand when they want to contribute. The effort that pupils put into their work is very variable and this is a feature which, too often, teachers do not control well. The youngest pupils in the school gave 100 per cent effort in one lesson whereas earlier in the day they had given the minimum. The oldest pupils were completely absorbed in a science activity and yet could barely be bothered to respond to their teacher's questions in a literacy lesson.

21. The features common to eliciting a good response from the pupils are a brisk pace from the teacher and an activity which challenges them but which is achievable. These two features combined are frequently present in the Reception group and in the Year 5 / 6 class, but less frequently so elsewhere. Where lessons are taught at a brisk pace and are challenging, the pupils learn well. When these features are not present then some lack of interest, truculence and arrogance creep into responses and reduce pupil effort. The effort pupils make mirrors very closely the quality of teaching they receive, and not all teachers are as aware of this as they should be.

22. Through the good target setting strategies of the school, pupils have a clear picture of how well they have done and how they might improve over a half-term or term. What is not always made clear to them is what the teacher wants them to learn in a lesson or part of a lesson.

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

23. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a range of learning opportunities of good quality, including French. It successfully meets the needs of its pupils. Religious education and all subjects in the National Curriculum are taught, and children aged under five are provided with an appropriate curriculum based on recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes. Because of limitations in accommodation, the school is unable to provide a full physical education programme in gymnastics. However, good links with the local secondary school and arrangements for the use of the village hall enable suitable gymnastic activities to be offered to pupils. The governing body has made the decision that sex education should be a part of the school curriculum, and appropriate advice is provided to pupils as they begin to mature. Drug awareness education is provided as part of the science curriculum. A criticism in the previous inspection report was that pupils were frequently given insufficient time to complete practical and investigative work. The school has made good improvements in this area, and pupils in both key stages now have regular opportunities to undertake investigative work.

24. There are policies and schemes of work in place for all subjects: in most curriculum areas the school has adopted the schemes of work recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Because of the small cohorts and mixed-age classes, the curriculum is planned on two-year 'rolling programmes' of work, one for each class. This year, however, there is a need to include Year 2 pupils in the middle class because of class size numbers. This will mean that these pupils could possibly be in this class for three years, and unless action is taken they will undertake and repeat the same curriculum in Year 4. The school knows the issue needs consideration.

25. Although the school has implemented the programmes of study and schemes of work for the national literacy and numeracy strategies, a number of lessons seen during the inspection did not take full account of the recommendations for lesson format, pace and structure.

26. Throughout the school year, the curriculum is successfully enriched through a good range of extra-curricular opportunities, including sporting activities and, in many cases, with the active support of the local community. There are residential visits to France and to Morpha Bay.

27. The school offers equal opportunities for its pupils in terms of gender, ethnicity and special educational needs. However, throughout the inspection, in the majority of lessons seen, pupils needing additional support or group work were withdrawn from lessons. At times, this practice leads to pupils' access to a full curriculum appropriate to their age and maturity being compromised. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall. Links with the local community are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school has good links with its partner institutions.

28. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. The school's cultural provision is good. Through whole-school and class assemblies and 'circle times', the school provides pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Principles distinguishing right from wrong are promoted appropriately, and consistently by all staff, who provide good role-models. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively and to take responsibility for their work and for others. Older pupils look after younger pupils, for example at the swimming baths. Pupils raise funds for charities and are currently raising money for a child in a school in India. There are developing links with children in Randwick school in Australia. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions, taking part in a range of local and county festivals and 'fayres'. They develop a good understanding of the diversity of other cultures through stories, studies of contrasting communities in geography, and the study of other religions in religious education lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. Since the last inspection the school has maintained the good provision for the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. Parents are mostly positive about the care their children receive while in school.

30. The school has good arrangements for ensuring that it provides a safe place for pupils and adults to work. There are well-established procedures and policies to address safety and security in all areas of school life. There are regular checks of the premises and equipment and an assessment of potential risks to safety. Arrangements are made as quickly as possible for any repairs to be carried out. The school is aware of the potential health and safety hazards outside the building and has taken steps to try and minimise the problems of an open and sloping playground. There are good procedures for dealing with first aid, accident reporting and pupils who are unwell. Good procedures are in place for dealing with any concerns relating to child protection and pupils' welfare. The headteacher, who is responsible for pastoral care and child protection matters, has a good awareness of current guidelines and ensures that all staff understand the need to report concerns to her and to maintain confidentiality.

31. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance and behaviour. The administrative officer makes good use of computerised systems to record weekly attendance figures, and follows up unexplained absences if they occur. The school makes appropriate use of the educational welfare service when there are concerns about the attendance patterns of individual pupils. Although the school has good information to hand about pupils' attendance and punctuality, it does not use this as effectively as it could to emphasise to parents the importance of bringing their children to school on time.

32. The school's policy of reinforcing good standards of behaviour through good relationships and a positive rather than negative focus is clear on paper but is not always practised consistently across the school. Where teachers make the expectations of behaviour clear to pupils, promote a positive ethos in the classroom, and provide pupils with interesting work, standards of behaviour are good. There is little bullying in the school, but the recent exclusion of one pupil has given a clear message to pupils and to parents that aggressive behaviour is unacceptable in school. The incident was dealt with well. However, the expectations for positive behaviour are not always applied consistently. Some pupils do not want to work: they can be truculent and unwilling to co-operate.

33. Teachers do not have effective strategies for these incidences and tend to ignore them rather than reinforce what is expected; for example putting up hands to answer questions and not calling out when others are speaking. In other cases, teachers try to have too much control. Some strategies such as clicking fingers or expecting pupils to put up their hands to achieve silence have lost their impact, and pupils take no notice.

34. Overall, teachers know the pupils well. There are systems to reward achievements through team points, certificates, and awards such as the ‘Skylark Award’. These are used well to recognise where pupils have made improvements in their learning and in their attitudes to work and school life. Pupils value these awards and receive them with pride. Older pupils are beginning to evaluate how well they are achieving, by using self-assessment sheets. These are good tools in helping pupils to assess the progress that they are making, to understand their strengths, and to identify areas where they need to make improvements.

35. The school has very good systems for assessing pupils’ attainment. It uses a range of assessments and has a wealth of data that give valuable information. It uses the data to track pupils’ progress and to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Areas thus identified are fed directly into the school development plan, and realistic targets are set for improvement. The information is also used by teachers to set learning targets for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36. Overall, the school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Since the last inspection, it has maintained the good quality of information provided for parents although the effectiveness of communication between parents and the school is not as positive as previously reported.

37. In the questionnaires completed before the inspection and at the meeting for parents, most parents showed good support for the school. They value the role of the school in educating their children within a village community. They feel that the school expects their children to work hard and that it is helping them to become mature and responsible. Most feel that their child is making good progress in school and that teaching is good. However, one quarter of those who replied to the questionnaire feel that they are not kept well informed about how their child is getting on and some parents feel that the school does not work closely with them although most report that staff are approachable. A significant minority is also critical of the school’s provision for homework.

38. Although parents’ views of the school are satisfactory overall, parents conveyed two significant concerns in letters to the registered inspector. Firstly, some parents feel that the school has become too business-like. They recognise the hard work and commitment of the staff but feel that the school has lost some of its caring approach to their children in the drive to raise academic standards. Secondly, they are particularly concerned about the impact that current arrangements for teaching groups of pupils, particularly for English and mathematics from Year 2 onwards, is having on their children. They feel that too many different adults are teaching their children and that the groups do not take account of pupils’ levels of maturity. These parents report that their children are sometimes unhappy about coming to school and that the younger pupils have difficulty in settling when moving into their new class and groupings. The parents’ concerns related to these two issues are justified. The school intends to review the impact of the grouping arrangements at the end of this term.

39. The quality of written information provided for parents is good. The school’s prospectus and the governing body’s annual report give clear information about the organisation and work of the school. Parents receive regular information about events and activities in school through numbered newsletters. They have been introduced to the national

initiatives for literacy and numeracy and the school's provision for teaching information technology at curriculum evenings. Parents receive good quality information about their child's learning in all subjects of the curriculum in end of year reports. These demonstrate that teachers know pupils well and are clear about what they need to do next to improve. The targets set for pupils in English and mathematics are helpful to parents who wish to support their child's learning at home. There are regular arrangements in place for formal consultations with teachers. However, although some parents report that it is easy for them to speak to teachers informally, others are justifiably critical of the opportunities for parents to speak regularly to teachers; for example, by the gate at the end of the school day. Some parents feel that any suggestions or criticisms that they make will not be received positively by teachers or the headteacher and that they are made to feel a nuisance. While parents recognise that teachers work hard and are under some pressure, they report that the links between the school and its parents are not as good as they used to be.

40. Parents have a good impact on the work of the school and their children's learning. Some parents help regularly in school with art and craft activities, hearing children read or working with them on computers. They offer support for visits outside school and for regular swimming lessons. They offer good support to fund-raising activities to enhance the school's learning resources. Parents are keen for their children to do well and many are supportive of homework activities. They hear their children read, help them with research and provide articles to bring into school in support of topics being studied. However, a number of parents are unsure about the school's policy for homework and feel that there is inconsistency in provision between classes. The inspection team found no evidence to support this concern. Parents have demonstrated support for the school in drawing up and signing the home-school agreement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The quality of leadership and management in the school is sound overall. The headteacher has some significant strengths and some areas of weakness. She has been instrumental in enabling the school to gain the Investor in People Award. She has encouraged involvement in an impressive number of initiatives beyond the academic curriculum such as a flourishing Internet link with Randwick school in Australia. There is a clear commitment to academic achievement and evidence that, since the last inspection, the school has been successful in raising standards in mathematics and information technology and sustaining high standards in science. However, since the last inspection, standards in English have remained broadly static and at a level well below that of similar schools. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils are now satisfactory while, at the time of the last inspection, they were good. Relationships lack the warmth of those typical of small primary schools. These changes have not been recognised by the headteacher. The setting arrangements for mathematics introduced in February of this year involve one-third of the pupils in Years 2 to 6 being taught by three or four different adults each week and in groups in which the age difference can exceed four years. This arrangement is inappropriate. It has subsequently, and unwisely, been extended to incorporate literacy. Pupils do not receive their entitlement of a daily literacy hour. The school improvement plan is a very detailed and far-reaching document but with planned change that does not take adequate account of the small number of staff available to implement it.

42. The school has made a good overall response to the key issues identified in the last report:

- *Review the organisational arrangements for providing administration time for the headteacher.*

43. The governing body has increased the time available to two days each week and this is currently further supplemented through additional funding:

- *Secure the development of subject skills through the school and use the information gained to inform curriculum planning and teaching.*

44. The school has rectified the imbalance of time allocated to some subjects so that pupils' skills can now be effectively developed in all subject areas:

- *Establish a school approach to assessment and use the information gained to inform curriculum planning and teaching.*

45. The school now has a very effective assessment system that it uses well to track pupil progress and to help with planning. It identifies areas for improvement and these feed directly into the school development plan. Progress on this key issue has been very good:

- *Establish a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school identified in the school development plan.*

46. The headteacher monitors the work of the school with zeal. While this is usually effective, there are occasions when she both looks too closely at fine detail and loses sight of the broader picture and introduces changes too rapidly for such a small school. Monitoring of teaching is in place but in the early stages of development:

- *Increase opportunities for pupils to improve their problem solving, investigative work and independent study skills.*

47. Progress has been very good. Pupils now have good opportunities, particularly linked to Internet access, at which most are very adept. Work in science provides good opportunities for investigation and even the youngest pupils have opportunities to solve simple problems.

48. The governing body provides good support to the school. It has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in academic attainment and functions efficiently in relation to finance. Not all governors are aware, however, of the downward trend in the quality of pupils' behaviour and attitude since the last inspection. Administrative routines are good and the school office functions smoothly and effectively. The school secretary ensures that up to date information is available to the governors and the headteacher. Good use of information technology makes a positive contribution to school administration.

49. There is an adequate number of teaching staff but they are not always effectively deployed. Class 1 has a full time teacher, a learning support worker who works for six of the ten weekly sessions and an additional teacher who works for one session. This is an adequate arrangement and the Reception children in particular, benefit greatly from the six sessions they spend with the nursery nurse. The remaining two classes are taught by five teachers and a voluntary classroom assistant. These comprise one teacher for eight (1/2 day) sessions, one teacher for six sessions, the headteacher for approximately half of the week, a special needs teacher for two sessions, a part time teacher for two sessions and the voluntary classroom assistant, also working for two sessions. Combined with the setting arrangements which the school adopts, pupils in Years 2 to 6 are taught by several adults during the course of the week – some by all six. This does not offer pupils the best in continuity and is particularly unsuitable for the younger ones.

50. Accommodation is cramped but best use is made of the space available. There is no hall in which pupils can have physical education lessons but the school does make use of the facilities in the village hall and the local secondary school. The school grounds are small, and, as the school is built on the side of a hill, the playground slopes quite steeply. The school does all it can to make the building and grounds safe places for the children to be.

51. Resources in almost every area of the curriculum are satisfactory. There is no large play equipment, such as wheeled toys, for children aged under five. However, there is no playground area flat enough for them to play on these safely. Storage would be an additional problem.

52. The school generally makes effective use of specific funding. It has run booster classes in English and mathematics and has used funding through the National Grid for Learning to extend its technology facilities. However, it has been very slow to use the Additional Literacy grant for the purpose for which it is intended and, even now, these support lessons do not follow the published format.

53. All staff have several curricular responsibilities. In the case of core subjects, co-ordinators are aware of standards outside their own classroom. The science co-ordinator in particular has worked hard to raise standards in the subject, and has been successful.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

For English and mathematics:

- adjust the current grouping arrangements to reduce the age range of pupils in the teaching groups;
(*paragraphs: 4, 15*)
- as far as possible, reduce the number of teachers by whom pupils are taught;
(*paragraphs: 4, 15, 32, 38, 49*)
- ensure that - on a daily basis and for all pupils in Years 1 to 6 - there is a literacy hour and a numeracy lesson, both of which comply fully with recommendations;
(*paragraphs: 3, 4, 15*)
- avoid disruption to these lessons through excessive withdrawal of pupils for additional support;
(*paragraphs: 6, 15, 17*)
- in English, ensure that the changes made do not remove the regular opportunities that pupils now have to produce pieces of written work of a longer length.
(*paragraph: 72*)

Reduce the amount of unsatisfactory teaching by:

- ensuring that, when lessons are planned, each part has a clear and measurable learning focus;
(*paragraphs: 19, 53, 75*)
- increasing the pace at which lessons are taught.
(*paragraphs: 19, 75, 82, 89*)

Improve the quality of behaviour and relationships.
(*paragraphs: 8, 10, 11, 21, 73, 88, 100*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	21
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	9.5	24	52	9.5	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)	75
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	2

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	17

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	9	5	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	5	4	5
	Total	14	13	14
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	93 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	9
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	2	4	4
	Girls	6	5	6
	Total	8	9	10
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (82)	82 (73)	91 (100)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	2	4	5
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	8	10	11
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	73 (91)	91 (73)	100 (91)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

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)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	163058.00
Total expenditure	157448.00
Expenditure per pupil	2157.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	1344.00
Balance carried forward to next year	6954.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	75
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	41	10	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	35	55	8	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	55	10	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	49	14	2	6
The teaching is good.	35	51	2	2	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	53	24	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	49	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	53	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	25	57	12	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	41	51	2	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	53	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	51	12	2	6

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed concern about the number of different teachers by whom their children are taught, particularly those children in Years 2, 3 and 4. They felt that, in pursuing high academic standards, the school has forfeited some of its caring approach.

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

55. The school admits children from the beginning of the school year in which their fifth birthday falls. At the time of inspection, there were two children under five. They are taught in a class of 28 Reception and Year 1 pupils. When they enter school almost all pupils have had play-group experience and most achieve standards above those expected for their age. This judgement is confirmed through analysis of baseline assessments.

56. By the time they start Year 1, children attain standards in language and literacy, mathematics, and knowledge and understanding of the world that exceed those expected for their age. Attainment in personal, creative and physical development is in line with that expected.

57. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained in personal development, language and literacy, creative development and physical development. In mathematics and in knowledge and understanding of the world they have improved.

58. Overall, the quality of teaching to children in the foundation stage is good. For two of the ten half-day sessions during the week, the Reception class children are taught by the class teacher and with the Year 1 pupils. For a further two they are taught by their class teacher while Year 1 pupils are elsewhere, and for the remaining six sessions they are taught, under the very broad guidance of the class teacher, by the learning support worker. There is a clear distinction in the quality of teaching the children receive. For the smaller proportion of the week it is satisfactory overall, while for the larger proportion it is very good and sometimes of the very highest quality. This relates to provision across all areas of the foundation curriculum.

59. The very best teaching is signified by planned activities which excite and enthral children and which constantly bombard them with new and challenging activities. The children behave impeccably and gaze wide-eyed at their teacher, wondering what exciting task will be next. The teaching, which is satisfactory overall, sometimes good, and sometimes unsatisfactory, has two main weaknesses. The teacher, too frequently, has no clear idea about what it is that children are to learn. In a language and literacy session, for example, there was no adequate pre-lesson planning, and the activities were a simple recap of previous work. In a music lesson, children made no progress because there was no attempt by the teacher to help children to improve their skills. Secondly, the behaviour of the children at various times during lessons hampers their learning.

60. Children's attitudes and behaviour are variable and reflect the quality of teaching they receive. They are capable of very high levels of concentration when activities engage their interest. One afternoon, for example, pupils were engrossed in a range of teacher-directed activities for fractionally less than an hour and their attention did not waver. Pupils are able to listen attentively to instructions and follow them reliably. They play amicably together. They accept the need to take turns and, when they know it is expected of them, put up their hand before speaking. They are equally capable of noisy and silly behaviour.

Personal and social development

61. The personal and social development of children is sound. Both teacher and nursery nurse have a warm and friendly manner and help the children to feel happy and secure when they begin school. The expectations of the two adults can vary, however, and the children quickly learn to produce the behaviour that will be accepted. Sometimes this is of too low a standard. Children share equipment and usually move from one task to another sensibly. They make limited choices of activity and there are sufficient opportunities for them to be involved in their own learning.

Language and literacy

62. By the time they are five, most children attain standards that exceed those expected for their age. They listen attentively, and because they do it regularly they are able to read some simple sentences, such as: 'There are _ boys and _ girls here today.' They identify objects which begin with 'r'. They joke that if 'jasmine' began with 'r', it would be 'rasmine'. They recognise all lower and upper case letters, know the sounds they make and some of the letter names. They can suggest phonetically plausible spelling such as 'r-o-p' for 'rope' and, when asked, suggest that there should be an 'e' on the end. They know that 'ck' often go together and know how to spell an 'ing' ending. Some, from a collection of words beginning with 'r', correctly match the name to the object. When helping their teacher to write 'Now I am five', they know that a capital 'N' is needed and can explain why. Nearly all know the letters in the word 'now', although several reverse the last two.

Mathematics

63. By the time they are five, most children exceed the expected standards. They check each day to see how many are in the class, and know that if there are five girls and nine boys, that is 14 altogether. They write 14 and know that it is made up of a ten and a four. They work out the difference between the two when the girls find a partner and they count the boys who remain. All have a solid understanding of number bonds to ten and many are confident with numbers up to 20. Many can order the days of the week and some can name the month. They work on symmetry when doing a topic based on *The Hungry Caterpillar* and extend their mathematical understanding when working on the computer on a range of programs, including sequencing. They estimate using scoops of sand, use string to measure the height of the towers they build, and compare the results of their measurements.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

64. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world exceeds that expected of children by the time they are five. They describe how things work – a rocking horse, for example. They know that a battery is often used to power toys. They comment on the shiny surface of a robot and want to know what makes it shine. They explain that it is the air inside an inflated ring that makes it float and know that a palm tree may well be a coconut palm. They learn to think. For example, some work out which country a child visited if he went to the French Alps. All can name a number of things that they can do now which, as babies, they were unable to do. One boy pointed out that when he was nine months old, he was really 0! Their knowledge of the world is increased as they engage in activities such as making bird cakes and floating large coloured ice cubes in uncoloured water to see if they will melt.

Physical development

65. The children's physical development is satisfactory, although experience with large play equipment is limited by lack of access to a secure, imaginative outdoor play area with equipment of a suitable size. However, the slope of the playgrounds would make the use of wheeled toys difficult. Staff create the best opportunities they can for the children by supervising them on the climbing apparatus erected for the older pupils. The children go swimming for two full terms. There are opportunities for pupils to cut, fold and stick. Physical control is developed through regular use of the computer keyboard and mouse. In physical education pupils learn confidence in the water and, in a playground lesson, showed above average attainment in an awareness of the need for space when moving forwards and in reverse.

Creative development

66. Children explore rhymes as they enjoy *Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes*, remembering to omit one extra body part in each verse. They learn about colour as they mix red and yellow to produce orange, and appreciate the springtime flowers when they draw and paint daffodils. They make clay snowmen and have regular access to dough. The role-play area provides diverse opportunities for imaginative play: a vet's surgery for example, following on the children's experience of a visit to the local vet. When this area is changed to something different, the children are involved. For example, a large cardboard ambulance was transformed by the children themselves – and a lot of red paint – into a post van.

ENGLISH

67. The very small cohort in Year 2 does not allow a secure judgement to be made on attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. However, the evidence available suggests that the standard is good.

68. The 1999 national test results show that, at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected level, Level 4, and the higher level, Level 5, were close to the national average. These standards are well below those of similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that current standards just reach satisfactory levels and that the school is unlikely to meet its declared target of 82 per cent of pupils reaching Level 4 or above. This downward trend in results is attributable to the current cohort of pupils in Year 6, over 40 per cent of whom are on the register for special educational needs.

69. There is no significant difference in the standards that pupils attain in the speaking, listening and writing components of English. All are satisfactory. Standards in reading are good. Skills in literacy make a sound contribution to work in other areas of the curriculum, particularly in science, and information technology skills are appropriately used to support work in English. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive support that is matched to their needs, although the additional teaching they are given is not always at an appropriate time.

70. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Pupils have the confidence to speak in front of their classmates, and many are articulate. While they have regular opportunities to speak, the school does not place a heavy emphasis on developing speaking skills, and valuable opportunities, particularly in the plenary sessions of lessons, are lost. The extent to which pupils listen attentively is variable. Teachers are not consistent in expecting pupils to put up their hand when they wish to speak, particularly in Years 1 to 4, with the result that they often shout out an answer, registering their expectation of the right to be heard.

71. Standards in reading are good overall despite being only sound in the current Year 6. Pupils enter Year 1 with very good standards. As pupils progress through the school, these standards are depressed slightly before they rise again in the final two years. Reading standards in Year 5 currently exceed those in Year 6. Parents make a valuable contribution to standards, particularly with the younger pupils. Pupils read a range of books but, too frequently, the range fails to incorporate non-fiction or poetry books. Books available in the library could easily - but seldom do - form part of pupils' choice.

72. Standards in writing are sound overall and pupils make steady progress through the school. The presentation of work is never less than satisfactory and the accuracy of spelling is a relative strength. Basic punctuation is secure, though relatively few pupils use commas to introduce or conclude direct speech or to separate clauses in sentences. The few pupils who are able to demonstrate these skills also experiment with sentences of different lengths when they write. One Year 6 pupil, for example, wrote: "He is covered in freckles, but wishes he wasn't. He wears a long, black, sweeping cloak and a maroon woollen sweater which his mum sent to him at Christmas". Pupils have regular opportunities to write at length and some of these are cleverly interwoven with work in other subjects. These are valuable opportunities. Years 5 and 6, for example, having looked at the work of Raymond Briggs as author / illustrator, then tried to apply what they had learned to produce a Greek myth.

73. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are satisfactory but there are three related features that prevent them making better progress than they do. Firstly, pupils in this school expect to be listened to and so frequently shout out answers along with a number of their classmates. This is particularly noticeable in Years 1 to 4 and arises because their teachers are not consistent in expecting pupils to put up their hands. The result, too often, is that no one really hears what is being said. It is not inherent in the pupils themselves, because Reception class children, working with the nursery nurse, put up their hands as a matter of course. Secondly, there are occasional displays of truculence or an unwillingness to respond to a teacher's question even though they clearly know the answer. This happens when the pace of the lesson is too slow and / or lacking in challenge, and is easily eradicated when these conditions are countered. Finally, in some lessons, older pupils 'switch off' because the language and style of speech used by their teacher is pitched at the youngest pupils in the group, who are three or four years their junior.

74. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in individual lessons. Of the four observed, three were sound and one, good. However, the curricular arrangements made for literacy and the inappropriate deployment of staff are factors which, although outside the remit of the classroom teacher, do have a negative impact on the potential for pupils to make progress on a daily basis. The cumulative effect is that literacy teaching is disjointed. The

teaching groups contain too wide an age range. Although the setting policy adopted by the school for three days each week could be used to reduce both the age and ability ranges in a teaching group, it does not do so. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support but this is often during a complete literacy session, and the pupils involved miss the work in which the rest of the group is engaged. One third of all pupils in Years 2 to 6 are taught literacy by either three or four different adults each week, and this has a negative impact on continuity. The school does not provide pupils with a daily literacy hour which follows the recommended format.

75. The one particularly good feature of teaching is the assessments that teachers make. They know the pupils very well. However, this cannot be put to best use when so many adults are involved with one child. The most significant weakness is the pace of teaching. It is sometimes slow, and teachers do not always make it clear to pupils what it is they want them to learn. The absence of a structured literacy hour also often means that there is not a clear and measurable learning focus to the lesson.

76. Resources in English are adequate, including library stock and books for groups of pupils to read together. There is, temporarily, no literacy co-ordinator in school, but the headteacher is keeping a watching brief. While the school is clearly pursuing higher standards in the subject, the setting action it has taken is unlikely to have the desired effect. In addition to the lack of continuity of teaching, there are two significant features which depress standards in English and keep them well below those of similar schools. The first is the lack of a daily literacy hour and the second, the absence of clear learning intentions for each section of lessons.

MATHEMATICS

77. Because of the very small cohort of three Year 2 pupils it was not possible to make secure judgments on overall levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, there is a wide range of attainment in the current cohort of pupils, but overall they are attaining standards equivalent to those expected nationally.

78. At the beginning of the current school year the school adopted the scheme of work and programmes of study of the National Numeracy Strategy. To some extent the grouping and teaching arrangements have meant that not all lessons comply fully with the recommended lesson format and grouping structure, although pupils do undertake a wide range of work in all areas of mathematics. For example, samples of work indicate that, in both key stages, pupils have undertaken a range of work on shape, space and measures, and have tackled a variety of problems involving handling data and investigation. Pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in other curriculum areas such as science and design technology, and information technology is used effectively to consolidate concepts and develop pupils' numeracy skills.

79. In Key Stage 1, most pupils in Year 1 are able to count up to 20, using a number line, and recognise that the '5', '9' and '12' markers are missing. A majority is able to identify odd and even numbers. When using the class shop, pupils are answering such questions as, "How much will it cost to make a fruit salad?" and are using mental strategies to solve simple story problems set in real life, finding simple totals and giving change. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils in a 'below average' group, consisting of Year 2 to Year 5 pupils withdrawn from

the classroom, are adding two, two-digit numbers, in most cases accurately. They are solving problems by organising and interpreting numerical data in pictograms, each symbol representing one unit. This is below the level of attainment expected for their age. Similarly, Year 4 and Year 5 pupils in this group are working below, and in some cases well below, expectations for their age. Most Year 4 pupils in a 'middle ability' mathematics group containing pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 are attaining above expectations for their age. Pupils are able to mentally add two single-digit numbers and subtract the answer from 20. They are reinforcing their understanding of the equivalence between simple decimals, fractions and percentages. They are ordering sets of decimal numbers, considering strategies for doing so and using the symbols for 'greater than' and 'less than' correctly.

80. Year 6 pupils in an 'above average' set consisting of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are working above expectations for their age. They describe and visualise the properties of solid shapes, and use terminology such as 'apex,' 'base' and 'vertices'. In their investigation of patterns formed by triangular numbers, they use and apply mathematics in real-life situations, search for patterns in their own results, make general statements from their own evidence, and explain their reasoning. Although the level of attainment of a significant minority of the current cohort of Year 6 pupils is above expectations, this is balanced by a proportion of Year 6 pupils working below expectations for their age. Overall, the level of attainment at the end of the key stage is satisfactory.

81. The quality of learning in the majority of lessons seen at both key stages was satisfactory, although in one lesson observed in Key Stage 2 the quality of learning was very good. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics work, especially the mental and oral activities, respond to their teachers, and work together without the need for constant teacher-intervention. In some lessons however, pupils shout out answers, fail to put up their hands to answer the teacher's questions after repeated requests to do so, and act immaturely. Where the quality of learning was very good, in the 'above average' Year 5 / 6 set, pupils were very well motivated by the challenges set by their teacher, and worked hard and enthusiastically to solve them. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for in teachers' planning with appropriately leveled work and additional support. They make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in their mathematics lessons are satisfactory overall at both key stages. Where attitudes and behaviour were very good, in the Year 5 / 6 lesson, pupils were clearly enjoying their work, collaborating well, and responding very well to the challenges and pace set by their teacher.

82. Four lessons were observed during the inspection, one lesson in Key Stage 1 and three in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1 was satisfactory. In Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good, teaching was satisfactory overall. In the best lesson, the teacher generated a very good working atmosphere, used praise effectively and consistently, and encouraged pupils to use appropriate mathematical vocabulary. The teacher had very good working relationships with the pupils and high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. In other lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, but the general, following and sometimes including the quick mental / oral activity, was not always sufficient to retain pupils' interest and enthusiasm.

83. Funding has been provided to purchase additional resources for the new numeracy curriculum. All teaching staff have received appropriate training in the numeracy strategy. The headteacher monitors teaching in the subject but this process is in the very early stages of development and has not made an impact on quality.

SCIENCE

84. The results of the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that standards in science were well above both national standards and those achieved by similar schools. The proportions of pupils achieving the expected level, Level 4, and the higher level, Level 5, were both well above national averages. Current inspection findings are less positive, but standards are still above national averages. This apparent fall is due to the normal variation between one cohort of pupils and another, particularly where the numbers involved are small. The very small number of pupils in Year 2 prevents a secure judgement on standards at the end of Key Stage 1.

85. Throughout both Key Stages, pupils have ample opportunity for investigative work. In fact, most of the science work in the school is underpinned by a strong emphasis on practical work. More important, however, is the way in which the link is forged between the practical work and what it ‘means’ scientifically. This is a particular strength of the school’s provision.

86. Pupils in Year 1 sort objects into ‘material’ categories which they select themselves – ‘plastic’, ‘fabric’ and ‘metal’, for example. They place their fingers over their voice box and feel the vibrations as they speak. They do simple experiments with their school bell to see how far sound travels, and notice that plants grow well when they have air, sun and water. In Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils find out which materials do and do not conduct electricity, and which of their shoes has the best grip; they use a Venn diagram to sort conductors and insulators. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 investigate the possibility of sound travelling through solid objects, look at how shadows are formed, take their pulse before and after activity, and find out the sort of surfaces that reflect light.

87. In all classes, each topic is dealt with thoroughly and usually at a level appropriate to age. As pupils progress through the school, the way in which they record their work becomes more sophisticated. Scrutiny of this work shows that pupils understand how to construct a fair test and are able to draw conclusions from practical activities. Pupils’ writing skills are well developed through science. They are clearly used to producing a detailed report on their practical work and have frequent opportunities to devise ways of recording the data they have collected.

88. Pupils’ attitudes and behaviour are variable, as they are in other subjects. When the lesson interests them and moves at a pace that retains their interest, they behave very well. Year 5 pupils took a very responsible attitude to their group work, even though not under the teacher’s direct supervision, and were keen to report their findings to the rest of the class.

89. Two lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching in one was very good, and in the other it was unsatisfactory. There was just one feature which separated the lessons so much in quality and that was their pace. The first lesson was fast moving, with each section timed by the teacher and a very clear explanation to the pupils of what they were expected to accomplish. Practical work focused on the effect on a bulb in a circuit of altering the length of wire, its thickness, or the material from which it was made. Time was set aside at the end of the lesson for pupils to report on their practical work, and this was well orchestrated. Pupils learned from the findings of other groups. In the second lesson, pupils produced lists of materials – those they might use in design and technology and those that might be used in buildings. The pace of the lesson was sedentary and the work could have been accomplished in a fraction of the time that it actually took. It could also have offered significantly more challenge.

90. The science co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and a good awareness of standards in the subject. She monitors the quality of work effectively through looking at pupils' books but does not have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. The quality of written recording that she encourages gives pupils good opportunities to practise their literacy skills. She ensures that a comprehensive scientific vocabulary is built up as pupils progress through the school, and makes good use of science facilities at the local secondary school to supplement pupils' overall experience. She has built science into a particular strength of the school.

ART and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. These two subjects are sometimes taught in combination, for example when producing book covers or replicating ancient Greek pots. Evidence is very limited because no lessons were observed, very little work appeared in pupils' sketch books, and there was only a very small amount of design and technology on display. Judgements on standards are therefore not possible, although evidence provided by work on display does show that pupils throughout the school have undertaken an appropriate range of work in both of these subjects.

92. The oldest pupils use a blue wash, followed by charcoal to produce effective tree silhouettes. They learn some skills of perspective when drawing a landscape, and use clay to make Greek pots before painting them with a typical design. For a competition, all Key Stage 2 pupils design and make a vehicle that will transport them around The Millennium Dome. They look at 'colour in art' by studying the work of Piet Mondrian and Jackson Pollock. The youngest pupils combine crayon and sand to produce a 'by the sea' drawing and use junk materials to make a range of jungle animals.

GEOGRAPHY

93. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection at Key Stage 1, and only one lesson at Key Stage 2. From this, not enough evidence was available to enable secure judgements to be made on pupils' progress, attitudes and behaviour or the quality of teaching in the subject. Evidence provided by a scrutiny of samples of pupils' work, however, shows that, during the current school year, pupils have undertaken an appropriate range of work.

94. In the lesson observed, Year 4 pupils in a class consisting of Year 2 to Year 4 pupils were continuing their study of India, having previously studied the life of a boy from Bombay in the city and village. In their studies of human and physical features of Indian life, they showed an understanding that buildings depend on the climate and that settlements differ in size and reflect their locality. They described and compared the physical and human features of different localities and offered explanations for their location, recognising that different places have characteristics both similar and different. Work samples show that Reception and Year 1 pupils have looked at the seaside, rocks and shells, learned about the climate by the sea, and undertaken a mini project on Australia during the year. Year 5 and 6 pupils have studied the development of rivers, considering springs, weirs, reservoirs, lakes and deltas. They have looked at climate zones, comparing holiday destinations, and studied the states of Europe.

95. Teaching in the one lesson observed was satisfactory. The teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge, maintained an overall satisfactory pace through the lesson and, after a slow start, motivated pupils well. Through good individual support, pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work in progress. The lesson was well prepared and resourced, with a good range of photographs.

96. The school has adopted the scheme of work published by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority for the subject and geography units of work are alternated over a two-year cycle with history units. There is a satisfactory range of resources for the subject.

HISTORY

97. One history lesson was observed during the inspection at each key stage, and work sampling provided additional evidence of pupils' work. During the current school year, Year 1 pupils have looked at 'What homes were like a long time ago' and 'Famous people in history'. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 have studied 'Invaders and Settlers' and, at the time of inspection, Year 5 and 6 pupils were involved in a study of the Ancient Greeks. It is evident from discussion with pupils, scrutiny of pupils' books, work on display around the school and photographic evidence provided by the school, that pupils at both key stages make appropriate progress in history.

98. In the one lesson observed at Key Stage 1, pupils distinguished between holidays to the seaside in Victorian times and now. They asked and answered questions and developed a sense of chronology by sequencing events and objects and using common terms to describe the passage of time. They learned about aspects of the past and became aware of differences between then and now, through a variety of historical sources. In Key Stage 2, for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils researched the Ancient Olympics, using the Internet to answer such questions as; "When were the first Olympics?", "What events were held?" And "how were horses used?" Pupils choose, recall and present historical information, including dates and terminology, and ask and answer appropriate questions.

99. Overall, judgements about the quality of teaching in the subject are not possible, since only two lessons were observed. However, teaching in the Key Stage 1 lesson was satisfactory overall. The teacher frequently and repeatedly had to remind pupils not to shout out, but a good range of resources was provided, and these motivated most pupils and encouraged them to respond satisfactorily to the lesson. In the Key Stage 2 lesson observed,

teaching was good. The teacher demonstrated good subject knowledge and a good awareness of what information was available for pupils in each book and web-site. Resources for the lesson were very well prepared.

100. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in history lessons, although satisfactory overall at both key stages, were less than satisfactory in some areas. For example, a significant proportion of younger pupils required constant reminders to concentrate and respond appropriately, and some older pupils found it difficult to share their work, responding with "Find out for yourself!" when asked for help by their peers.

101. History is organised over three two-year rolling programmes of topics. At times, history topics alternate with geography topics and at other times there are joint subject topics. The school has adopted the Qualification and Curriculum Authority scheme of work for history.

102. There is a good range of resources for the subject and good use is made of such local historical resources as Chepstow Castle and of visitors to the school for example an older resident who came to talk about the school in 'her day'. The co-ordinator for the subject has good subject-knowledge and has undertaken some training for teaching staff on the use of the Internet for historical research.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

103. No specific information technology (IT) lessons were observed during the inspection. However, a number of lessons were observed where pupils were working at the computer. Together with samples of on-screen work and print-outs produced using the computers, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that attainment in information technology is good overall at the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in the area of communicating and handling information. No secure judgement of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was possible, owing to the very small cohort of pupils. Indications are, however, that pupils in both key stages make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in information technology lessons.

104. The pupils make good use of their information technology skills in other curriculum areas such as mathematics, history, geography and religious education. For example, Year 3 pupils confidently and independently use the computers to write letters. They show good keyboard skills, delete and correct their work confidently, and use the spell-checker to edit their work. Year 3 and 4 pupils, carrying out personal research in a religious education lesson, log on to the computers with a password and gain access to the Internet without assistance. Working entirely independently, they select a search engine, choosing to search on 'UK sites only', and download information on Muslims and Hindus, finding and printing, for example, a web-page on Diwali. Year 6 pupils produce pie charts and bar charts of information gathered about their peers. They use the school's digital camera to take photographs of their activities and has established Internet links with pupils in Randwick School, Australia.

105. In both key stages, pupils' response to working at the computers in lessons, and the quality of learning during these activities, was good. Most pupils were well-motivated, working together well, taking turns and working independently, generally without the need for significant intervention or supervision by the teacher. Information technology skills were not being specifically taught in the majority of lessons observed, but where the computer was being used in lessons, teachers and support staff had appropriate expectations of work and behaviour, gave clear explanations of the task to be completed, and showed good subject knowledge.

106. The school's resources have been improved significantly since the last inspection through a successful bid for National Grid for Learning funding for equipment and training. This has been used to purchase additional computers and develop an information technology 'base' in the school hall, easily accessible from the three classrooms and with four multi-media computers linked to the Internet. These new resources are being used effectively and are having a positive impact on the skills and confidence both of pupils and of teachers. A good range of software is available for the new machines. The school has a digital camera which is used by staff and pupils, and a floor turtle, used to develop control skills.

MUSIC

107. Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection, a Year 1 lesson. There were very few opportunities to judge pupils' attainment in music. There was some tuneful singing in assemblies to an accompanying compact disc, but most music in the school is taught by a specialist teacher who works in the school for one day per week, which was not one of the inspection days. It is therefore not possible to make secure judgements on pupils' progress in music, their attitudes to the subject, or the quality of teaching.

108. However, in the one music lesson observed, pupils' attitudes and behaviour and the quality of learning were unsatisfactory, due to unsatisfactory teaching. In this lesson, Reception and Year 1 pupils were reluctant to do as they were asked, carrying on clapping, for example, after the teacher has asked them to stop. The teacher used a taped BBC music programme, but without any pauses or interruptions to replay a section, repeat songs or teach pupils the words. Pupils chattered during the tape and found it difficult to follow the taped instructions. They were given accompanying booklets and made an attempt to follow the song but, since many were unable to read the text, most were puzzled by the teacher's instructions and very limited progress was made.

109. The part-time teacher and acting music co-ordinator is well qualified and teaches all pupils in classes 2 and 3 for one lesson per week. In addition, she accompanies singing in assemblies, takes a recorder group, and organises and rehearses choirs for carol services, the harvest festival, school drama productions such as *Children of the Blitz*, and concerts such as the Cheltenham International Festival of Music. A peripatetic teacher visits the school for keyboard and instrumental tuition. School resources for the subject are satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

110. Observations of lessons indicate that pupils make good progress overall in physical education in both key stages. All pupils attend a local swimming pool for one lesson per week for two terms during the school year and by the end of the key stage the great majority of pupils are confident swimmers, easily able to swim 25 metres.

111. In Key Stage 1, in a physical education lesson in the school playground, Year 1 pupils understood that exercise 'is good for your health' and pursued activities that developed their endurance and muscular strength. In undertaking a range of group activities, they responded willingly to the teacher's instructions and worked well together.

112. They are developing control, co-ordination and balance and practicing a range of ways of sending and receiving a ball. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils rehearsed country dancing in preparation for a local Country Dancing festival and learned traditional dances such as *The King's Silver Jig*. They co-ordinated hand-claps and movements, worked with partners, skipped in time to the music and thoroughly enjoyed the activities, trying hard to follow and use the new steps. In the swimming lesson, most Year 6 pupils swam both front and back crawl confidently, unaided and safely.

113. The quality of learning in the Key Stage 1 lesson was satisfactory. In the Key Stage 2 lessons it was good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in physical education lessons is never less than good at both key stages. Pupils participate enthusiastically, work together well, relate well to their peers and to adults and, in most cases, take part in the activities confidently. Pupils enjoy the activities, respond well, and support each other.

114. Since only a small sample of lessons was seen, it is not possible to make overall judgments about the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1, but the teaching in the one lesson observed was satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching in the Key Stage 2 lessons was good. Where teaching was good, for example in the swimming lesson, the teacher showed good subject knowledge, used praise appropriately, had high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, gave very clear instructions and maintained a good pace throughout the lesson, changing activities frequently to maintain pupils' interest and enthusiasm.

115. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory for the taught curriculum. On-site facilities are limited; the school hall is too small for physical education lessons and there is no school field for games. Nevertheless, the school has the use of a field a short distance away for games and the use of the village hall for gymnastics and dance. In addition, the school has good connections with partner institutions – the local secondary school and Sports & Leisure Centre, for example. These allow use of their facilities and, in addition, a very good range of sport-related extra-curricular activities is provided. At different times during the current school year, there has been coaching by visiting specialists in country dancing, rugby, football, basketball and cricket. In addition, there has been the annual residential visit, where pupils have experienced outdoor and adventurous activities such as abseiling, canoeing and rock climbing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Since only one religious education lesson was observed, in Key Stage 2, there is not enough evidence to determine pupils' attainment in religious education at the end of the key stage. This one lesson provided insufficient evidence to allow secure judgements on pupils' attitudes and behaviour or the quality of teaching.

117. In the lesson observed, Year 4 pupils in a class of Year 2 to Year 4 pupils were undertaking personal research, finding out about Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Muslim beliefs, customs and symbols. Pupils were working well together in groups, using books and other printed resources, and confidently accessing information from the Internet, using search engines to find information, for example on Diwali. The quality of teaching in this lesson was good. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and encouraged pupils with her enthusiasm for the subject. Clear time-targets were given and the lesson moved along at a good pace.

118. The school follows the Gloucester locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. In readiness for Curriculum 2000, the co-ordinator has been involved in adapting the recently published and newly revised syllabus. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, well informed and supportive of teachers. There is a developing and generally good range of artefacts and resources to support work in the subject, and a good range of resources for teachers.