

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BOURTON-ON-THE-WATER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Bourton-on-the-Water, Cheltenham**

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115506

Headteacher: Mr A G Huggard

Reporting inspector: Mr R E Helliwell - 5535

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 192503

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Hill Bourton-on-the-Water Cheltenham Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL54 2AU
Telephone number:	01451 820458
Fax number:	01451 810224
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Pickup
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr R E Helliwell	Registered inspector	Science; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Kalms	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr P Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Physical education.	
Mrs F Ruddick	Team inspector	Art and design; Geography; History; Religious education; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs S West	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; English; Design and technology; Music.	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This community primary school of broadly average size caters for 243 boys and girls from the ages of 4+ to 11 years. Numbers have risen from 199 in 1995 to 243 in 2000 and the school is over-subscribed. Children begin in September of the year in which they become five. At inspection, there were 36 pupils below the age of six in the 'Foundation Stage',<sup>1</sup> most in a Reception class but five in a Year 1/Reception class. At entry, children's skills usually are broadly average overall but the 2000 intake was above average.

Nearly all families are of British heritage, with a very small minority coming from black Caribbean or non-English-speaking European communities. English is an additional language for two pupils: at inspection, one spoke very little English. Most pupils live in Bourton, but about 25 per cent travel from surrounding villages. Forty-three pupils (18 per cent) have special educational needs; of these, three have statements of special educational need, one of whom is physically impaired. There is some 'turbulence' - about 13 per cent of pupils joined who did not begin their education here or left during the previous school year before the age of 11 years. Families come from a broad range of social circumstances. Just about nine per cent of pupils are entitled to receive free school meals.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school is effective: it is very effective in some aspects and effective in many others. A few matters only require some attention. Leadership is good: the headteacher and governors work well together. The quality of teaching is mostly good and some is very good. Standards in most subjects are at least satisfactory, some are better than this and National Curriculum test results in mathematics are well above average<sup>2</sup> at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils behave very well and, in the main, make good progress. The school spends its broadly average income wisely and provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in mathematics, particularly number work, are very high at both key stages.
- Pupils speak and listen very well.
- Standards are better than national expectations<sup>3</sup> in: design and technology at Key Stage 1; history at Key Stage 2; and art and design, geography and physical education at both key stages.
- Children's attainments are on course to be very high by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Taken as a whole, teaching is of good quality.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Nearly all pupils' behaviour is very good and their attitudes to school are very positive.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English at both key stages have declined in recent years from well above to national averages.
- Standards are below national expectations in information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 and in music at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Assessment of pupils' work against National Curriculum levels is not undertaken with sufficient regularity.

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

<sup>1</sup> From September 2000, children are deemed to be in the 'Foundation Stage' up to the age of 5+ - that is, prior to entering Key Stage 1 in Year 1. The Foundation Stage caters for children aged 3+ to 5+.

<sup>2</sup> National averages refer to the percentages of pupils nationally who achieve particular levels in English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at ages 7 and 11.

<sup>3</sup> National expectations are those standards, laid out by Her Majesty's Government in the National Curriculum, which pupils are expected to achieve by a particular age.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. Since then, many aspects have maintained similarly good qualities, some standards have risen and a few aspects remain weak or have weakened. On the whole, parents' views of the school are even more positive than reported previously. Standards in mathematics have improved substantially at both key stages. Pupils' oracy is higher now than before, and more pupils have met or exceeded national expectations in: design and technology at Key Stage 1; history at Key Stage 2; and art and design, geography and physical education at both key stages. Standards achieved by pupils prior to beginning National Curriculum studies in Year 1 are higher. All the issues raised by the previous inspection report have been properly pursued. For example, governors' work with the school has strengthened, and better provision has been made for teaching information and communication technology.

On the other hand, standards in English at both key stages are weaker now than those reported previously when they were judged to be well above average. Standards of music and design and technology are weaker at Key Stage 2. Some minor issues, mentioned in the previous report, have not been sufficiently rectified. For example, parents still say they do not get enough information about the curriculum, and nothing has been done to provide an enclosed space for physical activity for pupils aged under six years.

## 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A	B	C	C
mathematics	A	C	A	A
science	A	C	C	C

**Key**

well above average above      A

average                              B

average                              C

below average                    D

well below average              E

At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English have fallen from well above to close to national averages. On the other hand, standards in mathematics have improved at rates similar to national trends and there has been improvement in science - both subjects are close to national averages. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards have also fallen in English, but rates of decline have slowed and are close to national averages. Standards in mathematics have improved at greater rates than national trends and are well above national averages. In science, a decline in standards has been arrested and results have improved between 1999 and 2000 to be close to national averages. In all other subjects, standards are in line with or exceed national expectations except at Key Stage 1 in information and communication technology, and music at Key Stage 2 where they are below. Initially, targets for 2001 were insufficiently challenging but these have been revised and those proposed are now more realistic and challenging.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils' attitudes are very positive; they enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Nearly all pupils behave very well; the school is a friendly and orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Teachers know the pupils well and keep checks on how they are getting on.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

Children at the Foundation Stage settle in very well and form good relationships. As they grow older, pupils willingly help but rarely take the initiative to comment: they make few suggestions about desirable improvements to school life.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 6 years	aged 6-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Some very good, some satisfactory; good on the whole	Good

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

Fifty-nine lessons, or parts of lessons, were seen. On the whole, teaching quality is good, which results in good progress for most pupils. Ninety-seven per cent of teaching is satisfactory or better; 68 per cent is good or better and 39 per cent is very good or excellent. Teaching at the Foundation Stage is most often very good, with very good relationships, good planning and efficient and effective team work. At the beginning of Key Stage 1, teaching is most often very good; towards the end it is satisfactory. At inspection, teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson of English. At the outset of Key Stage 2, teaching is mainly satisfactory. In the middle, most teaching is good or very good - the remainder is satisfactory except in one lesson of music where at inspection it was unsatisfactory. On the whole, the differing needs of pupils are soundly provided for. The progress which pupils make varies: it is very rapid in the first years, steady towards the end of Key Stage 1 and in some early parts of Key Stage 2; it is mostly rapid in the middle of Key Stage 2 and more steady towards the end. Teaching in English is mostly satisfactory and, in mathematics, it is usually good. Literacy skills are taught satisfactorily, but progress in word decoding skills and phonic understanding is irregular. Numeracy skills are taught well and are built on quite rapidly. Overall, progress being made in lessons during the inspection was good; pupils usually responded well and applied themselves to their learning.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced; it is often made interesting and is regularly based on interesting events and visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	On the whole, there is good provision. Pupils are identified early and extra support is given. Progress is most often good, but on occasions is unsatisfactory when no extra help is provided in class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The pupil with very little English is well supported and is making progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	On the whole, pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils learn to take responsibility, reflect on life's events and understand about living together. Cultural development is sound, but awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society is not sufficiently promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for well, but some of the routines and systems merit further improvement.

Pupils' academic performance is monitored well at the end of years, and at times these data are used well to influence long-term curricular planning. Often, the curriculum is enriched by interesting visits or suitable experiences in history, geography, art and design, physical education and religious education. Some aspects of music and information and communication technology are not well provided. There is very good care and attention for the pupil with physical impairment, and he is very well integrated into school activities.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership is good; the headteacher provides a strong lead, and governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors discharge their responsibilities well. They have planned very well for the very recent influx of a large number of new governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors its performance well, particularly in finding and using data about pupils' attainments at the end of years. Teaching quality is monitored regularly which ensures it remains good on the whole.
The strategic use of resources	Funds are handled very well and efficiently. Much energy has been used in establishing new buildings and bringing accommodation up to standard. Grants are used for the purposes intended.

Governors have much strengthened their procedures since the previous inspection. The headteacher provides a strong lead in using the principles of best value to gain a better quality environment. There are sufficient numbers of teachers and support staff to provide for pupils of these ages. Accommodation is more than adequate. Very recently, new permanent classrooms have been built and so there now is sufficient permanent accommodation for the number of pupils, and a little flexibility to use space for such aspects as the planned information and communication technology suite. On the whole, learning resources are adequate.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very many parents say their child(ren) like(s) school.</li> <li>• Most parents believe their child(ren) is/are making good progress.</li> <li>• Very many say they are comfortable in approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• Most believe their child(ren) is/are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Most parents say strongly that the school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Most say strongly that the school helps their child(ren) to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents believe there is insufficient homework.</li> <li>• Some parents do not believe they know how well their child(ren) is/are getting on.</li> <li>• Some wonder if the school works closely enough with the parents.</li> <li>• Some question whether or not there is an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Overall, there is good support for the school: this has strengthened since the previous inspection. At the pre-inspection meeting, the views expressed by parents were similar to those received in written responses and similarly positive to the answers given in the questionnaires. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and also that some of the small amount of criticism is justified. Sufficient homework is planned, but it is not set consistently in line with the policy. Some reports are unclear about pupils' progress. Nothing at inspection showed a lack of willingness to work closely with parents. On the whole, there is not the usual number of extra-curricular activities found in many schools of this type, but there is a wide range of sporting activities for older pupils. The school has been briefed about all comments but without reference to particular sources.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, National Curriculum tests results show that standards in reading are at the national averages and similar to those schools with which this one is compared.<sup>4</sup> Since the previous inspection, the trend has been for a decline in standards, contrary to national trends which show improvement on the whole. Also, writing standards declined from 1996 until 1999, but regained national averages in 2000 and were then similar to comparator schools. On the other hand, standards in mathematics have improved at rates similar to the national trend since 1996, and in 2000 remain at the national average but below average when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments for science in 2000 were broadly in line with national averages which is some improvement on the below average results in 1999.

2. At the end of Key Stage 2, National Curriculum test results show that standards in English have declined since 1996 - from well above average to around national averages, but rates of decline slowed in 2000. Standards are similar to those with which this school is compared. In mathematics, standards have improved at greater than national rates to be well above the national average and well above the average when compared to similar schools. In science, standards attained in National Curriculum tests declined from well above average to around the national average. However, in 2000, results recovered and between 1999 and 2000 improvement was similar to national trends and standards remain at the national average. Taken as a whole, at Key Stage 1 boys tend to perform better than girls, but at Key Stage 2 girls' and boys' attainments are little different from each other and the national picture. There were no discernible differences in the treatment of boys and girls during the inspection. However, some teaching was less challenging for higher attainers towards the end of Key Stage 1.

3. Targets were set for the proportion of pupils to achieve level 4 or better in 2001. Although not a statutory requirement, science had been set at 90 per cent. The targets for English and mathematics were insufficiently challenging. If achieved, they will not make gains against similar schools in English and science, nor maintain current standards in mathematics. However, a review of targets is underway and those proposed are more realistic and offer some challenge.

4. At both key stages, pupils write reasonably well, but often without richness and imagination, except for those of higher prior attainment. Reading is similarly lacking in expression for pupils of average and below average attainment. At the end of both key stages, spelling is not always graphically or phonetically consistent or sufficiently accurate. Standards of speaking and listening on average are higher than national expectations: most pupils are on course to attain national expectations and many to exceed them. In mathematics, levels of numeracy are high. Pupils have the appropriate understanding of numbers and apply themselves well in using a range of different strategies to solve mathematical problems. They have good understanding of shape and space and handle data well. In science, most gain an appropriate knowledge about how things live, about the properties of materials and about such phenomena as force, gravity and how matter changes. However, most do not explain their observations well in scientific terms, and approach investigations and experiments at only rudimentary levels. This aspect is below expectations at both key stages, but particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. It is not as strong as reported at the previous inspection.

5. At inspection, the work of children at the Foundation Stage was of a very high standard with most on course to attain and many greatly to exceed the expectations by the end of the Reception Year. Many of these children are reading and writing well, speaking and communicating with confidence, developing a good understanding of their world, increasing in confidence and learning to control their bodies well in physical education lessons.

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<sup>4</sup> Similar schools are those schools nationally with which this one is compared: they have similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals.

6. Work seen during the inspection at both key stages mirrors the National Curriculum tests results in the core subjects. In some foundation subjects, standards are good. In art, most pupils draw and paint well to exceed national expectations at both key stages. In geography, the picture is similar with skills being developed well through use of the local environment. History at Key Stage 2 also exceeds national expectations. There are good examples of pupils using their access to historical artefacts to develop their knowledge and understanding. In physical education also, standards are high, with most pupils skilful in control of their physical activity and good at evaluating their work to identify improvements. In all other subjects, except information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 and music at Key Stage 2, standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with national expectations: most pupils are on course to attain them. In information and communication technology at Key Stage 1, pupils have only rudimentary knowledge of computers and how to operate them. In music at Key Stage 2, most pupils do not perform well or develop suitable skills in reading musical notation and playing instruments. Nor do they have sufficient knowledge about music. Singing standards are satisfactory.

7. In lessons, pupils make good progress on the whole. Progress is very rapid at the Foundation Stage and outset of Key Stage 1, but it is moderate towards the end of this key stage. At the outset of Key Stage 2, progress is steady for most pupils. In the middle, progress is often rapid but steady on the whole towards the end of the key stage, particularly in the core subjects. Gifted and talented pupils are not identified as a matter of policy, nor is their progress monitored. However, when pupils are seen to have specific gifts in music or physical education, for example, special arrangements are sometimes made for them to increase their progress in their particular skill. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress on the whole. In small groups with the teacher for special educational needs, progress is at least good and sometimes even more rapid. It is often steady in class when teachers give pupils extra attention or provide them with suitably modified work, but it is sometimes slow when this is not the case in about one-third of lessons. The one pupil with English as an additional language is making progress.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. Nearly all pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Mostly, they behave very well in lessons and around the school; the relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are most often very good. These are strengths of the school, and it is the combination of these factors that produces a positive learning experience for almost all pupils. In Reception, pupils establish good working habits and quickly settle into school routines, becoming happy, confident and motivated learners. At both key stages, nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. They are enthusiastic and well motivated, in response to some very good teaching.

9. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is usually very good. This has a positive effect on the quality of life and the learning that takes place. On a few occasions, behaviour is exemplary, for example when pupils in Year 6 worked independently during a mathematics lesson. Nearly all pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour expected and respond well to the high expectations implicit in the school's ethos which has been established over many years. Nearly always, they play well together in the playground: harassment and bullying are rare. Around school, nearly all pupils are friendly and polite to each other and to adults, including visitors. A majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire strongly agrees that behaviour in the school is good. Those who attended the pre-inspection meeting voiced similarly strong views. There have been no pupil exclusions.

10. Very good relationships have been established and are a strength of the school. Pupils relate very well with their teachers. In lessons, the good relationships between pupils and teachers make positive contributions to motivation and learning. Relationships with each other in lessons are positive and, although play outside is sometimes boisterous, relationships usually remain good. Nearly all respect each other's views and know how their actions might affect them. Activities in many lessons are teacher-led and sometimes restrict pupils' opportunities to select their own resources or to show initiative. However, when pupils are given opportunities to work together they co-operate well, as evident when pupils in Year 4 worked well together testing soils in a science lesson. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take responsibility in assisting with tasks and routines. These they carry out willingly and conscientiously. However, pupils do not often suggest other ways in which they might help.

11. Levels of attendance are good and above the national average. Attendance is 95.5 per cent: unauthorised absence is 0.15 per cent and authorised absence is 4.4 per cent. The school has maintained a high level of attendance since the previous inspection. There are few instances of unauthorised absences, the rate being below the national average. Mostly, pupils arrive punctually for school and the good attendance rates contribute to the progress which they make.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Fifty-nine lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In just three per cent (two lessons) was teaching judged to be unsatisfactory, and in 97 per cent it was satisfactory or better. In 68 per cent, teaching was good or better and in nearly 40 per cent it was very good or excellent. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good on the whole; at Key Stage 1, it is good overall - often very good early in the key stage and satisfactory towards the end of it. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good on the whole. It is sound at the onset, often good or better in the middle of the key stage, and at least satisfactory and sometimes better in the foundation subjects and towards the end of the key stage. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is never less than good in small withdrawal groups, but varies from being mostly satisfactory, sometimes good and sometimes unsatisfactory in class. The teaching of literacy is mainly satisfactory - resulting in steady progress. Numeracy is stronger and often very good at the outset of Key Stage 1 and the middle of Key Stage 2 - resulting in quite rapid progress. At Key Stage 2, the teaching of science and many foundation subjects is often good. The remainder is mostly satisfactory, but at inspection teaching was unsatisfactory in one lesson of music at Key Stage 2, and also in an English lesson at Key Stage 1.

13. In two out of every five lessons, teaching is judged to be of very good or excellent quality. These occur mainly at the Foundation Stage, the outset of Key Stage 1 and the middle of Key Stage 2, and for pupils with special educational needs. The main characteristics of this teaching are:

- very good relationships between pupils and teachers based on consistent praise and suitable caution or re-direction of effort; this sets clear expectations and establishes and maintains good working atmospheres;
- good subject knowledge which allows a very good match between teaching and all levels of attainment: this results in all groups making good progress;
- good pace to the teaching and the use of a suitably varied range of teaching strategies which keeps everyone involved and interested and provides opportunities to learn which are matched well to all pupils' needs;
- questions which are often probing to produce good responses from pupils and which help all to add to their previous knowledge;
- good amounts of interaction when pupils are often asked to respond to questions by independent thinking;
- some humour, warmth and enthusiasm which catch pupils' attention and enable them to respond positively and with interest.

14. For example, in a very good English lesson in Year 4, the teacher led by example with a lively, enthusiastic and positive attitude. The introduction was lively, quickly reviewing past work and challenging pupils' thinking. The teacher set clear expectations for good behaviour and positive work attitudes which she reinforced by praise and encouragement. Imagery about five emotions was taken further, building well on previous work. Reminders were provided often and, when pupils answered, their efforts were always welcomed and supported by advice and guidance. All pupils, lower and higher attainers, were suitably challenged and helped to refine their understanding by the teacher providing good examples of what was required. Pupils were asked to comment and develop their own thinking rather than being told the answers: this 'interaction' encouraged independent thinking and kept all engaged. All this produced heightened interest in selecting appropriate words and their use, and a deepening awareness of the power of words. In lessons such as this, progress for all pupils is very rapid, with all making substantial gains.

15. Teaching in about one-third of lessons is satisfactory. Progress in such lessons is steady on the whole. The three aspects which occur frequently and prevent such teaching from being of good quality are:

- the activities are not always planned and explained well enough and so the purposes are not clear to pupils although, because relationships are good, they try hard to complete their work. However, they do not learn rapidly during the allotted time;
- the work is not well matched to the full range of pupils' prior attainment - most usually higher attainers, but sometimes also for those with special educational needs;
- lessons are routine and instruction lacks impact. It is often in need of further illustration or

exemplification, and there is too much teacher talk. This sometimes results in pupils disengaging, becoming confused or only reacting properly when asked a question.

16. For example, in a mathematics lesson, an over-use of teacher's questioning and explanation produced a passive atmosphere and lack of interest. Despite the teacher having a good grasp of the mathematics Programme of Study, pupils were not provided with opportunities to become deeply involved by evaluating their own thinking. They spent too much time listening and too little engaged in their own learning and problem solving. Because a few pupils needed and received extra help, the whole class waited, progress slowed and higher attainers, in particular, lacked regular challenge and independency of response.

17. In the very little unsatisfactory teaching, the main contributory factors are:

- a lack of richness in the instruction, which is undertaken without the support of charts or illustrations and thus lacks impact;
- a poor match between the activities chosen and pupils' prior attainment, and so progress is slow;
- poor preparation and organization which slows the pace and causes inefficient use of the time available;
- little enthusiasm for, or knowledge of, the subject being taught.

18. For example, in a lesson in English early in Key Stage 1, the instruction at the outset lacked richness and activities were not clearly explained. The pace of teaching was too slow. In a music lesson in Key Stage 2, the teacher had insufficient knowledge of the music Programme of Study and was unable to spark pupils' enthusiasm or explain the learning needed for them to make satisfactory progress.

19. Nearly all teachers make very good or good relationships with pupils and keep an eye on their welfare and personal development. All manage pupils' behaviour well and elicit positive responses and co-operation. The result is that nearly all pupils behave well in lessons, apply themselves to their work and are polite and courteous. Planning is usually detailed and good at long and medium term, but sometimes lacks clear objectives in the short term and this prevents rapid progress in some subjects, particularly in literacy and science.

20. Although all teachers keep records and log pupils' responses to assessment tasks, there is very little evidence gleaned to enable findings from assessments to be taken into account when planning work on a weekly or half-term basis. Progress against the National Curriculum is therefore difficult to track during, rather than at the end of, each year. Thus, teachers have no opportunity to refine their understanding of pupils' progress and to modify their planning to account for what they know.

21. Homework is set, but not consistently in line with the homework policy. It is having moderate impact in literacy, good impact in mathematics and little impact in science. In some subjects, such as history, it is used suitably to broaden pupils' experiences of what is required or to enable parents to provide support at home. Parents voiced some concerns at the pre-inspection meeting, and inspectors agree with their comments. There is sufficient homework for pupils of these ages if the policy is followed - but it is not. Furthermore, no reminders or explanations are provided. Therefore, it is difficult for parents to support their children at home, and some children are unable to remember what they have been asked to do.

22. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well on the whole. All for whom there is more than basic concern receive extra tuition in small groups. This results in most of them making good progress. Progress is most often very rapid in such groups. It varies in class, depending on the quality of support given. In about one third of lessons, either modified work and/or extra support from class teachers or an unqualified assistant helps pupils to make good progress. In about a third of lessons there is some, but not well-planned support provided and progress is moderate. In the remaining lessons, neither extra support or suitably modified work is made available and sometimes pupils on the special educational needs register are unable to read the texts in use. On such occasions, progress is most often slow.

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

23. The school meets fully the statutory requirements by offering a curriculum which has very appropriate breadth and depth. It is very well balanced and the quality planning and approaches to some subjects are good, particularly in the foundation subjects of history, geography, art and design, physical education and religious education. Here, the curriculum is often enriched by such events as the building of a 'round house' to mark the site of a recent discovery of an ancient Celtic skeleton, by visitors from the community or by day and extended visits to places of interest. Particularly good use is made of the local environment in geography and history.

24. Assemblies are an important part of the school's culture and meet statutory requirements. Some areas of the music Programme of Study are less well provided for, and there is some lack of opportunity for information and communication technology in Key Stage 1. The teaching of basic literacy skills is sound on the whole, and numeracy skills are well taught. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is outstanding in the Foundation Stage where a physically impaired pupil is very well integrated; it is sound at Key Stage 1 and often good at Key Stage 2.

25. Inspectors are somewhat concerned about the equality of access to the full curriculum for some pupils. Those who are withdrawn from class for extra literacy support, often at the same time each week, miss the same lesson each time which makes it difficult for them to catch up on their work. The same is true for those who have extra guitar lessons and who therefore miss a large part of one of the core subject lessons each week. Some pupils are unable to go on residential courses and so miss out on opportunities to develop a range of skills, including information and communication technology which often makes up 15 per cent of what is studied. The curriculum is suitably enhanced by extra-curricular activities. There is a broad range of extra-curricular sports but it is offered, in the main, to pupils in upper Key Stage 2. There is not the usual range of non-sporting activities for all pupils, or sporting activities for younger pupils, often found in primary schools of this size. Parents' responses to the related question in the questionnaire were less positive than to other aspects, and some comment regarding this was made at the pre-inspection meeting.

26. There are strong links with the community through the local church and visitors who come to the school for a variety of reasons to enrich pupils' learning. The school has some good curricular links with partner institutions like the pre-school play group and the local secondary school. Pupils are offered induction sessions both when they join this school and when they leave to go on elsewhere. Those in Years 5 and 6 take part in science and technology days at the secondary school. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well when they go on to the secondary school: there is close co-operation and good sharing of information about these pupils.

27. The provision for pupils' personal development is good on the whole. Cultivation of spiritual, moral and social development is good and for cultural awareness it is sound. Many opportunities arise in class and assemblies where pupils experience a sense of wonder; for example, in the appreciation of the autumn colours; the necessity for the ancient Jewish people to see the stars through the roof of their Sukkahs; the empathy pupils show for the plight of the evacuees during the Second World War. There is a strong moral ethos in school and this is strengthened through the teaching of religious education and many of the texts used in literacy. Pupils show by the rules which they make up for behaviour that they have a strong sense of right and wrong.

28. There are many opportunities for social development within classes and in the school as a whole. The pupils work well in collaboration in group and project work. This was particularly evident in the teams involved in building the Celtic age 'round house'. They help each other in class if required and sometimes spontaneously applaud the success of others. At breaks, older pupils often volunteer to care for younger ones. Most willingly take turns at games, for example turning the rope for skipping. There are several opportunities for them to accept responsibilities, for example in helping the smooth running of assemblies. However, there are too few instances when they are encouraged to show initiative or give their views. For



example, there are no records of pupils' views and opinions of their support for special educational needs. Also, there are no regular or systematic procedures to seek their views about improvements to life at school.

29. Pupils become aware of some other cultures through their studies of locations abroad, like St Lucia and Egypt and some topics in religious education about Judaism or Islam. They are also aware of ancient British culture, particularly because of the richness of ancient historical evidence in the local area. However, they are not sufficiently taught the diversity of modern British culture and, for example, occasionally show some unintentional racism when commenting on tourists in the village. At the previous inspection, there was comment about the need to understand the diversity of British culture and it remains a concern.

30. The teaching of personal and social education is inconsistent. Where it is a regular part of class timetables it is very effective, but this varies from class to class. It is rarely a regularly occurring feature. Health education is taught by class teachers up to Year 5 on an ad hoc basis and by the school nurse in Year 6. The governors' decision is that sex education should not take place until Year 6 and parents know they have the right to withdraw their children if they wish. There is some concern in the school about the evidence of possible drug culture in the local community. However, in contrast, the school's policy on drugs education is that only drugs prescribed by a doctor and administered by a suitable person should be taken, and pupils are not given any further specific guidance. Recently, the school has drawn up a policy on Citizenship to meet the new National Curriculum recommendations which came into force from September 2000, and plans are in hand to have this taught as a separate subject.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school offers pupils a caring environment which supports learning effectively. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well and have maintained a commitment to ensuring good standards of care. However, the formal arrangements to ensure child protection are not properly in place. Child protection issues in the school are taken seriously. Local procedures are followed and most staff refer any concerns to the headteacher. Nevertheless, the school is without a clearly stated policy, most staff have not received training to ensure they are clear about procedures to follow in the event of any specific concerns about pupils, nor are all formally aware that the headteacher is the designated person responsible. Day-to-day first-aid and care for pupils who are unwell are satisfactory; nevertheless, incidents are not always carefully recorded. For example, a pupil with an accidental head bump was very well cared for, but no record of the incident was entered in the appropriate book. This makes monitoring of these matters difficult. Informal, daily checks of the site and premises are carried out to identify problems, appropriate action is taken when needed, and records are systematically kept. Equipment is subject to annual checks.

32. Pupils' personal development is supported well through the caring ethos and the good relationships between teachers and pupils. Good work and effort are frequently recognised by class teachers and achievements are published in assemblies. Although there are no standardised methods to record or monitor pupils' personal development, individual staff are aware of the needs of the pupils in their classes and often discuss any issues which arise with the headteacher.

33. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are effective and those for monitoring it are informal. The headteacher and class teachers have a shared commitment to promoting high standards of good behaviour. These are implicit in the ethos and values of the school, and are understood by pupils. The current behaviour policy, shortly to be reviewed, outlines these expectations, although it offers staff little clear guidance on procedures to follow, allowing this discretion to individual teachers. Most staff control behaviour very well, although there are inconsistencies in the way rewards and sanctions are given. Any serious concerns about pupils' behaviour are discussed with the headteacher. However, there is no whole-school system for class teachers to record and monitor any incidents of inappropriate behaviour or to monitor individual pupils causing concern. Eliminating bullying has a high profile in the school and good, effective procedures are in place to deal with the few instances which occur.

34. The procedures to monitor and improve attendance are satisfactory. Class teachers have individual responsibility for monitoring attendance and following up absence of pupils in their class. This is effective, as the high levels of attendance illustrate. However, attendance records are not used as a basis for tracking progress at the end of each year.

35. Pupils' academic performance is monitored closely in year groups at the end of each year. The data have been used well to ascertain how year groups are making progress year on year. In addition, some useful analysis of end of Key Stage 2 tests undertaken by the science co-ordinator and by the National Foundation for Education Research in mathematics has produced information to guide curricular planning in following years. However, pupils' work is not assessed regularly against National Curriculum levels, but only by end-of- or half-term tests to gauge how well pupils have done. Thus, there is little useful information to gauge what pupils already know and what they next need to learn in order to improve the quality of their work and make more gains.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

36. Parents' views of the school have strengthened since the previous inspection. The great majority of parents is supportive but a small number express a few concerns about some aspects. Most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or completed the questionnaire were positive about the school. They strongly agreed that their children like school, that behaviour is good, they believe that the school encourages its pupils to become mature and responsible, and that the school is well led and managed. They say that pupils make good progress and that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. The inspection team agrees with the positive view parents have of the school. However, a few parents raised concerns about levels of homework, do not feel the school works closely with them, do not feel they receive sufficient information about their children's progress and feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside the curriculum. Inspectors found some evidence to support these views.

37. The school homework policy, if followed, allows for sufficient work, but homework is not set consistently in line with the policy and instructions about it are rarely written down. Thus, some children forget and parents have no means to check what the teacher intended or to estimate how long should be spent. There is no evidence to show that the school does not seek to work closely with parents. There are two 'open evenings', some parents help in school and all are consulted if their children are assessed as requiring help with a special educational need. Inspectors checked reports and agree that in some of them progress is difficult to ascertain, particularly in core subjects - English, science and mathematics. Also, inspectors found that progress in pupils' work in comparison with National Curriculum levels is not assessed well. They found that the range of extra-curricular activities is not as broad as in many primary schools of this size.

38. The school has established a satisfactory relationship with its parents. For example, the home school agreement has been signed by most parents. A number of them makes a valuable contribution towards school life and pupils' learning, for example helping in classrooms and around the school. They hear pupils read, assist with information and communication technology and have donated ten computers and software. A supportive parent teacher association organises a range of social and fund-raising events which enables the school to purchase additional resources and equipment.

39. The quality of information provided for parents both about the school and about progress is satisfactory overall but has some shortcomings. Monthly newsletters and additional letters keep parents informed about school matters, key dates and forthcoming events. A new up-to-date prospectus is being prepared. The governors' annual report to parents properly reviews the work of the school. Whilst parents of children in Reception receive information to help them understand what is taught, this well-received practice is not continued in later years. Thus, most parents do not receive regular information on topics and work done in lessons. A meeting was held to explain the National Numeracy Strategy and, each year, parents of children in the Reception Year are invited to a meeting explaining the home school reading scheme. However, curricular discussions are not regular features. As a result, parents are not always sufficiently well informed to support and encourage their children's learning, although they are welcome to discuss concerns with the headteacher or class teachers at any time.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. Taken as a whole, leadership is of good quality and effective in sustaining some strong aspects, identifying weakness and, in some respects, assisting the school on a road to improvement. The headteacher provides a strong lead and has the confidence of the governors. Recently, many governors have resigned because of personal reasons and past long service. Those remaining have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and supplement this information by making visits to gain further insight into the school's work. This helps them to use 'best value' principles well and to monitor finance properly. They have produced a very appropriate induction plan aimed at ensuring that the work of all new members is brought to the good standard of operation which has been achieved since the previous inspection.

41. On the whole, the school monitors many aspects of its own performance and properly attempts to rectify weakness. The headteacher monitors teaching quality regularly and provides a commentary and written notes. These are usually very encouraging and highlight strengths: they are somewhat less clear about developmental points - but the effect has been to sustain teaching at the same good quality on the whole as reported at the previous inspection. The school is a suitable place for the initial training of teachers. Although yearly interviews are held to support professional development, the standard of pupils' work and their progress against National Curriculum levels through the year are not discussed in conjunction with this. Additionally, some systems and routines are not efficient, paper work is often too detailed and repetitive, and some essential routines have lapsed, as pointed out earlier in this report.

42. The tracking of pupil progress by year groups is very well in place and based on a number of measures which include termly and end-of-year tests. Some groups have been tracked separately: for example, data have been extrapolated to establish if pupils with special educational needs are making progress. Analysis of end of key stage National Curriculum test results is used to inform yearly planning and identify suitable curricular targets. The school development plan, although bulky and somewhat unwieldy, has pulled plans together for future development. However, its priorities and targets are not recorded clearly and there are not many objectives to define the intended outcomes. Nevertheless, governors' knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses, coupled with their good financial monitoring, result in good application of the aspects of consultation, comparison, setting challenge and seeking competitive use of resources.

43. Some senior staff, such as the deputy headteacher, make useful contributions. Mathematics, for example, is soundly managed and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resulted in improved standards. Science co-ordination is effective and has successfully helped to reverse the decline in standards when compared with national averages. Art and design, history, geography, physical education and religious education are other subjects which are well managed. Arrangements for mentoring the newly-qualified teacher are of very good quality and are proving successful. The newly-appointed joint co-ordinators for English have quickly grasped the strengths and weaknesses in that subject and have drawn up suitable plans to improve it further. Leadership of the early years is very strong and has resulted in a good framework for planning and teaching in the newly-implemented Foundation Stage, and good organization and team work. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed: they are assessed early and procedures closely match the Code of Practice recommended by the government.

44. There are sufficient teachers and support staff, whose knowledge and experience are appropriate to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and young children's needs. Their in-service training is regular and suitably matched to the school's priorities and to their individual needs. Recently, much effort has been put into gaining grants to refurbish or replace poor quality accommodation to create a good environment for learning. Consequently, now the buildings are of good quality and suitably spacious. All grants have been used for the purposes intended. Most teaching resources are adequate. The environment outside is not so good. There is no separate area for children at the Foundation Stage to have daily access to climbing and moving facilities - an aspect criticized at the previous inspection. There is no easy access to a suitable area for games or for recreational play on grass surfaces - despite being adjacent to a local Foundation School which caters for older pupils. Furthermore, owing to the placement of temporary classrooms, at the moment car parking is very restricted. The hard-surface play areas are adequate in size, but unappealing, except for a small area to the south west.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- raise standards of literacy further at both key stages by:
  - ensuring the approach to teaching is similar and consistent; (61)
  - making the planned progress in phonics at least as good as the one advocated by the National Literacy Strategy; (4, 55, 57, 58, 59, 61)
  - ensuring that teachers' planning and teaching cover at least the same strands and aspects as the Programmes of Study advocated by the National Literacy Strategy (the same broad range of texts, sentence and word strands); (61, 62)
  - ensuring at least the same range of reading and writing skills are taught regularly; (58, 59)
  - ensuring more attention is given to matching pupils' work to their prior attainment. (2, 57, 58, 59, 61)
- improve information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 by:
  - ensuring pupils have regular experience of using computers; (57, 59, 102)
  - teaching the full range of the curriculum more frequently; (104)
  - ensuring regular assessment, using National Curriculum levels. (105)
- improve music at Key Stage 2 by:
  - teaching the full range of the Programmes of Study; (17, 18, 108)
  - improving pupils' knowledge of music and how to perform. (107)
- improve the quality of assessments of pupils' work by:
  - tracking progress against National Curriculum levels, especially in English, mathematics and science throughout the year; (20, 62, 73, 81)
  - using the information to modify planning and teaching and to identify curricular targets. (20, 62, 73, 81)

### Minor issues:

- Establish a clear policy and procedures for child protection. Train all staff in awareness of child protection issues and ensure that all are aware of the school's procedures and know the person named as responsible. (31)
- Ensure established routines do not lapse by:
  - for example, ensuring all accidents are properly recorded in the book provided. (31)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	36	29	29	3	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		243
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		25

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		47

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	4.4	School data	0.15
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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



### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18(25)	15 (13)	33 (38)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15 (23)	14 (21)	17 (23)
	Girls	14 (10)	15 (10)	15 (11)
	Total	29 (33)	29 (31)	32 (34)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (87)	88 (82)	97 (89)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15 (22)	17 (23)	14 (21)
	Girls	15 (13)	15 (11)	15 (10)
	Total	30 (35)	32 (34)	29 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (92)	97 (89)	88 (82)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	16 (20)	21 (18)	37 (38)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11 (18)	13 (15)	13 (18)
	Girls	18 (13)	17 (13)	20 (13)
	Total	29 (31)	30 (28)	33 (31)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (82)	81 (74)	89 (82)
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12 (18)	13 (17)	13 (17)
	Girls	18 (14)	18 (14)	19 (15)
	Total	30 (32)	31 (31)	32 (32)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (84)	84 (82)	86 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	199
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Average class size	30

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	106

### *Financial information*

Financial year (forecast)	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	409,396
Total expenditure	407,870
Expenditure per pupil	1,666
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,371
Balance carried forward to next year	37,897

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	78

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	33	0	8	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	40	4	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	37	16	0	8
The teaching is good.	48	42	4	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	35	23	6	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	19	8	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	30	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	36	38	15	8	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	32	2	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	35	6	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	29	17	12	19

### Other issues raised by parents

Overall, there is good support for the school. This has strengthened a little since the previous inspection. At the pre-inspection meeting, the views expressed were similar to those received in written responses and similarly positive as the answers in the questionnaire. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views and that some of the small amount of criticism is justified. Sufficient homework is planned, but it is not set consistently in line with the policy. Some reports are unclear about pupils' progress. Nothing at inspection showed a lack of willingness to work closely with parents. There is not the usual number of extra-curricular activities found in many schools of this size and opportunities for extra sports are confined mainly to Years 5

and 6. The school has been briefed about all comments but without reference to particular sources.

## **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**

46. Children enter the Reception class at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five and, at inspection, on the whole had above average understanding of words and numbers for their ages. Data relating to several previous years show standards close to the average. At the time of the inspection, there were 31 children in the Reception class and five in the Reception/Year 1 class. They are taught by two class teachers who are supported also by two learning support assistants and an assistant who has particular responsibility for a child with physical impairment. The new curriculum for the Foundation Stage is properly in place, despite being implemented only from September 2000. Most children are making good progress: a majority is on course to attain the early learning goals<sup>5</sup> by the end of the Foundation Stage and many to exceed them. The child with physical impairment is very effectively integrated into all aspects of the curriculum and is making very good progress.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

47. After they begin, very good relationships are quickly established between the children and all the adults who work with them. Routines are set clearly and adults' expectations of behaviour are suitably high. Many activities are provided which encourage independence and co-operation and children respond well, working and playing sensibly together, taking turns and sharing equipment without fuss or confrontation. They listen carefully to instructions and follow them, enjoying the wide variety of learning opportunities prepared for them. When in 'focused activity'<sup>6</sup> groups led by teachers, nearly all concentrate hard to complete tasks before moving quietly to choose from other activities. Those chosen as 'helpers' complete jobs effectively with minimal assistance. At lunch times, children have their packed lunches in the classroom, chatting sociably together as they eat. On some of the occasions they were observed, their behaviour was exemplary. Nearly all were orderly, suitably seated, socially comfortable and well looked after. The mutual respect which has been built and the trust and responsibility given to children by the teacher and her assistants encourages them to ask questions and make sensible choices. Teaching is usually of very good quality.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

48. Almost all children enter the school with the language skills expected for their ages and many exceed them. Only a few children still use single words or short phrases and most answer in sentences often adding sensible after-thoughts or further information. The conversation and tones used by the teacher establish high expectations and children respond well to these. Therefore, they speak out confidently offering their thoughts and ideas in class discussions and hold long conversations with adults in the room. 'Emergent'<sup>7</sup> writing is encouraged effectively and improves well with numerous opportunities provided for children to practise their early writing skills. Over half of the children already write their own names independently and in a legible style. When copy-writing, they are taught to hold writing implements correctly and to use the right amount of pressure. For example, a small group writing 'Get Well' letters for 'Postman Pat' copied the assistant's print well, formed most letters correctly and added their own names with minimal help.

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<sup>5</sup> Early learning goals are set out in governmental guidance and comprise goals for: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

<sup>6</sup> Focused groups and activities are led by a teacher or learning assistant and are planned to teach particular skills.

<sup>7</sup> 'Emergent' writing is that done independently in the manner which children assume is appropriate, so that they are encouraged to rôle play their emerging writing skills. This leads to later 'formal' writing skills.

49. All children enjoy books and listen to stories carefully. They respond well to the teachers' good quality, challenging questions about the story line and relate the pictures to the text by appropriately discussing why things are so and what might happen next. Children seen working independently in the reading corner at activity time shared books with obvious enjoyment, turned pages carefully and discussed the pictures. One child read 'Not Now Bernard' alone, making monster noises as he espied the monsters on each page. A girl read to a row of teddies, turning the book to show them the pictures and asking them what they could see. Most children begin to recognise single letter sounds in a structured phonics programme, for example, they were seen recognising 't', 'k', 'n', 'h', and completing the associated actions advocated by the scheme. The two teachers with Foundation Stage children plan very carefully together. Learning objectives are clear and learning assistants are well briefed and skilfully supported. All adults work effectively together to produce rapid rates of progress for most children. Teaching of this aspect is of very good quality.

### **Mathematical development**

50. Most children enter school with an understanding of simple number; consequently, the teacher builds mathematical concepts into all areas of learning very early in the term. Almost all children are familiar with numbers 1-10 and many with numbers beyond. All can subtract one digit at a time, count back from five and enjoy simple action rhymes which consolidate this. 'Focused activities' - teacher led - involve matching numbers to pictures and taking turns in number recognition games. Painting activities involve recognising different shapes - square, circle, triangle and rectangle - and completing potato prints of these in a repeating pattern. Almost all recognise these shapes easily and most can describe the features of them. They confidently complete jigsaws of varying complexity, matching shape and colour. Teaching is of good, and often very good quality. Every opportunity is taken to consolidate mathematical concepts, and spare minutes frequently are filled with counting games and rhymes. Mathematical activities are well planned and 'focused group work' is suitably recorded to ensure continuity and progression. Children's skills are known and work is well matched to their prior attainment.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

51. At the time of the inspection, all opportunities for children to gain knowledge and understanding of the world around them were based on 'Postman Pat' which gave the learning purpose and interest. The play area was a busy post office where letters and parcels were sorted into sizes before being posted or put in the 'van'. Some children wrapped parcels and tested them for durability, attempting to say why the contents of some broke and some did not. Eight children wrote letters and cards, placing them in envelopes with addresses and stamps. One 'focused group' made postcards of holiday resorts, whilst another created 'Postman Pat's' village on a large base. Much lively discussion took place about the positioning of rivers, fields, hills and trees and where sheep should be placed. Suitable textures were chosen to represent them. Activities are all well planned and children's contributions are properly expected and valued by teachers, and so they are already confident. The teachers' questions consistently require thoughtful and well constructed answers. Single word answers, suitably, are challenged often by further questions. Adults' conversations with children continually stimulate their ideas. Teaching is most often of very good quality.

### **Creative development**

52. Through a wide variety of activities, children's creative ideas and skills are effectively improved. For example, they cut and stick carefully with increasing dexterity. They enjoy paint and use a variety of media - paint, pencils, crayons - to colour their work. They build exciting models and describe imaginatively how they work. Many activities have good cross-curricular connections and knowledge and understanding in all areas is frequently consolidated in art work. For example, children are beginning to use the computer: they understand that the 'mouse' will move icons and create pictures of animals or people in mathematical shapes. Children enjoy singing and memorise words and tunes well: they understand simple dynamics, slow and fast, loud and soft. Those children working within the Year 1 class begin to recognise simple untuned percussion instruments and remember their names, for example triangle, tambour, woodblock and claves. They are able to hold a regular beat counting to four and begin and finish appropriately. Teaching is mostly of very good

quality.

## **Physical development**

53. Through good use of the hall and structured planning of a variety of activities, children's physical skills are steadily improved. All change into suitable clothing for work at floor level, and at the end of the session most dress themselves competently. In order to challenge them, the teacher does not help directly. However, if some have difficulty dressing or clothes are 'inside out' she talks them through the correct procedures to assist them to improve. In physical activity, children use space well, walking or running with increasing control. They are very well behaved holding a ball still whilst listening to instructions and then throwing and retrieving sensibly. Most control a ball rolling on the ground and catch successfully from a short distance. Outside activities with mobile toys are thoroughly enjoyed and further develop physical skills and spatial awareness. Although children have access to larger equipment in the hall, they do not yet have a dedicated outdoor area with climbing apparatus as recommended at the previous inspection. Consequently, they do not have daily access to opportunities for higher level and more challenging climbing, balancing and risk taking. Thus, by comparison with many children of their ages in similar schools, they have less opportunity for improvement in this aspect. The teaching seen at inspection was of very good quality.

54. Overall, the good quality provision for the curriculum for children under five, reported at the previous inspection, has been maintained. At the Foundation Stage, adults co-operate well: there is very good leadership and strong teamwork. All adults make at least useful and often good contributions to children's learning and use time efficiently. The curriculum is very well planned. Children now have access to computers and, although these are not yet used with enough frequency, they are beginning to develop early technological skills. There is a good range of other resources. Overall, teaching is very good, activities are well organised, there is a good amount of interaction between adults and children, and a good balance is created between direct instruction, independent work, choice and creative play.

## **ENGLISH**

55. The results of the 2000 Statutory Assessment tests indicated that at the end of Key Stage 1 standards were average in reading and writing. Also, in comparison with similar schools standards were at the average. Work seen during the inspection reflects similar standards. In reading, standards have declined over the previous three years to the national average. Standards in writing have risen to the national average in 2000 after declining in recent years. Overall, standards have declined since the previous inspection to become much closer to the national average after being well above. The progress made by most pupils is steady over Key Stage 1; however, it is rapid for most in Year 1. In Key Stage 2, the National Curriculum test results for 2000 showed that standards are broadly average. This was borne out by work seen during the inspection. There has been a decline since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be above average. Progress is steady over Key Stage 2, but there is good progress in the middle - Years 4 and 5. The National Literacy Strategy is not implemented in line with recommendations. Teachers' planning indicates that the approaches adopted are not consistent nor as progressive in building up skills and knowledge in reading and writing as the approaches advocated in the National Literacy Strategy. This explains the recent decline in standards relative to national averages.

56. Inspection shows that, throughout, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. Early in Key Stage 1, the importance of listening carefully is emphasised and teachers' questions probe and challenge pupils to give thoughtful answers. They are encouraged to speak clearly using the correct vocabulary. Particularly in the middle of Key Stage 2, pupils are aware of their audience, are beginning to relish the sound of words and speak out confidently with expression and suitable intonation. In many curricular areas, the correct technical vocabulary is used. At the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils converse freely using more advanced phraseology and language.

57. By the end of Key Stage 1, only higher attaining pupils read fluently. Although texts presented for group reading are suitable to develop concepts, in individual reading most pupils are reading texts which have little interest or challenge, and they do not progress through these at a fast enough rate. Moreover, they have a very narrow range of understanding of strategies to decipher unknown words and comprehend meaning. Also, adult helpers who hear pupils read are often insufficiently briefed on how they can assist them to develop strategies and improve their reading skills. Books available for choice do not offer a suitable range to extend the skills of average or higher attaining pupils. Although pupils understand the terms 'author' and 'contents', they do not have the wide knowledge of a variety of authors normally found in pupils of this age. By the end of the key stage, pupils' spelling and punctuation inaccuracies lower the standard of their work. Weakness in spelling has been identified by the school, and a structured phonics programme has been introduced to remedy this. Although it is having the desired affect in Year 1, it is not yet used throughout the key stage. Handwriting is not taught or practised consistently throughout the school, and many pupils hold writing implements incorrectly; consequently, work is often poorly presented and lacks fluency. There is very limited use of information and communication technology in Key Stage 1. Little teaching of it occurred during the inspection period and planning was imprecise - lacking in continuity and without regular links between it and literacy.

58. In Key Stage 2, the standard of spelling also affects the quality of pupils' writing. At the end of the key stage, it is not graphically secure, especially in use of multi-syllabic words: moreover, careless mistakes are not effectively assessed and rectified with sufficient regularity. Although higher attaining pupils often use punctuation effectively, average and lower attaining pupils are not so accurate. In addition, work designed to consolidate knowledge of grammatical exercises is not always related to writing - which inhibits the development of skills. This was exemplified at the end of the key stage where pupils were writing newspaper reports about the witches in Macbeth and the murder of Duncan. Although some higher attaining pupils quickly grasped the concept and used imaginative language and phraseology with suitable grammar, the work of most average and lower attaining pupils lacked individuality and good use of telling adverbs and adjectives. In addition, comparison, similes and punctuation were often minimally used.

59. The quality of imaginative writing improves rapidly in the middle of the key stage. Pupils understand the power of 'simile', 'synonym' and 'antonym' and are beginning to use these together with imaginative adverbs and adjectives to enrich their writing on emotion. For example, they use phrases such as 'leaves floating like doves in the air', 'cascading quietly' and 'like a sparrow in winter'. They are beginning to use thesauruses effectively. At the end of the key stage, pupils who are higher attainers read with understanding and expression. They are able to clarify nuances in language, hypothesise and give worthwhile opinions on the texts they are reading. They are familiar with a wide variety of authors, both modern and classical, including Tolkein and Rowlett, and compare contrasting texts such as Frances Hodges Burnett and Enid Blyton. However, average and lower attaining pupils are not so adept. They have too few decoding skills and, although they read accurately, they sometimes do not understand the language of the texts. Their knowledge of different styles of writing is limited. There was little evidence of the use of information and communication technology to assist learning during the inspection period. However, at the end of the key stage, pupils use a variety of fonts and layouts to display their work.

60. The quality of teaching seen was almost always satisfactory and very occasionally very good or outstanding. It was very good at the onset of Key Stage 1, mostly satisfactory in Years 2 to 4, occasionally outstanding or at least very good in the middle of the key stage, and mostly satisfactory at the end. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is of good or very good quality. In the very good or outstanding teaching, the teachers' own love of poetry, imagery and the power of words is successfully transmitted to the pupils who then respond well. Lessons are well structured, texts are challenging, tasks are well prepared and appropriate, and there is a good amount of interaction between pupils and teacher.



61. In most lessons, the National Literacy Strategy is not routinely established, nor does the structure preferred by teachers produce consistency and progression in skills throughout the school. Consequently, progression in teaching and learning the essential skills related to knowledge of text, sentence and word building structures is erratic. Frequently, in both key stages, time management is inefficient and so sessions spill over into each other and often lose some effect. For example, in some lessons too much time is spent by the teacher talking, leaving little time for pupils to complete tasks. Also, rates of progress slow by relying on mainly one, rather than a range of, captivating teaching strategies. Levels of interaction - where pupils respond thoughtfully rather than answering only simple questions - are often low. Revision sessions are often missed, or become rushed and do not ascertain what pupils know or need to do next. Furthermore, work frequently is not modified to suit all attainment levels within each class. In both key stages, pupils who are higher attainers are not often presented with suitably challenging work or further tasks to extend learning and higher attainment. Although progress is good on the whole, many are capable of quicker rates. The marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, although there are some instances where unsatisfactory standards of written work are accepted without enough attention being drawn to desirable improvements. Marking is particularly effective in the middle of Key Stage 2, where regular attention is paid to spelling and there are many helpful, encouraging comments related to desirable improvements.

62. The joint co-ordinators of English have been appointed recently and so have had little time to make an impact on the management of the subject. However, statistics have been analysed and dips and trends identified. This has led to a revision of the reading and spelling programmes. A portfolio of a variety of work from the last three years is available to guide teachers, and some general comparisons have been made between pupils' work and National Curriculum levels. However, pupils' work is not consistently matched to National Curriculum levels, so that curricular targets may be identified to clarify what comes next. As yet, the co-ordinators have not had time to monitor teaching of the school's literacy strategy and, consequently, are unable to evaluate its impact on standards through the school. Presently, the school's approach to teaching literacy, which includes the literacy framework's use as a reference rather than as a structured guide, is not producing the same continuity and progression in planning and teaching as advocated by the National Literacy Strategy. This is particularly so in writing and spelling, but also to some extent in reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

63. Standards in mathematics show an improving picture between 1999 and 2000. This is because of the school's drive and commitment to raise standards in the subject by: giving it more curricular time; clearly linking it to other subjects; good and sometimes very good teaching; a structured and progressive curriculum planned within the National Numeracy Strategy framework.

64. Results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils are attaining similar standards to those achieved nationally. However, when compared with similar schools, results are below average. Nevertheless, good teaching at the start of Key Stage 1 results in rapid progress in pupils' learning by the majority. At inspection, samples of pupils' work show that close to the outset of Year 2, most are on course to attain standards above those expected nationally. Progress accelerates for pupils during Key Stage 2, and they attain standards better than those expected nationally by the end of Year 6. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils in Year 6 achieved well above average results in the 2000 National Curriculum tests.

65. At the time of the previous inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above at the end of Key Stage 2, and so attainment is higher now. On average, trends over the last four years reflect the national upward trend: they have improved steadily since 1998. The performance of boys exceeded girls at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999; however, by the end of Key Stage 2, boys and girls achieved similar levels. No discernible gender differences were observed during inspection.

66. Currently pupils enter school with above average attainment in mathematics and, in previous years, attainment at entry has been broadly that expected for pupils' ages. Good teaching in the early years results in good progress for the majority of pupils. However, it slows for some pupils towards the end of Key Stage 1 because teaching sometimes lacks sufficient challenge, often failing to build sufficiently upon previous learning. Through Key Stage 2, progress is consistently good and sometimes very good, enabling pupils to make good progress overall.

67. Pupils' numeracy skills are good. Their mental recall of multiplication facts is good throughout the school as observed in a Year 3 class where pupils counted in groups of three and six with confidence and accuracy. In some lessons, pupils used their numeracy skills very effectively to support work in other subjects. For example, a prominently displayed 'thermometer' indicates a range of mathematical vocabulary related to positive and negative numbers. The use of numeracy skills in some other subjects is well planned, and has a positive impact on the overall good standards achieved.

68. Pupils in Year 1 have a good knowledge of numbers up to ten with the higher attainers having a secure knowledge of numbers up to one hundred. Most pupils use a range of strategies to find the answer to simple addition and subtraction problems with totals to ten, with the higher attainers using quick recall to find the answers. As observed during a mental mathematical session at the start of one lesson, many pupils are aware of odd and even numbers and are successfully counting in twos to at least 30, with the higher attainers counting well beyond this. In Year 2, most pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100 and the higher attainers understand place value of digits which include hundreds, tens and units. Most pupils are familiar with a range of different methods to undertake calculations, and their knowledge of multiplication facts is improving, often counting in twos, threes, fives and tens. However, pupils rarely discuss the use of more than one method to complete a given calculation. Most pupils identify halves and quarters of given shapes and acquire appropriate measuring skills. For example, they record accurately to the nearest centimetre as seen in a display in Year 2 about the construction of cubes. Across Year 2, pupils' work shows mostly good achievement. However, higher attaining pupils often complete the same work as others before moving forward to more exacting tasks, and this slows their progress.

69. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils talk confidently about their mathematical work and use correct mathematical language to explain clearly how they reach particular answers. Although all pupils are encouraged to use a range of strategies in their calculations in Year 6, they are given too few opportunities to talk through the various possibilities of solving the same number problem. Pupils in Year 3 successfully use the skills of positioning to add two two-digit numbers and are aware of patterns established when adding odd and even numbers. In Year 5, pupils accurately place decimals in order of magnitude up to two and three decimal places. The majority knows how to convert simple fractions into percentages using a calculator, and use that skill successfully to solve some everyday problems. In Year 6, pupils use information and communication technology to enter information into a database, which enables them to produce graphs and diagrams. However, there is no regular use of information and communication technology to support a range of work in data handling. This is an aspect identified by the school as meriting improvement.

70. The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages, but although there are undoubted strengths there are also areas which are slowing progress and in need of improvement. Teachers' planning is suitably detailed, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, and the best is informed by careful assessment of pupils' learning in previous lessons. The most effective planning clearly identifies what individual groups of differing attainments are expected to learn in the lesson, and these objectives are discussed with the pupils. This ensures that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and is a key factor in maintaining focus and pace throughout the lesson. Most lessons start with a range of mental questions, but the discussion of ideas about methods of calculation are infrequent. Most teachers explain new tasks to be undertaken very carefully, and the best presentations can be imaginative and supported well by appropriate resources which heighten pupils' interest. For example, some pupils stand in front of a class,

71. each with a large card numbered with a single digit. Another pupil, holding a card displaying a decimal point, is then used to position whole numbers and decimal places. Pupils are then asked to position the number held to form highest and lowest values using the cards available. Introductions to lessons are often lively and interesting. However, pace sometimes slows during the middle part of the lesson and, consequently, the final revision session is often rushed. Thus, the opportunity to consolidate learning is missed. The very good teaching has a sense of purpose and urgency that holds pupils' interest and motivation.

72. Where teaching is satisfactory there are more strengths than weaknesses. However, strengthening some aspects would make the teaching good. For example, the activities set for pupils often are too easy, particularly for higher attainers, so they are insufficiently challenged during independent work, often failing to make the gains in learning of which they are capable. Furthermore, work does not always build upon previous learning; for example, the repetition of counting in twos and fives in upper Key Stage 1. Recording is often restricted to worksheets which require only simple, one number answers, rather than requiring pupils to demonstrate the extent of their mathematical knowledge and understanding.

73. Teachers' methods are good and their relationships with pupils are very good. Pupils with special educational needs are often well supported within the class and make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils' response and interest in mathematics is very good. Levels of appropriate challenge and teacher expectation, as observed in Year 5, have a direct impact on levels of pupils' enthusiasm and they try hard to do their best work. Most pupils behave very well and take pride in their work.

74. The use and quality of day-to-day assessment is inconsistent throughout the school. Careful assessments are carried out using a wide range of national test materials. This information is used effectively to inform planning to improve areas of collective weakness over the long term, but it is not always used to match work to the needs of individual pupils in the short term. Most pupils' work is marked and dated, but the use of constructive marking to indicate what pupils need to do to improve is less well established. There is a useful portfolio of pupils' work compared against National Curriculum levels to assist the assessment and moderation of standards across the year groups and throughout the school. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to update and extend the range of work presently included, and to utilise the information in assessing pupils' National Curriculum levels through the year.

75. Management of mathematics is sound. There are some strengths and some weaknesses. The school has made a good start to the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has resulted in improvement in teaching quality and a subsequent rise in standards. The subject co-ordinator has successfully identified appropriate areas for development in the form of an action plan. Although there has been some monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, the co-ordinator only has a partial view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. There is a shared commitment to raise standards even further. The attractive, high quality mathematical displays in most classrooms successfully celebrate the subject's high profile in very positive ways.

## **SCIENCE**

76. National Curriculum test results and teacher assessments in science show that, at the end of Key Stage 1, standards were broadly in line with national expectations in 1999. Data for 2000 were unavailable at inspection because teacher assessments were in the process of being collated. These standards are similar to those reported in 1997 at the previous inspection. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000, standards were average compared with both national figures and with schools in similar contexts. Since the previous inspection, standards at Key Stage 2 have declined from well above average reported in 1997 to the national average in 1999. The decline halted between 1999 and 2000, and standards improved then at similar rates to national trends and so remained at national averages. There are no significant differences between the

attainments of boys and girls. Progress varies: in four out of seven lessons seen it was good for most pupils and in three it was steady on the whole. Work in lessons and that scrutinised as a sample across the school show standards similar to National Curriculum assessments and tests. They are broadly in line with national expectations with most pupils on course to achieve them, a few to exceed and some to fall short by the end of both key stages.

77. At the outset of Key Stage 1, most pupils know that different materials have different properties and that we learn these by the use of our senses. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 distinguish similarities and differences in fruits and seeds and know that solids and liquids may sometimes be separated. In the middle of Key Stage 2, many pupils know that soil comprises different particles and name some of them. Many know that materials have different properties and give simple reasons why some may be waterproof. Some know that solids and liquids have different properties. By the end of the key stage, some know such terms as 'gas' and 'evaporation', that water expands on cooling and that air has weight. However, scientific language is not consistently in use in pupils' work. In addition, progress is slow in gaining understanding of how to set up investigations and experiments, how to predict events based on previous scientific knowledge, and how to record and use data to provide simple scientific reasons for what is observed. Rarely, do the oldest or higher attaining pupils give sufficient scientific reasons for their observations.

78. All teaching seen at inspection (in seven lessons) was satisfactory or better - it was more often satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and more often good at the beginning and middle of Key Stage 2. Overall, it was satisfactory. The good teaching seen had these characteristics:

- clear planning which highlights learning objectives which are explained to pupils at the outset and reviewed with them at the lessons' conclusion to consolidate learning;
- good subject knowledge which enables teachers to explain matters clearly and also to challenge higher attainers to think deeply at advanced levels of scientific enquiry in the Programme of Study;
- often it provides modified work or extra support for pupils with special educational needs so that they are assisted to respond and make good progress;
- teaching is at a suitable pace, and concepts are explained clearly and in interesting ways so that all pupils take interest and learn well;
- questioning of what is taught is exacting and so causes pupils to review what they know already in order to answer.

79. For example, pupils in a Year 5 class were studying 'variables' in an investigation of how balls bounce. To begin, the teacher reviewed what the pupils were to attempt and checked up on their previous knowledge about forces - gravity in particular. Questions were challenging - constantly asking 'Why?' when answers were given, and so prompting pupils to think about what they knew already and to refine their thoughts. The teacher had a good grasp of scientific principles and the National Curriculum Programme of Study. She had prepared well and so equipment was to hand and different amounts of support were provided for groups of different prior attainment. Thus, all groups made good progress in refining their investigative skills. Consequently, all pupils remained interested, tried hard and kept on task. This was good teaching and, to enhance it further, more attention should be given to refining pupils' precision in measuring and recording, because at times they were too casual in achieving this.

80. The satisfactory teaching has strengths that outweigh weaknesses, but is characterised by some parts of the lessons making much less impact than other parts in which quite rapid progress is evident. For example, in a lesson in Year 6, the teaching strategies were narrow, relying too much in the main on oral communication and closed questioning to teach new facts and confine challenge to a simple acquisition of them. Progress was much quicker when pupils were asked for their own examples or when teaching was illustrated by charts and tables on the board. In another lesson in Year 1-2 about animals, the introduction was clear with poems and pictures used to explain how animals have different characteristics and to draw pupils' attention to the salient points. However, progress then slowed because the books provided for the activity were a poor match for pupils' prior attainment. All groups had similar work sheets which lacked

challenge for some and were confusing for others. Because explanation of how to undertake the activity and record findings were unclear, many struggled to comprehend the point of what they had to do. Thus, all groups made slow progress and, in addition, no extra attention was given to pupils with special educational needs. The progress in this part of the lesson was slow compared with the quite rapid progress made in the first part.

81. All teachers make good relationships with their pupils and are consistent in their high expectations for their good behaviour. Thus, all pupils behave well and try hard. The gain from these good relationships is reduced when productivity and interest wane, as in the two examples above, because the teaching does not match pupils' interests, maturity, prior attainment or learning styles. In the good teaching, all pupils have many chances to learn - to think and explain - and the tasks are often matched to their prior attainment. They then maintain interest and good levels of productivity because they are willing to work as a result of good relationships.

82. Some teachers set homework for science, but others do not. Mostly, it is not set in relation to the learning objectives or to reinforce learning at the end of 'teaching modules'. Therefore, it is not impacting well on standards and progress. Most teachers assess pupils' work by checking their knowledge at the end of lessons and units of work. However, the work is not analysed by comparing it to National Curriculum levels. Some comparisons are made and samples collected as evidence. However, because work is not matched against National Curriculum levels during the year, there is little information to hand to modify planning or to show pupils clearly what next they will need to do in order to improve. Planning is of good quality overall in the long and medium term. However, there is not a clear sense of progression from simple to more complex forms of scientific enquiry to ensure pupils learn to think scientifically and give reasons for their predictions and observations of events. This lack of progress in the aspect of scientific enquiry is evident in much teaching and pupils' work; this explains in part why progress is not quicker than steady on the whole.

83. Science is managed well; there are many more strengths than weaknesses and this has been a contributory factor in arresting the decline of standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Good quality analysis of National Curriculum tests picked up some of the areas of weakness in pupils' understanding. Thus, information was fed back directly to staff. Similarly, the need for a more helpful scheme of work was understood, and one from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been adopted. Since September, teachers are using half-termly assessment tests. The co-ordinator has observed some science teaching and has provided guidance. Teachers are supported by a programme to link the adequate resources to the 'units of study' in the newly adopted scheme. 'Booster groups' have been used for science as well as literacy and numeracy. The result of this effort has been an arrest in the decline of standards and a slight improvement in line with the national trend between 1999 and 2000. The management of science still lacks sufficient impact at Key Stage 1. The co-ordinator has worked on particular aspects at Key Stage 2, but provided only general support at Key Stage 1. Teachers throughout school have not been helped or required to assess pupils' work throughout the year by comparing it to National Curriculum levels, and undertaking analysis of strengths and weaknesses so that teaching can be modified straight away in the light of the information gleaned. However, trials of how pupils can be set targets in science which are related to their work are being undertaken. A third area of weakness is that there are no end-of-year assessments in science and so an opportunity is missed to pass on valuable information about standards to the teachers in the following years in Years 3, 4 and 5.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. Standards of work seen are above national expectations at the end of both key stages. Early in Key Stage 1, pupils begin to draw or paint self-portraits which show an appropriate awareness of the proportions of the human face. They use the work of famous artists as inspiration for their own attempts, for example Monet's 'Water Lilies'. Most use a graphics program on the computer to produce houses or people. They begin to use different media - paint, pencil, fabrics - to produce patterns and pictures. As pupils move

through the key stage, observational drawing skills progress well. Most are able to produce easily recognisable and correctly proportioned drawings of, for example, household and natural objects such as corkscrews or autumn leaves. They learn to apply paint well and many pictures have a lively, vivid quality. In Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with a wider variety of media to good effect. They begin to apply knowledge gleaned from other subjects, for example an understanding of symmetry, to enhance their work. By the end of Key Stage 2, most have made good progress and skills become more sophisticated. Many produce imaginative landscapes, creative and colourful patterns and some represent movement in their work. They expand a small picture by using a grid system and, by working in groups, produce a pleasing result. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

85. It was possible only to see one lesson being taught during the inspection, so no overall judgements can be made about the teaching of art and design. Other judgements are drawn from discussions with pupils and staff, and observation of work around the school. Where teaching is at its best, pupils are encouraged to extend their skills by the imaginative choice of activities. Often, an earlier study is used for later development. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils had drawn houses of different periods and designs from observations outside. These initial drawings were then used in different media like tile printing, clay modelling and collage to extend pupils' ideas and creativity. Planning shows lessons are well prepared so that the pace is maintained and pupils' interest held throughout. Praise is used judiciously to raise self-esteem and encourage further effort. Sometimes, pupils are given the chance to discuss their work quietly with the teacher and this gives them pointers as to how they can improve. All staff use art and design effectively to strengthen other subjects, particularly history, geography and English. Thus, pupils are able to use their skills in a wider context to deepen their understanding. This helps them to see that art and design is not a subject in a vacuum but is an integral part of our lives. Occasionally, the tasks set in art and design lessons are rather too difficult for the lower attaining pupils to cope, and this adversely affects their sense of achievement. Nevertheless, all pupils try hard; most enjoy their art and design work and derive satisfaction from it.

86. Since the previous inspection, art and design in the school continues to be a strength. Standards have remained above national expectations. Pupils obviously enjoy the subject and to advantage use skills learnt in other subjects. Work is well displayed to add value to each piece. Pupils' skills and techniques are developed systematically, but there is only occasional evidence of drafting work from preliminary designs.

87. The subject is well led. There is a great enthusiasm among the staff which obviously communicates itself to the pupils. Work is often shared and discussed at the end of the day, which gives an informal assessment of levels achieved. There is an annual 'health check' when samples of work are cross checked with the governmental guidelines and an action plan is drawn up for the next year. This ensures that all Programmes of Study are fully covered. A portfolio of pupils' work shows progression and continuity through the key stages. There has been in-service training for the staff to help them implement the new curriculum and to discuss issues about how pupils' skills development should proceed. It is planned to review them in the light of the new curricular requirements. Resources have not improved since the previous inspection; they are adequate, if somewhat lacking in inspiration, but are to be reviewed in the light of the new Curriculum 2000.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. Only one lesson of design and technology was observed during the inspection. Other evidence was gained from scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and a portfolio of work for the previous academic year. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of work are above national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards of work meet expectations. The standard of work seen at the previous inspection has been maintained at Key Stage 1 but has declined somewhat at Key Stage 2. This is because work is not systematically evaluated and improved upon. Few records are kept of pupils' progress.

89. In Key Stage 1, pupils have designed a coat for Joseph. They planned their design, tested various materials and made a prototype to see which was the most suitable. They recorded what they needed and what they would do. At the end of the key stage, pupils have made lemon tarts and scones, finger puppets and fans. All designs are labelled appropriately, methods and results are recorded and pupils are beginning to evaluate their work. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils design money purses. They examine a variety of purses, discussing fastenings and seams. They draw designs and complete detailed plans. Some pupils practise the stitches they will need, for example blanket stitch and hemming, whilst others make prototypes to see if the money will be secure. All pupils take care in their work, steadily developing their ideas and skills. This is a sound foundation for work at Key Stage 2. However, although there are some well constructed models which increase in complexity through this key stage, the processes are not sufficiently recorded and there is limited written evidence of evaluation, or of testing in order to make improvement in models and designs. Progress in Key Stage 1 is quite rapid for most pupils. At Key Stage 2, progress is steady on the whole but pupils do not build rapidly on the foundation established at Key Stage 1.

90. Too little teaching was seen in design and technology to allow an overall judgement. However, the quality of the teaching in the one lesson seen was very good. The teacher had a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the needs of pupils. Good open questions probed to produce thoughtful answers and technical vocabulary was used consistently. High standards of work were expected and pupils responded accordingly.

91. The management of the subject is satisfactory. There are some strengths and a few weaknesses. The scheme of work ensures progression and continuity of skills, and the portfolio of work provides interesting exemplars. Pupils benefit from whole day projects, for example work on puppets with a puppeteer. However, during the inspection period, opportunities were missed to take full advantage of the expertise of archaeologists building a replica of an ancient 'round house' in the school grounds. Although pupils took part in small groups, only some classes undertook associated drawings or evaluations of the design and technology of the building under construction. So, although the experience was a very interesting one, many pupils missed an opportunity to gain a deeper insight into its design, production and use of materials.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

92. Standards of work seen are on course to be above national expectations by the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to develop an understanding of map work using their routes to school and around the local area. They recognise different types of building, both residential and commercial, within the village. They become aware of geographical features, such as woodlands and rivers. They begin to build up appropriate geographical terminology and learn how to collect and record information. They use their knowledge of the local area to make comparisons with other areas of Britain, for example Jersey and a Hebridean island (based on Col). From this, they realise what attracts visitors to locations and what souvenirs might typify each of them. In Key Stage 2, pupils become aware of cause and effect from studying how various factors like weather, volcanic action, erosion or human activity affect our lives and how we live both in Britain and other parts of the world. Some interesting work arose from a study of St Lucia. This included the volcanic areas and how they were formed, and other physical features and weather patterns, for example high winds and rainfall, and how they impact on the life of the islanders. Pupils discover that another important issue is the impact of tourism and they then make comparisons with this aspect of their own locality. Most identify benefits and disadvantages of the influx of so many visitors and come to reasoned judgements as to whether it is overall a good or bad thing for each area. The study of tourism leads pupils into research about other world locations, often on the Internet. They also use a computer software program to research a project on erosion by wind, water, frost and human activity and from this draw mature and geographically sound conclusions about land management. These are not based purely on factual recall but on the skills of using the evidence to arrive at information. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

93. Since the previous inspection, standards have risen at both key stages. Planning has improved because of the new Curriculum 2000 requirements and the implementation of Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for a scheme of work. This relates clearly to Programmes of Study and progression and continuity are built in. Resources have improved and there are United Kingdom and world atlases, maps, artefacts, photographs, CD-Roms and a sufficiently wide variety of books from which the pupils can research their work.

94. It was possible only to observe two lessons in geography at the time of the inspection, and teaching quality was good in one of these and very good in the other. Judgements about teaching quality overall are derived from discussions with staff, pupils and scrutiny of work. It is good. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are encouraged to form their own opinions and not just repeat what they have been told. This is evident, for example, in the manner in which pupils reach conclusions about the impact of tourism on any area. Their skills of deduction are thus honed. 'Brainstorming' sessions are well used to stimulate mature use of language, challenge pupils to think more clearly and use appropriate geographical terminology. The amount of teacher instruction related to pupil activities is well judged. This maintains the pace and balance of lessons and sustains pupils' interest in the topics. Pupils are given the opportunity to evaluate points raised during the lessons which helps consolidate their learning. Lively, enthusiastic approaches by the teachers engender a similar response in the pupils and give the lessons extra impact. Thus, pupils enjoy geography and are eager to answer well judged questions, which result from good subject knowledge.

95. Resources, for example the poetry of Benjamin Zephaniah in the study of St Lucia, are well used to stimulate discussion and extend learning. Work set for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs matches their prior attainment, and thus allows a sense of achievement when successfully completed. Where aspects of teaching are less than highly effective, insufficient thought is given to set tasks so that higher attaining pupils are not challenged to extend and deepen the content of their work. Also, some opportunities to evaluate what has been learned are rushed; thereby, consolidation of teaching points is lost.

96. The Programmes of Study match those required by Curriculum 2000. The subject is well managed and the provision is good. The implementation of the new scheme of work has sharpened the focus of lessons which now relate well to the new syllabus. Staff discussions frequently take place, and all teachers say they now have a greater grasp of subject requirements. Assessment procedures are currently under review and, although informal assessment is a regular feature, this does not yet impact strongly on future planning. Annual assessment is undertaken by the subject co-ordinator. Some effective fieldwork is carried out in the local area and there are visits to other areas like the Isle of Wight from which the pupils derive much information. Plans for a greater emphasis on fieldwork are being developed. All teachers have had in-service training on the requirements of the new curriculum since February 2000. The resources available are good and the co-ordinator has an annual budget. There is a folder of work done by each year group which shows progression, but this does not indicate the National Curriculum levels achieved. There are good cross-curricular links with: art and design, including some very effective St Lucian landscapes; history, through for example maps of the Second World War; information and communication technology, through word-processing and use of CD-Roms; literacy, particularly from expressive poems about hurricanes and volcanoes; mathematics, in the use of grid locations. The strengths of the provision of geography are the knowledge and enthusiasm of the staff which communicate well to the pupils and enhance their interest.



## HISTORY

97. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are on course to reach the national expectations in history by the age of seven. Standards are above national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. At both key stages, pupils' knowledge and understanding are based not solely on factual recall but also on a growing facility to understand the conditions in past times, and to empathise with the people who lived then. In Key Stage 1, pupils are aware that they are part of a continuing pattern, greatly helped by the discovery of a Celtic age site in the school grounds where the skeleton of a young woman was found from approximately 2,500 years ago. Awareness of the passage of time for the pupils at the beginning of the key stage is strengthened by drawing their family tree, describing how babies change from birth to school age, and looking at their own houses in comparison to houses in the past. They realise that the way people live, work, dress and travel changes as the years go by. They learn about the lives of famous people like Dr Barnardo, Florence Nightingale and Grace Darling's 'daring rescue'. They record their growing knowledge in a variety of ways, for example in vivid pictures and extended writing, some of which is word processed.

98. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their understanding and develop empathetic skills which grow in maturity as the key stage proceeds. In the earlier years of the key stage, they learn about life for the Roman soldiers stationed in Britain and write, with insight and some humour, the letters they might have sent home. They identify with the apprehensions of the monks at Lindisfarne when the Vikings arrived, and begin to understand a little of the power of Henry VIII with some originally idiosyncratic interpretations. They empathise with the misery of the working lives of Victorian children and realise the reasons behind the urbanisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As they grow older, most pupils visualise what life might have been like during the Second World War for those who were blitzed or for children who were evacuated. They produce some vivid and interesting work deriving from this in newspaper articles, letters and pictures showing the misery of air-raid shelters. Some begin to realize the part bias plays in our interpretation of the past. Most pupils develop skills of investigation, research - sometimes using the Internet - and independent reading which help to strengthen literacy skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at both key stages.

99. Since the previous inspection, standards have remained much the same. Pupils continue to show a great interest in and derive enjoyment from history. Cross-curricular links are very well developed. There is a portfolio of pupils' work showing progression and continuity. Resources have recently been strengthened by the acquisition of Second World War material.

100. It was not possible to observe many lessons during the inspection, but in the three seen the quality of teaching was sound or very good. On the whole, teaching is satisfactory and judgements about it are therefore based on these lessons, on discussions with pupils and staff, and a scrutiny of books. Where teaching is at its best, there is very vivid evocation of the period being studied which stimulates pupils' interest and promotes creativity and sensitivity. Good subject knowledge underpins searching question and answer sessions which challenge pupils and extend their understanding. In the study of Britain since 1930, excellent use is made of resources like photographic evidence, posters, newspaper cuttings and tape recordings. These bring a vivid reality and immediacy to the period and help the pupils to identify with the victims of war. The enthusiasm of many of the staff communicates itself to the pupils, and good class control engenders a suitable atmosphere for learning. Role play is used to enhance teaching points and consolidate previous knowledge. The judicious use of praise raises pupils' self-esteem and sense of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, particularly where work is set to match their prior attainment. Where teaching is less effective, some opportunities are lost to ask 'How do we know ....?' or 'Is this an absolute fact?' Tasks set for group work are not a close match to prior attainment and do not sufficiently challenge higher attainers. Resources are occasionally too small for all the class to see clearly and some pupils become disengaged. Strategies used to communicate teaching points are insufficiently varied and rely too much on a 'look and listen' approach which lessens the impact of teaching.

101. The provision of history is good and remains one of the strengths of the school. The subject is well managed. There is time set aside for its co-ordination which, this term, has concentrated on the implementation of the new curricular requirements and reshaping the scheme of work. This is now well in place and bearing fruit in the quality of work seen. Monitoring teaching quality is planned for next term when the co-ordinator will have an opportunity to observe history being taught throughout the school. The planning includes appropriate coverage of the Programmes of Study for the new curriculum. Pupils' work is assessed half-termly, and there are written assessment tests at the end of topics. Information gleaned from this is well used to inform future planning. There have been opportunities for in-service training through courses outside school which help to improve teaching quality and, as a result, standards. In addition, there is much informal discussion among the staff and this affords opportunities to sort out any problems which might be encountered. The subject gains from the fact that there is a depth of knowledge, understanding and enthusiasm among the staff which encourage a love of history in most pupils. The involvement of pupils in the building of a Celtic age 'round house' has added to their 'feel' for the past, with greater insight gained from talks from archaeologists who come to the school. Good use is made of the wealth of sites of historical interest in the local area which the pupils are given opportunities to visit. Cross-curricular links are very strong, particularly with art where vivid illustrations of wartime Britain add considerable impact; with literacy - some strong evidence of good extended writing; with drama, in use of rôle play to emphasise some aspects; with information and communication technology where pupils make their own attempts at word processing their work; with mathematics, for example in the use of timelines.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

102. Since the previous inspection, the school has made good progress in the implementation of a subject policy and a coherent scheme of work to support progression of skills. The quality and range of hardware and software have been substantially upgraded. However, the quality of learning for pupils in Key Stage 1 remains unsatisfactory as indicated at the previous inspection. Most pupils are not on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the key stage. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, and discussions with pupils in Year 6 indicate the widening use of information and communication technology to support learning in English, mathematics, art and design and history.

103. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use computers with limited confidence to communicate a range of information. In Year 1, some pupils use a software package to support a variety of headings underlined with appropriate adjustments in text size. In Year 2, pupils use a data-handling program to record information about themselves, but skills are very limited owing to the infrequent access to the computers.

104. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have satisfactory levels of word processing skills. Most have used the word processor to produce extended pieces of writing involving saving, retrieving, modifying and, finally, printing work. Pupils also use 'clip art' facilities and paste pictures into their written texts to enhance their appearance. Also, most have satisfactory knowledge and skill in using a data-handling program to organise information and use it to produce graphs or other charts to show it pictorially. Pupils have satisfactory skills in using CD ROM encyclopaedias to research information. They have used digital cameras to include photographs of themselves and provide a range of information about themselves and the school. During the inspection a group of Year 6 pupils extended their knowledge of control work by designing a program for a simulated model to travel in a series of movements through a maze. This required pupils to calculate units of distance and angles of turn, making changes as required to complete the task successfully. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make unsatisfactory progress: at Key Stage 2, progress is steady for most and rapid for many. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress owing to the good support provided and most attain expected levels.

105. During the inspection, two lessons of information and communication technology were observed, both at Key Stage 2. One was of good quality and one was satisfactory. However, close scrutiny of teachers' planning in upper Key Stage 1 indicates that most teaching is unsatisfactory, because of failure to build systematically on pupils' previous experience and irregular access to computers. In the well taught lesson at Key Stage 2, the teacher had good subject knowledge and taught new skills well. All pupils listened carefully to instructions about new techniques and the teacher encouraged keen participation in pairs. In both lessons, teachers were supportive and encouraging. These qualities have a positive impact on pupils' learning and attitudes. When teaching quality is good, pupils make rapid progress because there is a successful combination and the right balance of practical experience, good amounts of information and searching questions. All pupils have a very positive attitude toward information and communication technology and speak confidently about computer programs they have used at school and at home. Pupils work quietly and efficiently at computers and think out solutions to problems themselves, working collaboratively in pairs and groups when required. Pupils work in mixed attainment and gender groups and this successfully promotes their social development. Their behaviour is very good, as demonstrated by a group in Year 6 using a programmable model working outside the classroom in a very mature manner.

106. The subject of information and communication technology is managed satisfactorily overall. There are some strengths and some weaknesses. The scheme of work, new since the previous inspection, meets National Curriculum requirements and provides a good structure to ensure progression in teachers' planning at Key Stage 2. The subject co-ordinator directs it with enthusiasm and has been instrumental in the proposed development of a new information and communication technology suite. At present, assessment and recording of pupils' progress are weak features, and so there is insufficient information gleaned to measure progress against National Curriculum levels. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has drafted plans to rectify matters.

## **MUSIC**

107. During the inspection, three lessons were seen, one in Key Stage 1 and two in Key Stage 2. Limited evidence was available: no work was presented for scrutiny. Information was gained from talking to teachers, scrutinising their planning and observing extra-curricular activities. This shows that most pupils in Key Stage 1 are on course to meet expectations at the end of the key stage. At Key Stage 2, most pupils are on course to meet the expected standards in singing but not to meet them in composing, appraising, listening or applying knowledge and understanding. Most standards are unsatisfactory.

108. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy singing. They memorise favourite songs and hymns well. They pay attention to dynamics, singing loudly and softly and paying particular attention to silences. They enjoy songs with actions, performing them appropriately. Pupils in Year 1 quickly learn the names of untuned instruments such as tambour, wooden blocks, guiro, claves and triangle. They are aware that they fit into three 'families' - metal, wood and skin - and play them with care. They keep to a simple four beat rhythm, playing individually or in unison. Older pupils have the opportunity to play the recorder. During the inspection, particular attention was being paid to technique and rhythms. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing with clear notes and diction. They have good pitch and, by following taped music, cope well with complicated phrasing. However, teachers' planning shows that music is not taught progressively to develop further the skills learned in Key Stage 1. Many pupils did not know the names of instruments and were only able to keep to simple rhythms. Furthermore, they did not show respect for instruments, banging them inappropriately. Some pupils are enjoying learning to play the guitar. They have mastered simple chords and are learning to strum and pluck the strings for different effect. These skills are taught by a visiting teacher, once per week, as an extra-curricular activity.

109. The quality of music teaching varies. Of three lessons seen, teaching in one was good, in one it was very good and in one it was unsatisfactory, but it is unsatisfactory as a whole. In Key Stage 1, where teachers have some musical knowledge and expertise and follow the chosen scheme of work, pupils make steady progress. In Key Stage 2, teachers do not systematically use the scheme of work to support their planning or the teaching of lessons. Consequently, progress is haphazard and not all musical aspects required by the National Curriculum are systematically improved.

110. Management of music is satisfactory; there are some strengths and some weaknesses. Although the co-ordinator has only been in post a short while, already she has identified the school's needs. She has adapted the new 'Music Curriculum 2000' to the level of pupils' understanding so that skills can be built upon successively through Key Stage 2. Although opportunities to introduce music from other cultures are missed, music is used successfully as a cross-curricular activity; for example, it is used in dance and as a background atmosphere for some classroom activities. Visits from musicians, ensembles and musical players suitably enhance the curriculum. Evidence shows that, in the past, pupils with a specific gift for music have been well supported, but there is no systematic procedure to identify those with outstanding attainment and to accelerate their progress.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

111. The above average standards observed during the previous inspection have been maintained in both key stages, and progress for most pupils of all levels of prior attainment is still good throughout the school.

112. In Year 1, pupils use space very confidently in response to music, reflecting the movement of a butterfly. They travel under good control in different directions, very successfully linking together a number of movements at high and low levels. Pupils interpret music with very good expression and imagination. In Year 2, pupils build well on the skills learnt in previous years and perform simple gymnastic movements using floor and apparatus with good confidence. Floor exercises and apparatus work are linked together with purpose and imagination, reflecting the skills being undertaken. Also, pupils are aware of and comply with safety rules when dismantling and moving apparatus and when performing their gymnastic routines on fixed apparatus and balance beams. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils improve their gymnastic, catching and throwing skills well and achieve good quality hockey, football and netball skills. In games, for example in Year 6, pupils show that they have a good understanding of the use of space and abide enthusiastically by the rules of the game, displaying high levels of fair play. Pupils in Year 4 undertake swimming lessons, and most reach the required standard by the end of Year 6 (25 metres, using a recognisable stroke). Year 5 and 6 pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies and relate this well to the 'warm up' and 'cool down' sessions at the beginning and end of lessons.

113. The quality of teaching is good. Occasionally, where teachers have a very good knowledge and a high level of personal skill, the quality of teaching is very good. This was particularly evident in lower Key Stage 1 and Year 6. The planning, structure and pace of lessons throughout the school are good, and these ensure that good progress is maintained as pupils move through the school. Teachers ensure that there is appropriate balance between warm up, demonstration, practice and performance. They use praise effectively and encourage collective celebration of the achievements of others. However, the use of pupil evaluation to enhance performance is less consistently successful. Clear directions, explanations and the use of demonstration, as observed during a Reception and Year 1 class, underpin the very good relationships and understanding between teachers and pupils. These very effectively provide valuable experiences and learning opportunities for all pupils. Most show a very keen, enthusiastic interest in physical education. They respond well to teachers' instructions and guidance, act positively on advice to become proud of their work, and thoroughly enjoy performing for visitors. Most enjoy very good relationships with their teachers, concentrate on the tasks set and sustain high levels of energetic activity well. All pupils select equipment in a very mature, confident manner, putting it away sensibly and carefully. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make good progress in all aspects of the subject.

114. The subject is well managed with a number of strengths and a few weaknesses. The school's policy provides clear guidance for teachers. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and manages the physical education curriculum well. However, the school is aware of the need to update a large proportion of the gymnastics equipment to accommodate easier movement by younger pupils. The current range of extra-curricular sports activities available to Key Stage 2 pupils is broad, but offered largely to those in upper Key Stage 2. This reflects comments by parents at the pre-inspection meeting about extra-curricular activities being related mainly to sports and to older pupils. Involvement in the many extra-curricular sporting activities makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' social and moral development, such as when pupils take part in inter-school activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

115. Pupils are on course to achieve standards of work broadly in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages, with a substantial number achieving these expectations. Most pupils make steady progress at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils become aware of the need to care for others and to look after weaker creatures as St Francis taught. They relate simple stories like the Creation and the events in the Garden of Eden. They express their ideas simply but effectively, for example in poems about harvest time. This leads into learning about the celebration of Sukkoth, the Jewish harvest festival, which helps pupils to realise that other faiths have something in common with Christianity. Pupils celebrate other seasonal festivals like spring, and thus become aware of life cycles affecting us all.

116. As they pass up into Key Stage 2, all identify major events in their own lives from birth until now, and draw up similar timelines for their parents. They suggest topics of conversation between God and Moses and, later, Elijah, which show a simple grasp of the problems which the prophets encountered. Some produce thoughtful work on codes of behaviour and begin to realise how their behaviour affects those around them. The millennium prompts some to compose effective prayers for a better world. Some pupils begin to understand the concept of 'rites of passage' and identify some of them, for example baptism, confirmation and marriage. The study of the Crucifixion prompted some good work in the form of a newspaper article which shows considerable empathy and depth of understanding. Many begin to realise how Christians and those of other faiths draw on their religion in their daily life to help them. They understand why people go on pilgrimages and something of the significance of festivals such as 'Ash Wednesday'. However, most find it more difficult to write about or discuss in depth abstract concepts such as forgiveness, although some attempts are made at a simpler level. Most can give examples of occasions when they have been forgiven by, or have forgiven, friends or family.

117. Since the previous inspection, little has changed. Pupils continue to develop sound understanding of Christianity and other faiths, particularly Judaism and, in Key Stage 2, Islam. In all lessons seen, teaching was of good or very good quality. In contrast to the previous inspection, none was unsatisfactory. The curriculum follows the new Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus.

118. One lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and three in Key Stage 2. The teaching was either of good or very good quality. Insufficient was observed to make overall judgements. Where it is most effective, teachers read texts very expressively to involve pupils in the story from the start, for example in the Creation story in Key Stage 1. Activities are well planned to keep pupils suitably on task and maintain the pace of the lesson. There is a good balance between direct instruction and pupils' independent work in groups. This ensures interest does not flag. As pupils move through the key stages, appropriate vocabulary is used to stimulate thinking and to develop accuracy of response. Teachers' good subject knowledge ensures that suitably challenging questions are posed and pupils are encouraged to justify their reasoning. Preparation of Bible texts to be studied is good so that each group knows what they are required to read in order to research the topic, for example baptism. Discussion is well guided and so leads pupils to deeper

insights. There are some opportunities to evaluate how people behave in certain situations, either in real life or in the stories chosen. This encourages pupils to think of how their actions affect others. Where planning is least effective, it is superficial and lesson objectives lack clarity so neither pupils or teacher can evaluate if they have been achieved. Occasionally, the selected texts are too difficult for some pupils to comprehend deeply or to gain much insight from reading them, and they lose interest as a result. This prevents some good teaching from being judged to be even better.

119. The subject is well led. The teaching of religious education meets the requirements of the Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus which has recently been amended. The school assemblies support the teaching of the subject and are broadly Christian whilst also introducing pupils to other faiths, particularly Judaism and Islam. They help the pupils to reach a deeper understanding about religious matters, build self-esteem and gain in confidence. This strengthens the whole ethos of the school. Standards are monitored closely three times per year to ensure that themes are being taught appropriately. Work is matched to the levels described in the Agreed Syllabus and these assessments help to shape future planning. At the end of the year, an action plan is drawn up when strengths and weaknesses have been analysed so that all staff are aware of areas of development. There has been some in-service training for the co-ordinator about the new syllabus, and the information gleaned has been conveyed to the rest of the staff to assist in their teaching. Visitors from Christianity and other faiths are invited to come into the school to talk about their beliefs to help pupils understand customs and beliefs which may differ from their own.