

INSPECTION REPORT

BEGBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bristol

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 108918

Headteacher: Mr Ian Purnell

Reporting inspector: Mr Fred Riches
23235

Dates of inspection: 4 - 7 June 2001

Inspection number: 192794

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior with Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Begbrook Drive
Stapleton
Bristol

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Andrew Collins

Date of previous inspection: 24 February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23235	Fred Riches	Registered inspector	Science; equal opportunities; English as an additional language.	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14756	John Lovell	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
3764	Stephanie Lacey	Team inspector	English; history;	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23812	Carol Slade	Team inspector	Art and design; foundation stage; special educational needs.	
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; physical education.	
19302	Christine Perrett	Team inspector	Design and technology; geography; religious education.	
21872	Lorna Brackstone	Team inspector	Music.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Begbrook is a large community primary school with 342 boys and girls on roll. In addition, 60 children attend the nursery classes part time. Children bring a wide range of knowledge, skills and social development when they start in the nursery. Their attainment on entry is broadly average overall. Almost all children come from the local Stapleton area of Bristol, with a few from further afield. The school is almost fully subscribed. Most pupils are of white European origin, with 12 per cent from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds. These include 11 pupils for whom English is an additional language, but only two are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is just over 11 per cent, which is broadly average. Just over 11 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational need. This is below the national average of around 20 per cent. Of these, six pupils have statements of special educational need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Begbrook gives its pupils a satisfactory education. The headteacher provides a strong lead, setting a clear educational direction. There is a high proportion of good teaching, although quality is inconsistent. Standards achieved by age 11 in mathematics and science are average or above, but English is below average. The school has had to address challenging issues of very poor accommodation and resources, as well as managing difficult staffing changes since the last inspection. These have absorbed considerable time and energy, affecting continuity and morale on occasion. With a new building and greatly improved resources on the horizon, the mood is now one of joint optimism and shared purpose. In the light of standards achieved and the overall sound quality of education provided, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Achieves above average standards in mathematics through good teaching and clear focus on mental and oral work;
- The headteacher shows vision and drive and is well supported by the acting deputy and chair of governors in setting the school's educational direction;
- Much of the teaching is of good quality, with pupils participating well in stimulating lessons;
- Very good leadership by the special educational needs co-ordinator;
- Good financial planning is very well supported by efficient administration.

What could be improved

- Standards in English are not as high as they should be;
- A narrow, unbalanced curriculum results in underachievement in aspects of science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education and music;
- Inconsistencies in teaching quality stem from a lack of planned monitoring and support;
- Subject managers have insufficient impact on raising standards;
- Grim accommodation and scarce resources lower staff morale and pupils' achievement;
- Statutory requirements for ICT and collective worship are not fully met.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements in standards overall at ages seven and eleven have kept pace with the national trend. However, the school has not made sufficient progress in addressing key issues from the last inspection, particularly in ICT. With teaching quality improving and the senior management team functioning more effectively, it is now in a position to move forward.

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	E	C	D	D
Mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	D	B	C	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

Similar schools are those with between 8% and 20% of pupils eligible for free school meals.

As the table shows, the school's performance in mathematics in 2000 was well above average and much better than that of similar schools, due to good teaching. Standards in science were average and in line with those of similar schools. In English, the proportion of pupils reaching level 4 was in line with the national figure, but standards were below the national average and those of similar schools because very few pupils attained the higher level 5. Standards since the last inspection have risen faster than nationally in mathematics and have caught up with the national average in science. Results in English continue to be lower than mathematics and science annually.

Standards at age eleven in the current year are average in mathematics and science and below average in English. In comparison with last year, the current Year 6 contains double the number of pupils with special educational needs, limiting the overall level of attainment. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and satisfactorily in science. Although the school is set to meet targets for the proportion of pupils to reach level 4 in literacy and numeracy, higher attainers do not achieve as well as they should in English. Standards at age seven are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Children in the nursery and reception classes make satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning.

Pupils of average ability and those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily in the main. Higher attainers do well in national tests at age eleven, but are not fully extended through their junior years in applying their literacy skills or in active investigation and enquiry in science. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils from ethnic minorities and those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Standards in most subjects are satisfactory. They are poor in ICT and unsatisfactory in music throughout the school, however. They are also unsatisfactory in religious education in the junior classes.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils like school, but some show a lack of enthusiasm in lessons when teaching is not stimulating.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Good in many lessons and around the school, including lunchtimes. A small minority present challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Older pupils gladly accept responsibilities and most pupils relate well to their teachers and each other. Year 6 pupils develop initiative and independence on annual field trips.
Attendance	Satisfactory. In line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 88 per cent of lessons, including 16 per cent where it is very good or excellent. Whilst over half of the teaching was good or better, 12 per cent was less than satisfactory. The variation in teaching quality is unacceptably wide. Nevertheless, this picture represents an improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of numeracy is good throughout the school and includes some of very high quality. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory, but does not challenge higher attainers as effectively as in numeracy. Teachers plan conscientiously. In the best lessons, teachers motivate pupils by showing enthusiasm in their tone of voice, brisk questioning and warm reception of pupils' comments. In several lessons, teachers deploy assistants very astutely, with the result that they offer sensitive, targeted support to pupils with special educational needs. In these lessons, relationships are positive and class control is not an issue, because pupils are fully involved. Pupils do their best because they recognise their teachers' high expectations. In the unsatisfactory lessons, pupils listen passively and complete tasks routinely, rather than showing interest in their activities. In these lessons, the teaching methods and use of resources are uninspiring. There are both strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of more able pupils and those with special educational needs, but overall the school is meeting the needs of all pupils, including those from ethnic minorities and the few speaking English as an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory, but ICT does not meet statutory requirements. The curriculum overall is unbalanced, lacks breadth and is often dull. The curriculum for the foundation stage is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Very good management and some excellent examples of assistance and teaching; also situations where support, tasks and resources are not well matched.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Most of these pupils are fluent English speakers. Teachers give additional support where appropriate to the very small number at an early stage of speaking English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall, with good provision for moral development. The school has given most attention to implementing the 'Begbrook Code', but not all lunchtime supervisory staff and teaching assistants fully subscribe to the procedures being fully implemented by teachers.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactorily. Child protection, first aid, health and safety procedures are in place. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and improving, but not yet used sufficiently to guide planning. Health and safety management needs attention.

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory, with positive support from the Friends' Association, Link Parents Group and many parents giving their children good support with homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good by the headteacher, who shows vision and sets a clear direction. The acting deputy and senior management team give positive support, but subject manager roles are underdeveloped and senior management team roles need redefining. Satisfactory overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. The chair of governors has an excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Several governors bring particular expertise. Procedures are efficient. However, the school does not fulfil statutory requirements for ICT and collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Current priorities stem appropriately from thorough evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has taken positive action to address areas needing improvement. The monitoring of teaching is unsatisfactory, but this is being addressed.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and the school is applying the principles of best value well in its decision-making.

Staffing levels are adequate. Accommodation and resources are very poor, however. Pupils are taught in the morale-sapping surroundings of fifty-year-old temporary buildings. A new ICT and library block is being built, after which the recently agreed £3.5 million building project cannot begin soon enough.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The inspection team received 124 questionnaire replies and 13 parents attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. (93%) • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. (92%) • The school works closely with parents. (92%) • Teaching is good. (91%) • Staff are approachable. (91%) • Children are making good progress. (90%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of additional activities. (36%) • The amount of work to do at home. (29%) • Behaviour of a few pupils, mainly at lunchtime. (14% and a number at the meeting.)

The inspection team is in broad agreement with the positive views of the majority of parents. The school offers a satisfactory range of additional activities, though not as many as in previous years. This explains the dissatisfaction of a minority of parents, who were used to broader provision. The school's homework arrangements are also satisfactory. The new policy states clearly what is expected, but this has not yet been shared with parents. Inconsistent application of the previous arrangements may also have caused some parental dissatisfaction. Parental views include those wishing to see both more and less homework. Some 82 per cent of parents in the survey feel behaviour is good. The dissatisfaction comes from parents who focus on the school's response to the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils. The school is rightly recognised locally as an excellent example for its sensitive management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A reflective teaching staff are trialling a new behaviour code. Clearer feedback to parents on the nature and success of strategies may serve to allay their anxieties.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Overall, pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily in most subjects. This maintains the situation reported at the last inspection. In some instances, for example in mathematics and art, pupils achieve well, and occasionally very well because of strong teaching. In others, for example in ICT and music throughout the school and in religious education in junior classes, they clearly do not achieve as well as they should, because the school's educational provision is weaker.

2 The picture in other subjects is not so clear-cut. In English and science, for example, achievement is inconsistent. Some pupils achieve well, but others under-achieve. For example, in English, pupils are currently achieving well in Years 3 and 4, but not all are achieving as well as they should in Years 5 and 6. In science, pupils are achieving well in all aspects of the subject in Years 1 and 2, but their learning in Years 3 to 6 is very narrow and knowledge-based, lacking development of investigative and enquiry skills. To complicate matters further, higher attainers do well in science in Years 5 and 6, but pupils with special educational needs often struggle to complete tasks too difficult for them. Results of national tests in 2000 show pupils doing much better in mathematics than in English. They show a higher proportion of boys than girls reaching the standard level in science, but girls doing better than boys in writing. This unacceptable variation in rates of achievement stems from six distinct but interrelated sources:

- a lack of rigour in the monitoring of standards and teaching;
- weak use of assessments to improve planning;
- underdeveloped subject management roles;
- a high turnover of teaching staff;
- a period of low staff morale (now over);
- very poor working conditions, with inadequate accommodation and resources.

3 The school has clearly identified its strengths and weaknesses in terms of pupils' achievement and is taking appropriate steps to address the areas needing improvement. During the last two years, staffing and accommodation have demanded a disproportionate amount of senior management and governor time. The development of monitoring procedures, together with the establishment of clear subject management roles and responsibilities now top the agenda for immediate, rigorous action.

4 Children entering the nursery bring a wide range of knowledge, skills and personal development. Overall their attainment is broadly average on entry. Children aged 3, 4 and 5 in the nursery and reception classes make satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning, though there is room for further development of children's ability to use initiative, make choices and learn independently. By the end of the reception year, almost all pupils have met the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative, physical, personal and social development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards have been maintained at this level since the last inspection.

5 Standards have also been maintained at age seven since the last inspection. Since summer 1997, the year in which the current Year 6 pupils were seven-year-olds, results have improved in line with the national trend. Last year they were above average in writing

and average in reading and mathematics. Pupils did better than their peers in similar schools in writing and about the same in reading and mathematics. Standards in writing were a strength. Pupils also achieved above average standards in science.

6 This year standards are average at age seven in speaking and listening, below average in reading, but above average in writing, where the school has concentrated its efforts. Standards are again average in mathematics and above average in science, where pupils show good understanding through their investigative work.

7 The school's performance in mathematics at age 11 in summer 2000 was well above average and much better than that of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was also well above average at 37 per cent, compared with the national 24 per cent. Standards in science were average and in line with those of similar schools. In English, the proportion of pupils reaching the standard level 4 slightly exceeded the national average, but standards were below the national average and those of similar schools overall, mainly due to the fact that very few pupils reached the higher level 5. Higher attainers clearly achieved well in mathematics, but not so well in English. In common with schools across the country, pupils' achievement in writing was much lower than in reading.

8 Results at age 11 since the last inspection show the school's performance improving much faster than nationally year on year in mathematics. As with mathematics, science results in 1997 were below the national average. Science results had caught up with the national average by 1999 and this standard was maintained in 2000. These improvements are due to good teaching of numeracy and a rigorous focus on covering and revising the knowledge elements of the science curriculum in Years 5 and 6. Results in English continue to be lower each year than in mathematics and science. Reasons behind this include the school's slow introduction of the national literacy strategy, very poor resourcing, weak use of assessments to target areas for improvement and some inconsistent teaching. A mitigating factor is that pupils' special educational needs relate mainly to difficulties with language and literacy. Nevertheless, the pattern of lower results year on year in English than in mathematics and science is clear evidence of underachievement, particularly by higher attainers, in this subject.

9 Standards at age 11 in the current year are average in mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities are achieving as well as they should in mathematics, where teaching is consistently strong. Pupils of average attainment and above are doing well in science, where the instructional teaching approach in school, backed by the use of supportive revision materials at home, gives these pupils good factual grounding. Pupils of lower ability, particularly those with special educational needs, do not achieve as well as they could, because the curriculum is not suited to their learning styles. Standards of scientific investigation and enquiry, not reflected in national tests, are unsatisfactory at age eleven. The science curriculum in junior classes is too narrow and does not encourage sufficient learning by allowing pupils to investigate, predict, test and analyse results.

10 Standards in English at age 11 are again below average. In comparison with last year, the current Year 6 contains twice the number of pupils with special educational needs and many of these are related to underdeveloped language and literacy skills. Pupils are achieving well in mathematics and satisfactorily in science, but not all are doing so well in English. The school exceeded its literacy and numeracy targets for the percentage of pupils reaching level 4 in Year 6 in 2000, but it did not extend higher attainers sufficiently in English. It is on track to meet this year's targets, which have been set lower because of the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In 1997, when current Year 6

pupils were in Year 2, the school's results in reading, writing and mathematics were the lowest in the last five years. The targets set are therefore appropriately challenging. Once again, however, fewer pupils are working at the higher level 5 than in mathematics and science.

11 Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make satisfactory progress overall. When they are supported by the well briefed and caring teaching assistants, their progress is good. On occasion these pupils struggle in English and written work in other subjects, particularly science in upper junior classes, when work set is too demanding for their literacy skills. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in English in some year groups, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6. The school tracks the progress of individuals in annual tests and analyses differences between boys' and girls' attainment well, but it does not check to see whether pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, including those speaking English as an additional language, are doing as well as they should. In sessions seen, these pupils were achieving as well as their peers. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, girls did better than boys in English. Eleven-year-old girls also did better, but the difference was only slightly greater than nationally. The school's own analyses show that Year 6 boys did better than girls in science. There is no significant pattern, however, to show any major difference between boys' and girls' attainment in recent years.

12 Standards are satisfactory at ages seven and eleven in art and design (although there are signs of recent good achievement by pupils in this subject), geography, history and physical education (PE). They are also satisfactory in design and technology at age seven, but there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement in this subject at age eleven. While the limited amount of work seen included some good examples, pupils' recollections, recordings and work samples suggested insufficient attention has been given to the subject in junior classes. Standards in music are below average at ages seven and eleven. Pupils do not show an appropriate breadth of musical experience and knowledge. This is due to unsatisfactory teaching, with staff showing a lack of confidence and insufficient subject knowledge.

13 Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at age seven, but not at age eleven. The subject receives insufficient attention in junior classes. Pupils' work samples do not show care or interest and discussions with pupils reveal inadequate knowledge and understanding.

14 Insufficient evidence was available to make a firm judgement about how weak standards are in ICT. It is clear, however, that they are below average throughout the school, except for pupils who have access to computers at home. The school is awaiting completion of an ICT suite. However, the last inspection clearly made the subject a key issue for immediate action. Until recently, because of staffing and management changes, the school had made negligible progress in addressing the issue. Provision for pupils who have been at the school since February 1997, the time of the last inspection, has been poor. The new headteacher has now taken positive action, but the subject remains the school's weakest.

15 Standards in almost all of these foundation subjects remain the same as they were at the last inspection. Standards in music at age seven and religious education at age eleven, however, have declined. While the school has made good improvements in mathematics and science, it has not made sufficient improvement in English and ICT.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16 Pupils enjoy school, a view confirmed by parents. Most pupils identify strongly with the school and display positive attitudes to learning, as they did at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. They show an interest and involvement in most activities. Overall standards of behaviour are satisfactory and relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are good.

17 Children in the nursery and reception classes are secure in daily routines and organisation. They develop trusting, confident relationships and respect each other's ideas and feelings. Most sustain concentration well and are well behaved. Most children change independently for physical education and manage their personal hygiene confidently. Children learn to co-operate well, but do not make enough choices or take initiative in their own learning. Pupils' responses to teaching are satisfactory or better throughout the school in almost all lessons. In those classes where the pace of the lesson is good and teachers' expectations are high, pupils are well motivated, interested and responsive. For example, in a Year 1 lesson in which pupils talked about their holidays and wrote simple sentences, focusing on their targets to use spaces, full stops and conjunctions, they persevered well and maintained interest and concentration. In such well-structured lessons, where teachers use time effectively and stimulate all pupils to develop ideas independently and collaboratively, pupils are enthusiastic, remain focused on their work and achieve well. Pupils usually work well in pairs and small groups, sharing resources with one another, co-operating and collaborating increasingly well. For example, in a Year 6 art lesson, pupils had studied a painting by George Seurat and were making their own paintings in his style. Using the techniques of pointillism, they maintained interest, shared resources well and discussed techniques to achieve different shades and blending of colours and the effect of changing the size of the 'dots'. When the pace and challenge of lessons is less demanding, concentration and focus lapse after short periods and pupils need constant encouragement to continue to apply themselves to their work.

18 The quality of relationships between pupils is good. Pupils ensure that no-one is left out at playtimes and dinner time is a social occasion in which boys and girls of different ages mix together at the dining tables and talk about their lessons and their interests outside school. They enjoy activities such as table tennis at midday but would like opportunities to use play equipment such as skipping ropes and hoops at midday. They are keen to ensure that visitors should gain a good impression of them and of their school.

19 Pupils warmly welcome visitors and are confident in showing and discussing their work. Pupils respond well to visiting speakers and assemblies. These help them to develop an understanding of the needs of others. Within their classes, pupils discuss suggestions for supporting charities to inform discussions at school council meetings, where decisions are made. School councillors have a good awareness of the work of charities they support and explain why they were selected.

20 Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is usually satisfactory and sometimes good. Most pupils are self-disciplined, although a minority behave inappropriately on occasions, failing to respond to instructions, talking whilst the teacher is working with a small group of pupils and calling out inappropriately whilst the teacher is talking to the whole class. When the pace and challenge of lessons is good, pupils' interest, enthusiasm and behaviour is generally good. When lessons lack pace and challenge and management of the class is unsatisfactory, behaviour is sometimes unsatisfactory, noise levels rise and pupils' learning is affected. This is very similar to the position reported in 1997. Pupils have a good understanding of the 'Begbrook Code' and are aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected from them and usually respond

well to these. Some parents have concerns about the standards of behaviour. During the last school year there have been nine fixed period exclusions, involving six pupils, and this contrasts with no exclusions in the year prior to the 1997 inspection. Exclusions have been used appropriately. In some cases significant traumatic events that occurred outside school have affected pupils' behaviour and needed the support and expertise of external specialists. The standards of behaviour throughout the school have a positive effect on learning and standards.

21 Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion, with a minimum of supervision. They are courteous and trustworthy and show respect for the school's and other pupils' property. There is no evidence of vandalism, graffiti or litter in or around the school. Pupils have respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs. There is no evidence to suggest that there is systematic bullying or oppressive behaviour within the school. Generally, pupils and parents do not express concerns about bullying and pupils are very confident that if they have any worries about this or relationship breakdowns, they may take them to teachers or other adults working in the school. The school seeks to identify and address any concerns, mediating in the case of difficulties that arise in relationships, involving parents when appropriate.

22 Throughout the school, pupils undertake routine tasks to help the teacher within the classroom. They clear up after activities and assist in handing out books and resources. They respond increasingly well to the limited opportunities which are available for them to undertake whole school responsibilities, such as by volunteering to sweep the hall floor after lunch, serving on the school council or acting as a prefect. These opportunities are mainly limited to pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils display satisfactory initiative and personal responsibility for their own learning and when their interest is captured, they collaborate well in pairs and groups. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 discussed the difference between living and non-living things and developed their understanding by building on each other's prior knowledge to identify a third category, 'once living'. As a consequence of the lack of resources and facilities, pupils do not undertake sufficient independent research to benefit their learning and extend their knowledge and understanding.

23 Overall attendance is satisfactory and attendance rates remain similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. The significant majority of pupils are punctual at the start of the school day and those who arrive late, usually arrive within the first few minutes of the school day, during registration. The levels of attendance have a positive effect upon pupils' progress and attainment.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24 The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the foundation stage, infant and junior classes. Throughout the school, teaching is satisfactory or better in 88 per cent of lessons, with twelve per cent less than satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when 19 per cent of lessons were less than satisfactory. The proportion of good and very good teaching has risen. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching remains too high, however.

25 On the positive side, teaching is very good in 13 per cent of lessons and excellent in three per cent. It is good in a further 40 per cent. Over half of the teaching observed was good or better. It is important to note, in the face of parental concern about staff turnover, that teaching by newly qualified staff includes much good teaching and some of the highest quality. The good and very good lessons are spread across every year group in the school and lessons with unsatisfactory elements similarly occur in each of the three key stages.

26 As a result of the teaching, pupils of all abilities achieve at least satisfactorily throughout the school in most subjects. Gifted and talented pupils learn particularly successfully in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, but are not sufficiently extended in other subjects, including English, ICT and music. Teachers and assistants are particularly successful in their approach to supporting pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. These pupils receive sensitive support within the classroom and around the school, where necessary on a learning programme individually targeted to their needs. Teachers also ensure that pupils from ethnic minorities, including those speaking English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers in lessons. They use assessments to highlight any individual needs for additional attention. Teachers give equal attention to boys and girls in all subjects and are alert to any differences in attainment by gender. There is no significant pattern to show difference between boys' and girls' attainment over recent years.

27 The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers usually match tasks to pupils' capabilities well, but there is variable practice and in some lessons, pupils tackle tasks that are too difficult without support. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of their pupils and use their assessment information sensitively to prepare realistically achievable individual education plans where these are needed. Teaching assistants provide good levels of help for children with learning difficulties. They are conversant with pupils' individual education plans and liaise effectively with teachers about the learning expectations in lessons. They are flexible, patient and sensitive to pupils' personalities.

28 The special needs co-ordinator provides excellent support for pupils. She gives them and teachers the option as to whether her help is classroom-based or whether it is better to withdraw pupils. She liaises well with teachers to ensure that pupils are fully involved and included in lessons where possible. When necessary she gives teaching support outside the classroom. On one occasion, working with two pupils, she gave outstanding literacy and comprehension support, using the same text as pupils in the classroom.

29 Teachers, nursery nurses and assistants in the foundation stage show patience and understanding. They give regular praise and encouragement to build children's confidence. Children make sound progress because they know the routines and feel secure. Teachers foster sound development of communication and literacy skills, regularly sharing books with children in both nursery and reception classes to encourage a love of stories. They plan mathematical activities well matched to children's understanding, ensuring that mathematical experiences are a natural part of day-to-day routines. Teachers give children a range of experiences to help them get to know their world, choosing topics that interest them. Occasionally, however, children have to sit and listen for too long, with too little time for practical activities. Staff manage the activities calmly, but do not always put sufficient emphasis on encouraging children to learn by making independent choices and taking initiative themselves. Teachers provide stimulating role-play opportunities and help pupils participate in a number of artistic pursuits, but musical activities are not always satisfactorily organised. Teachers offer regular opportunities for physical development, but outdoor resources need improvement.

30 An analysis of the quality of teaching by subject shows that the teaching of mathematics and art is good. The teaching of English is satisfactory, with many good features. Teaching in most other subjects and in the six areas of learning in nursery and reception classes is also sound. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory and this is mainly due to lack of confidence and insufficient subject knowledge. With very few lessons timetabled,

there is insufficient evidence to judge the teaching of ICT. The paucity of evidence shows, however, that the school has not addressed the teaching of ICT sufficiently rigorously since the last inspection, when raising standards in the subject was a key issue. Other subjects highlighted for attention by the last inspection were art, music, geography and religious education. Teaching has clearly improved in art and pupils are achieving well. Teaching in geography is mainly good, but a little unsatisfactory teaching remains. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching in religious education, but the school has not given sufficient attention to the key issue in this subject, as standards at age 11 do not meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Teaching in science includes an appropriately broad range of methods in infant classes, but follows too narrow an approach in junior lessons. Teachers in Years 3 and 4 use worksheets to the exclusion of all other recording and pupils in Years 5 and 6 record far too much factual information, often copied word for word. These approaches limit pupils' understanding, because there is insufficient emphasis on pupils learning the skills of scientific investigation and enquiry. While teaching is satisfactory overall, there is a little unsatisfactory teaching in both infant and junior classes, due to a lack of challenge, slow pace and inappropriate choice of teaching methods. Nevertheless, the proportions of satisfactory, good and very good teaching have improved since the last inspection, with a reduced amount that is less than satisfactory.

31 The headteacher has only recently put in place procedures for monitoring teaching across the school. It is the previous lack of monitoring and support structures that have led to the continued inconsistencies. Staffing and management changes have delayed positive action in a situation where the lack of agreed monitoring procedures at a time of change left a vacuum. The school clearly addressed the last inspection's key issue related to teaching initially by improving class organisation and therefore equality of opportunity, but there is little evidence of the 'sharing of good practice' advocated. Newly qualified teachers have a good induction programme and receive good support from their team leaders and mentor, but other teachers have had little experience of observing each other or of observing lessons in other schools. Also, the variety of schemes of work for different year groups and splitting of subject management responsibilities has had a detrimental effect on continuity in the teaching of some subjects, including science, and music.

32 The teaching of numeracy is a strength of the school. It is good in most lessons throughout the school and includes some of excellent and very good quality. A particular strength is the teaching of mental and oral sessions, which are brisk and focused. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has led to much improved, well-focused teaching since the last inspection and this has contributed to the rapid rise in standards. There is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching in this subject. Teachers involve pupils regularly in explaining the strategies they use to add, subtract, multiply and divide and this sharpens all pupils' numeracy skills. Teachers throughout the school use the three-part format of the national numeracy strategy successfully. They model the use of precise mathematical vocabulary and ensure that pupils use this. Teachers prepare tasks matched to pupils' assessed abilities and make good use of the limited resources. They deploy assistants very effectively, so that pupils with special educational needs receive effective support. They challenge higher attainers very successfully, as is apparent from the high proportion exceeding the national standard at age 11. Teachers use the final plenary session well to check pupils' learning.

33 The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall, with the strongest teaching observed in Years 1, 3 and 4. All teachers implement the national literacy strategy, with teachers planning in teams to ensure pupils of the same age all cover the same work. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well in the literacy hour throughout the school. Teachers do not extend higher attainers as well in literacy as in mathematics

and science in Years 5 and 6. In the best teaching, teachers enliven lessons by using texts imaginatively, showing their enthusiasm for the subject and prompting pupils, through careful questioning, to think and express themselves. This was particularly apparent in the Year 3/4 lessons comparing Dick King-Smith stories. Pupils achieved well in these lessons because they were caught up in the enjoyment of learning. In one or two sessions, a slow pace and uninteresting presentation led to pupils showing little enthusiasm and not making the progress they should.

34 In most lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is uninspiring and teachers fail to motivate pupils. The teaching methods chosen, usually too much time spent talking by the teacher, are ineffective. The resources used are often dull. In too many lessons, the majority of pupils' participation is minimal. They do not usually disrupt, but they fiddle or loll and do not attempt to gain eye contact with the teacher. After the slow pace of a long introduction, pupils undertake written activities with little sense of urgency. Standards of presentation are varied throughout the school and reflect teachers' expectations and demands, rather than pupils' best efforts. In several lessons, teachers omit to focus the class by highlighting the main learning points as the lesson begins. Similarly, they do not allow time to review and share achievements at the close. In a few lessons, mainly in music, unsatisfactory teaching and learning results from teachers' lack of confidence or expertise. In a very small proportion of lessons, class management is weak and results in poor or unsatisfactory learning.

35 Common elements that contribute to the best teaching are teachers' thorough preparation and planning, good questioning and listening, which prompts pupils to express themselves and enter into discussion, and a clear sharing of the focus of the lesson with the pupils. Teachers show their enthusiasm through their tone of voice and the way they interact with pupils. This motivates pupils to participate. They achieve successfully because the teachers have caught their interest and they recognise the teachers' sense of purpose. In these lessons, the teachers' expectations are clear. Their pace and organisation is good. They waste no time and pupils therefore share the sense of focused effort. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive in these lessons. There are no problems with pupil management because pupils are fully involved, doing their best.

36 Teachers make mainly good use of day-to-day assessment, circulating and prompting well during lessons. Some marking is of high quality, particularly in Year 1, but there are also inappropriate marking comments, praising work that clearly does not merit it, for example. This is another area of inconsistency the school needs to address, as pupils' presentation of work varies in direct relation to teachers' demands.

37 Teachers make mainly good use of homework throughout the school. The school has recently re-organised procedures. These are appropriate for each age group. A significant minority of parents in the survey showed dissatisfaction with homework arrangements, but this appears to stem from inconsistent application of the previous homework policy and the fact that the new arrangements have not yet been fully publicised. For the most part, homework arrangements have a positive effect on pupils' achievement. They are particularly effective for nursery and reception children and for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Parents give the older children very good support through the use of revision books in English, science and mathematics.

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

38 The school has made some headway in improving planning for different subjects since the last inspection, but this remains an area for further development. The school does not provide a sufficiently broad or balanced curriculum. It has not made sufficient headway in addressing key issues on curriculum development since the last inspection.

39 There is a heavy emphasis on English and mathematics, with most of the morning sessions set aside for work in these areas. This means that less time is available for other subjects. This is especially the case for ICT, where the school is not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum. Too little time is spent on this subject. Religious education is also given insufficient attention in some classes.

40 Planning has improved overall. The school has adopted the national literacy and numeracy strategies and these now underpin work in English and mathematics. However, as a consequence of staff changes the planning in these areas is not as far forward as in many other schools. Staff are now beginning to look at planning for the development of speaking and listening skills, for example, and at linking work in the literacy hour with planning in other subjects. There are appropriate systems in place for planning in mixed age classes.

41 Planning for work in the new foundation stage is firmly based on the new national guidance for work in the six areas of learning which lead to the early learning goals set for children to reach by the end of their reception year. Both nursery and reception classes offer a balanced range of activities, with appropriate focus on children's personal and social development. The school is aware of the need to ensure that pupils have increased opportunity to make choices and use their initiative when learning through investigation and enquiry. Staff are also fully aware of the need to further develop outdoor play and learning opportunities once the new building is in place.

42 With the introduction of 'Curriculum 2000', the school has also taken positive steps to address the planning issues raised at the last inspection by introducing an overall cycle of topics to be covered from year to year. This sets a clear framework for staff. The school has recently adopted national guidance documents for planning work in most subjects and these will ensure appropriate coverage over time. At the moment work in ICT particularly is not sufficiently based on these guidelines and the school is not planning for the full range of work in this area. Work in music is based on a published scheme for all but the oldest classes. Here teachers' planning does not cover the work appropriate for this particular age group sufficiently. In science too, staff in junior classes use a different planning framework to that adopted in infant classes. The junior scheme places an over-emphasis on developing pupils' knowledge base, with little opportunity for experimental or investigative work. In religious education the school plans from the Bristol Agreed syllabus. Overall there is an over-emphasis on pencil and paper tasks, with too little opportunity for pupils to work independently in order to experiment or investigate.

43 The school is trying to bring some excitement into learning by planning special weeks. Recently, for example, the whole school took part in a science week in which scientists from various disciplines gave demonstrations and involved pupils in investigative enquiry. The week served to raise the profile of science and technology and to stimulate pupils' interest. They made paper, created pneumatic models, using syringes and tubes, launched paper aeroplanes and kites they had designed and made, watched crystals grow on rocks and ice-cream steam as liquid nitrogen was poured onto a mixture. They began to develop their own conservation area in the school grounds, designed prototype hot air balloons, worked out why celery changed colour when placed in food dyes and felt the skin of a

snake from Bristol Zoo. The experience-packed week did much to heighten pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.

44 A minority of parents are unhappy with the school's range of additional activities. The inspection found that overall the school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside of lessons. There are a number of sporting and musical clubs, mostly for older pupils. Some of these, such as table tennis, are held at lunchtimes. Others, such as netball, take place after school. Visits are planned for most year groups, as part of their studies, and these help to bring learning alive for the pupils. During the week of the inspection, for example, Year 2 pupils were very excited about their forthcoming trip to Weston Super Mare. In Year 6, pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a residential visit and this helps them to develop their personal and social skills away from the security of home.

45 The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum in almost all subjects and areas of learning. However, the timetabling and provision of resources for ICT does not yet ensure that all pupils in all classes have equal access, however limited, to regular use of computers. Through the planning of groups for higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs in English and mathematics, the school ensures that these pupils have access to appropriate challenge and support. The school's curriculum complies with its policy on equality of opportunity, ensuring that provision does not discriminate between boys and girls. There is, however, currently insufficient check on the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils from ethnic minorities, including those learning English as an additional language.

46 The school tries very hard within its means to ensure that pupils with special educational needs have the fullest curriculum possible. Pupils' problems are assessed early in their school lives and positive steps taken to provide early support. Appropriate individual education plans are prepared, which set out clearly how the school will meet each pupil's needs. Where additional advice is needed, the school makes effective use of outside specialists for guidance.

47 The school has a justifiably good reputation for the way it includes pupils with challenging emotional needs and those with physical disabilities. Staff are sensitive and flexible in following plans. They also listen carefully to pupils' and parents' opinions and try to be adaptable in providing for their learning needs.

48 The school has worked hard to improve its provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. There is a planned programme for sex and health education, which meets statutory requirements. Work is in progress to update the materials used for the sex education part of the plans. In addition to this, teachers also plan a 'circle time' each week, when pupils meet together to discuss ideas, worries and concerns.

49 Provision for personal, health and social education is satisfactory. Circle time is now a regular feature of the curriculum for most pupils. During the week of the inspection pupils in Year 6, preparing for their residential camp, were scheduled to discuss any anxieties they might be experiencing at the prospect of being away from home. Corridor displays reveal appropriate work culminating in large poster displays on safe routes to school. Photographs are on display along corridors, so that pupils liable to toxic shock or asthma attacks are known to everyone. The school has good links with its local community policeman. Whilst it is evident that good work is being achieved in some classes, there are inconsistencies too. At present there is no co-ordinator to develop current policy for personal, health and social education or to overcome inconsistencies through the creation of a scheme of work.

50 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school explicitly promotes spiritual awareness through its religious education provision. In the main, teachers generally give significant thought to making lessons enjoyable for their pupils. Some creative activities have an intrinsic spirituality. Examples of this quality are seen through carefully detailed observational drawings of flowering daffodil bulbs in science. Teachers try hard to be positive and to raise pupils' self esteem. Pupils' work carefully displayed in many classes helps to compensate to some extent for the dilapidated state of the building. However courtyard areas, which have the potential to be spaces for quiet reflection, are neglected. Calm supportive teaching in the special needs room helps to raise the confidence and self-belief of more vulnerable pupils. There are inconsistencies in the spiritual element of some assemblies. Arrangements for collective worship do not meet statutory requirements.

60 Good provision for pupils' moral development centres on the 'Begbrook Code', which is currently being trialled. It gives explicit guidelines and expectations to clearly indicate what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The code has been agreed by careful consultation between staff, pupils, parents and governors. Everywhere pupils turn they see it displayed, in their classrooms, corridors and the halls. Children in the nursery also understand its implications. The code is followed consistently. Good behaviour is acknowledged through special reward assemblies, whilst sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are defined and followed.

61 Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. In many lessons, teachers give pupils opportunities to make contributions towards each other's learning through group collaboration and plenary sessions. Pupils willingly take responsibilities when they are asked to do so. Year 6 pupils effectively supervise corridors at lunchtime breaks. Every class from Year 2 upwards has a representative on the school council. Their suggestions have brought about real changes in provision, such as a less regimented approach to where pupils may sit in the lunch hall. Money is regularly raised for charities chosen by the school council. A recent 'Wacky Hair Day' enabled pupils to contribute to a local children's cancer charity.

62 Teachers plan contributions from other world cultures to make an appropriate impact on the cultural life of the school. Through history, religious education, art and music lessons, they provide pupils with opportunities for aesthetic appreciation as well as cultural knowledge and understanding. For example, when pupils study the Bayeux Tapestry they do so for its artistic interest as well as its historical evidence. The school tries to involve its ethnic minority families wherever possible in providing a multicultural dimension to its work. For example a formidable large dragon was made for the celebration of Chinese New Year. Recently a Muslim mother talked to nursery children about the special events that happen when a baby is born into the faith.

63 Begbrook has satisfactory links with the local community. The local police officer visits the school regularly to talk about his work. Christian church leaders also make a positive contribution to assemblies. The headteacher has plans to develop closer links with the local Muslim community and to work with a colleague in a local business in order to refine his management skills. The school is a member of a cluster of local schools, which has developed useful working relationships. Arrangements for pupils transferring to local secondary schools are satisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

64 The strategies employed to manage and monitor behaviour and support for pupils' personal development ensure overall satisfactory standards of behaviour in and around the school and during lessons. They also promote good personal relationships. They are effective in creating a working ethos that has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

65 The school has revised its behaviour policy and this is being carefully evaluated during a trial period. The policy involves support staff and midday assistants, who can refer any behaviour that is of concern directly to the headteacher. He in turn follows up every report and takes appropriate action. Rewards and sanctions are, for the most part, consistently applied by all staff. The simple 'Begbrook Code' is well understood by pupils, who value the praise and recognition of teachers. Pupils speak positively of the support they receive and are confident that they can take concerns, including those about friendship breakdowns, to any member of staff. They are confident that they will be listened to and the issues addressed sympathetically and resolved effectively, involving parents fully when necessary. The school's procedures for addressing bullying and oppressive behaviour are satisfactory and, where particular concerns are identified, parents and, if necessary, support agencies, are involved in developing strategies.

66 The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality and seeks to encourage parents to take holidays outside term time. Generally, the school does not contact parents on the first day of absence in those cases where no explanation has been provided. There is no celebration of good attendance by recognition of the achievement of those pupils or classes having very good or excellent levels of attendance. Registers are marked accurately and the school is rigorous in authorising absences, ensuring that parents are aware that the maximum period the school can authorise for holidays in any one year is ten days. In those cases where concerns are identified, the school seeks to resolve them in partnership with parents and outside agencies. Good support is available from the education welfare officer, who is readily accessible.

67 Child protection procedures are satisfactory and comply with requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities and there are good liaison arrangements with outside agencies. The headteacher is responsible for child protection, has undertaken appropriate training and is due to undertake further training later this year. Teaching staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed and these are reinforced during induction for new staff and through staff meetings, but the school has not yet provided appropriate guidance and training on this issue to all support staff. The school also needs a policy and staff training on how to restrain pupils.

68 Although teachers promote health and safety satisfactorily on a day-to-day basis within lessons, the overall management of health and safety is unsatisfactory. Health and safety is a standing item on governors' agendas, but staff generally have insufficient awareness of health and safety issues and the school has recognised the need to raise their profile. The school has an appropriate policy, supported by that of the local education authority, and the headteacher is responsible for its implementation. The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure that the condition of the school buildings does not affect the health and safety of staff and pupils by having reports prepared by the local education authority and the occupational health service. The headteacher has also ensured that the building works being carried out on the site are managed appropriately and do not pose any dangers to pupils and staff. Fire extinguishers, portable electrical appliances and equipment such as that used for physical education are regularly tested, but a few items have not been appropriately tested. Emergency evacuations are practised and identified issues are addressed. Cleaning products and other such items are appropriately stored, but the school has not completed appropriate CoSSH (care of substances hazardous to health)

assessments and records. Some safety issues associated with storage need to be addressed and the school is considering how best to resolve these.

69 The arrangements for providing first aid are satisfactory. First aid supplies are accessible throughout the school and travel first aid kits are taken on school visits and accident records are satisfactory. Parents are appropriately advised of accidents and contacted in the event of any concerns about a pupil's health.

70 Overall the school's assessment procedures are satisfactory. All children in the reception year are assessed using the Bristol baseline assessment scheme. This provides the school with a clear picture of pupils' understanding and skills on entry to the school. In Years 3, 4 and 5 good use is made of the optional annual tests in English and mathematics to check pupils' progress. This is well supported by the use throughout the school of a clearly defined programme of regular assessments in English, mathematics and science. Information from these is well used by the school and governors to inform the process of setting required targets.

71 The school is developing its use of the data from these assessment arrangements to inform the process of setting targets for improvement. So far it has concentrated on the comparison of attainment within different year groups and the identification of trends, such as differences in performance between boys and girls or children with special educational needs. It is now beginning to look at comparing progress in different classes and by individual pupils. It has just begun to enter this data and that from national assessments into a database that will allow it to make sophisticated comparisons more easily.

72 After analysing and comparing data with similar schools and the national picture the school identified a dip in pupils' attainment in writing. Writing progress books were introduced to address this. Teachers now regularly assess pupils' writing and this leads to clear tracking of pupils' progress and better identification of ways to improve writing skills and quality.

73 The headteacher, assessment co-ordinator and other members of the senior management team have worked closely together to refine assessment procedures. These have featured as part of the school's development plan for the past two years. As a result of this, teachers' assessment files now contain detailed records of pupils' progress in English and mathematics in a common format based on regular formal assessments. Recent developmental work has led to the introduction in infant classes of regular assessments of pupils' work in science being recorded against National Curriculum requirements, using a standardised form. Work is currently in progress to formalise the arrangements for junior classes.

74 However, the lack of agreed assessment procedures within the other subjects of the curriculum means that there is no formal recording of pupils' attainment that charts their progress. This lack of information prevents the school having an informed view of standards in the foundation subjects. It is unsatisfactory since it leads to situations such as that found in ICT, where standards throughout the school are still below those expected. It also means that teachers do not have an informed view of any gaps in pupils' subject knowledge or skills development that need addressing. The variable quality of marking does not help to support this process.

75 Effective monitoring systems are in place for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment in the nursery and through the local authority's baseline judgement, in addition to teachers' understanding of pupils' personalities, gives a rounded picture and a sound

basis for targeting special needs. Where individual education plans and statements of special educational needs are in place, reviews are scheduled and all relevant staff, including learning support assistants and parents, are consulted in the assessment process. Outside agencies and education specialists provide good support and advice for pupils.

76 Improvements in the quality of assessment arrangements since the last inspection have allowed the school to look at how information is shared with parents. Since last year it has sought to make the annual written report more reflective of how well pupils are doing in comparison with others, what they need to do next and how to improve. Assessment is being used to inform the setting of individual targets with pupils, but the procedures for this have not yet been regularised and not all classes employ the same methods for drawing these to pupils' attention.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

77 Partnership with parents is satisfactory and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. In 1997 relationships with parents were described as being 'very good'. After a period of staffing and management upheaval, the situation is clearly not as good as it was. An effective partnership between the school and parents is being promoted, however, through good communications and satisfactory information regarding pupils' progress and through the involvement of parents in the life and work of the school. The partnership between parents and home is reinforced through the home/school agreement, which has been returned by almost 80 per cent of parents, including almost all parents of pupils joining the school last year.

78 Parents generally express positive views of the school, although a significant minority express concerns about the range of additional activities and the arrangements for homework. A small minority also express some concerns about standards of behaviour, the information they receive on their child's progress and the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors support the positive views of parents. Pupils are making satisfactory progress and teaching is satisfactory or better in the main, although expectations are not always sufficiently high. The school is seeking to work in partnership with parents and the headteacher and staff are approachable. The school is to circulate its revised homework policy later this term, but it does need to improve the clarity of information about pupils' progress. Inspection findings show that the headteacher's leadership is good and that pupils' behaviour is satisfactory.

79 The information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. Staff are accessible to parents to discuss any concerns, and parents are invited to meet with their child's teacher each term. These meetings are well supported by parents and the school follows up those parents who cannot attend to offer alternative opportunities to discuss their child's progress. Although parents are provided with general targets throughout the year, they do not know the levels at which their child is working, except at the ages of seven and eleven. Parents receive annual reports, which meet requirements, but often focus on what pupils know and have learned, with insufficient evaluative comment and insufficient information about progress or focus on targets for improvement. These could help parents support their children's learning at home. Most parents receive an overview of the topics pupils are to study but these are inconsistent in the quality of content and frequently do not provide sufficient information to help parents in providing opportunities to support learning at home or when making family visits.

80 Parents of children in the nursery are invited to attend a reading workshop to help them in supporting their child's early reading. The school has not yet sought to help parents understand how to support their children's work as they progress through the school, however. The school has not, for example, organised workshops to help parents understand how to support their child's mathematical development. In other areas of the curriculum, advice has been included in year group letters, but this has not been sufficient to promote a clear understanding by parents of what they can do to help their children. Newsletters are produced regularly and the new format introduced earlier this year is an improvement on that used previously. These newsletters provide good information about the life and work of the school and occasionally involve contributions by pupils, such as a report by one of the school councillors. Parents are regularly invited to events and performances.

81 The school maintains very close links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress through the school's well-organised review system. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational need are consulted formally and routinely in line with statutory requirements. In addition to the formal consultation systems, the special educational needs teacher is very approachable and supportive of parents' concerns.

82 The Friends of Begbrook School (FOBS) organise fundraising events such as a fireworks party and barbecue, nearly new sales and an Easter Fayre. The funds raised are used to provide additional resources such as listening centres and books for class libraries, to provide a disco for pupils leaving Begbrook to move to secondary school and to present each of them with a dictionary. FOBS also provide practical assistance in various ways, such as by providing refreshments at performances. About ten parents help regularly in classrooms and parents readily volunteer to accompany pupils on visits. When the school organised a science week, many parents came into school and helped with various activities. This greatly enhanced the opportunities and support available to pupils. A group of parents serve as 'link parents' and these are well known to other parents, who can discuss concerns with them informally and express their views. These arrangements help the link parents act as a group that the school can consult as it develops ideas and policies. For example, many parents were expressing concerns about the number of local residents who allowed their dogs to foul on the grassed areas within the school and this was taken up with the school through the link parents. As a consequence, the school council designed a poster, which parents delivered to houses around the school and the problem has significantly reduced. Pupils and staff appreciate the support of parents

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

83 The inspection comes after two years of considerable changes in leadership, both of senior staff and within the membership of the governing body. Taking into account the roles of the governing body, subject managers, the senior management team and the headteacher, the picture overall is currently satisfactory. This is similar to the situation at the time of the last inspection.

84 The headteacher, who has been in post since January 1999, exercises good leadership and management. He has been resolute in tackling a series of difficult staffing, accommodation and resourcing issues, consulting appropriately, negotiating strongly and making decisions in the school's best interests. Since his appointment two years ago, he has needed to show considerable determination and clarity of thinking, in order to give the school a clear educational direction. By setting the school's mission, values and objectives at the heart of improvement planning, he has ensured that action taken by the senior

management team and governing body is clearly related to improved outcomes in terms of pupils' attitudes and achievements.

85 While the school's development plan still contains too many priorities, it clearly defines time scales, responsibilities, resource and training needs. The plan aims to improve pupils' behaviour, pupils' involvement, monitoring processes, resources and accommodation. It places appropriate emphasis on staff development and performance management. The development plan is drawn up by the headteacher, senior management team and governing body and informs the setting of the budget, which is discussed in detail with governors as it develops. Good financial planning by the headteacher and governing body and careful review, through the finance committee, enable expenditure to be monitored against the school development plan. The finances are well managed and administered. All funds received for specific purposes are appropriately applied and managed. The school development plan appropriately links priorities to spending and decisions have been taken, for example, to increase spending on heating to improve the learning environment. The plan is regularly reviewed to take into account the implications of new or changing priorities and the impact of building developments.

86 The urgent need to develop the roles of subject managers is also recognised in the current development plan. Few currently have a clear overview of standards and educational provision across the school and procedures are not in place for them to monitor planning or track pupils' progress. The current practice of sharing roles, restricting responsibility to either juniors or infants, has been unhelpful. It has led to discontinuity in the adoption of planning systems and resulted in no one person having a clear picture or responsibility for reporting on standards throughout the school.

87 Leadership changes since the last inspection have resulted in a lack of continuity and effectiveness for the senior management team. Roles and responsibilities have altered with personnel. Effectiveness has improved over the past year, with both the acting deputy, as Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, and the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator contributing positively to planning decisions in regular meetings. With the appointment of a new deputy headteacher in the autumn, the school looks forward to a period of greater stability. It still needs a clear staffing structure, however, to ensure that heavy responsibilities are fully recognised, distinctive key stage roles and whole school roles clarified, and time allocated to monitor provision and standards and to promote the necessary action. The school's failure to improve ICT provision is a clear example of the detrimental effects of staffing and leadership changes in a situation where roles and responsibilities are not part of an agreed structure.

88 The introduction of performance management procedures goes some way to addressing the inconsistencies in teaching quality. Largely because of the considerable turnover in staffing, including senior management, the school had not previously successfully introduced appropriate systems for monitoring teaching. As a result, although the quality of teaching has improved overall since the last inspection, the school has not made sufficient improvement in reducing the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching.

89 The chair of governors has given excellent support to the headteacher and has steered the governing body well to develop efficient committee structures and procedures. Several governors contribute individual expertise, particularly in finance. The governing body is regularly informed about the school's financial position. Some more experienced governors have a very good understanding of the school's priorities and finances. Newer governors do not yet have such a clear picture of trends in the school's performance, however, relying too much on the school's good reputation. For example, they are not aware of standards in

different subjects or in relation to national trends or that standards are lower than in similar schools in English at age 11. The governing body has not ensured that statutory requirements are met in the school's provision for ICT, an issue raised at the last inspection. Another area for attention is collective worship, where the school again fails to meet statutory requirements.

90 The headteacher and governing body apply the principles of best value satisfactorily. The school compares its position with that of other schools and some governors challenge proposals very effectively as 'critical friends', assisting in planning and identifying areas that could be improved. Few governors visit the school during the school day and the school has no procedures to help governors make good use of focused visits. Governors have, however, developed a range of strategies for consulting and communicating with parents, establishing link parents to act as a focus group who informally consult with parents to gain their views and convey these to governors. The school seeks to obtain value for money in securing goods and services and has a good awareness of the weaknesses that exist in some of the contracts for services that are currently in place. Overall, the governing body is supportive and a few governors have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is still work to do, however, to ensure that all governors can hold the school to account by acting as informed, critical friends.

91 The school shows a clear commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. Improvements in assessment procedures in English and mathematics, developed by the acting deputy headteacher, ensure that the school has sufficient information to be able to check the progress of individuals and of various groups of pupils. The new procedures are already used to check for differences in performance between boys and girls. They are used to check the progress of individual pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds and those learning English as an additional language, but are not yet used to check that these groups of pupils are making sufficiently good progress.

92 The leadership and management of special educational needs are satisfactory overall, but it also has some outstanding features. The newly appointed, part-time co-ordinator is knowledgeable and experienced and is an outstanding special needs teacher. She manages the administration of special needs well and makes good use of outside agencies in providing expert guidance where necessary. She maintains sensitive, supportive contacts with parents. Whilst formal guidance on procedures within the school is in place, time for teachers to liaise with the co-ordinator routinely when preparing programmes for pupils on the special needs register is not planned. Neither does the co-ordinator have regularly planned contact with teaching assistants. Her expertise, therefore, is not yet maximised in raising standards of provision for all pupils with special educational needs across the school. She has created an attractive working environment in the resources room, but resource provision is barely satisfactory. In particular, computer software for special educational needs is significantly underdeveloped.

93 The school is adequately staffed with teachers and assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. A part-time teacher provides release time for the newly qualified teachers and deputy headteacher and the school employs several peripatetic music teachers.

94 There is a good range of expertise and experience amongst teachers, but a high turnover in recent years means that the teaching team is not working together as effectively as it might. The senior management team has also changed annually over the past few years and this has impeded the school's development. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed from September and the school is now in a better position to move forward.

95 Staff training is linked to current priorities and newly qualified staff follow an appropriate induction programme. Further training is needed for staff in the foundation stage as they work to implement the new foundation stage curriculum. Teaching assistants and nursery nurses are mainly experienced staff. Some have undertaken further training, but little provision is made for necessary training by the school. School meals supervisory assistants work under the guidance of the headteacher. Overall they manage the pupils well, but do not always receive feedback on pupils who have been reported for bad behaviour. This means that they do not all feel as involved as they should do. Support staff, including the very efficient and friendly administrative staff, caretaker, cleaners and canteen staff, make a valuable contribution to the work of the school.

96 The school and parents are delighted with the news that capital funding has been allocated to rebuild the school and, at the time of the inspection, work is progressing well to provide a much needed resource centre containing a purpose-built computer suite and library. The current accommodation is very poor and has a detrimental effect on teaching and learning. Apart from one modern classroom and a temporary classroom, the school is housed in an old building that was not designed as a school. Although staff and pupils cope with the conditions very well, there is insufficient space to provide the facilities needed to support the delivery of the curriculum. Storage is inadequate and even in the summer there is evidence of the extensive damp which is present throughout the winter. To combat the effects of the cold and damp, the current headteacher significantly increased the money spent on heating during the winter. However, the effects of damp, narrow corridors and the type of construction of the building mean that areas of the school are difficult to clean. Despite the good efforts of staff to provide stimulating and interactive displays, they are unable to show as much of the pupils' work as they would like because when dampness penetrates the walls, work is damaged or peels off. They cannot therefore use displays to celebrate pupils' achievements in an appropriate way.

97 All classrooms have basic facilities, such as a sink, but many of the metal window frames have rusted and distorted, making it difficult to open them safely and therefore limiting ventilation. The caretaker has redecorated and made substantial improvements to the kitchen, which serves as the food technology area. Currently, there is no library to provide a central focus for independent learning and the school does not have facilities such as a music room or a computer suite. This affects standards by restricting opportunities to teach elements of these subjects to whole classes. Books stored around the school are sometimes affected by the dampness. The hall provides a good space for physical education and assemblies, but the lack of storage for large items of equipment means that furniture, apparatus and a piano present potential hazards.

98 The school has good outdoor facilities, including hard and grassed play areas, which support physical education well. Picnic bench seating provides an opportunity, in fine weather, for pupils to eat their sandwiches outside in a pleasant social atmosphere. There is an environmental area, which has been made more accessible as a result of work undertaken by the caretaker, and this is beginning to be used to support the science curriculum and activities such as observational drawing. Nursery children have access to a secure outdoor area, with both hard and grassed surfaces, which benefits their social and physical development. Current equipment limits opportunities for both nursery and reception children, however. The school is aware of the need to ensure that both nursery and reception children have direct access to the outdoor area when the new school is built.

99 Resources in all subjects throughout the school are very poor. This clearly affects the quality of teaching and learning. Very poor resourcing has contributed significantly to the low standards in ICT. The situation has arisen as a result of a previous approach to

financial planning which put resources at the bottom of a list of priorities for scarce funds. Long-serving staff have made the best of a very poor resource situation, supplementing the resources available with their own. Many of the facilities used in classes have been purchased by teachers. The school is now addressing this unacceptable situation. In the current year, all subject co-ordinators have a budget for resources. Though it will take a while to overcome previous under-resourcing, the school is now in a position to weigh priorities among the subjects and to allocate funds accordingly.

100 The school is making good use of new technology to support its work in the general administration of the school. For example, records are completed detailing maintenance items and photographs of pupils produced on a digital camera enable easy identification of those with specific medical conditions in the event of an emergency.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

100 In order to improve the quality of education provided and raise standards, the headteacher, governing body and staff with management responsibilities should:

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
 - expecting more of higher attainers, especially in writing;
 - sharing the good practice in literacy teaching to lift teaching quality overall;
 - improving the quality, range and use of resources;
 - planning systematically to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills;

(paragraphs 3, 8, 10, 11, 26, 33, 40 and 116-128)
- (2) Broaden the curriculum, especially in junior classes, so that:
 - the school meets statutory requirements to teach ICT and raises standards in the subject;
 - all junior pupils pursue activities involving scientific enquiry;
 - agreed schemes of work in religious education and music are consistently implemented and support is given to teachers who lack confidence, in order to raise standards in these subjects;
 - the timetable is planned to achieve appropriate continuity, depth and breadth in all subjects;

(paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 31, 38, 39, 42, 87, 140-7, 153, 154, 162, 164-70, 171-6, 183-7)
- (3) Improve the quality and consistency of teaching by
 - introducing a programme of monitoring and support, linked where appropriate to staff development, performance management and training;
 - agreeing common standards for marking and pupils' presentation of work;
 - raising everyone's expectations in order to raise pupils' attainment;

(paragraphs 31, 34, 88, 127, 137, 143, 145, 157, 162, 169, 175, 180)
- (4) Strengthen subject management by ensuring all co-ordinators have a full school overview of their subject and are empowered to monitor planning, track standards and report on these; at the same time ensure that simple, manageable assessment procedures help raise attainment in foundation subjects (especially ICT and music) and religious education;

(paragraphs 3, 74, 86, 139, 147, 155, 158, 159, 170, 176, 182, 187)
- (5) Address with urgency the problems of very poor accommodation and resourcing;

(paragraphs 3, 96, 97, 98, 99, 138, 147, 148, 151, 155, 158, 159, 176)
- (6) Ensure that the school meets statutory requirements for collective worship.

(paragraph 50)

101 The following minor points should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Publicise the homework policy and apply it consistently; *(paragraph 37)*
- Give parents and pupils more information about assessments and targets; *(paragraphs 76 and 79)*
- Ensure work for all pupils with special educational needs is appropriately planned and resourced; *(paragraphs 11, 27, 92, 141 and 162)*
- Offer children in the foundation stage more opportunities for independent learning; *(paragraphs 4, 17, 29, 41, 102-115)*
- Develop clearer policy and practice on personal, social and health education; *(paragraph 49)*
- Provide improved training and feedback for teaching assistants and school meals supervisory assistants; *(paragraphs 67 and 95)*

- Improve the management of health and safety and the recording of procedures.
(*paragraph 68*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	13	40	32	11	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	342
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	39

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	24	24	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	44	45	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (82)	94 (92)	94 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	23
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	44	46	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (90)	96 (98)	98 (98)
	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	23	23	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	22
	Girls	20	20	19
	Total	36	39	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (70)	85 (78)	89 (84)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	20	22
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	32	37	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (67)	80 (75)	87 (82)
	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	9
Indian	5
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	252
Any other minority ethnic group	13

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	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	753425
Total expenditure	745105
Expenditure per pupil	1840
Balance brought forward from previous year	23381
Balance carried forward to next year	31701

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	402
Number of questionnaires returned	124

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	41	5	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	47	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	56	9	5	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	48	18	11	6
The teaching is good.	50	41	6	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	48	9	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	35	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	52	3	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	37	55	6	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	39	41	7	4	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	48	7	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	40	19	17	14

Percentages are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number and may therefore not total exactly 100.

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

102 The foundation stage provision at Begbrook consists of part-time, morning or afternoon sessions in the nursery for sixty children and full time provision in two reception classes. Many children have previously attended playgroups. Their levels of physical, emotional, social and intellectual development on entry to the nursery are broadly in line with those expected for three-year-olds. Helped by secure routines, the children make satisfactory progress in all aspects of their development in the foundation stage. Most achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and are suitably prepared for the transition to the National Curriculum.

103 Overall, findings are similar to those of the previous report. One improvement is in planning. The new foundation stage curriculum is fully implemented, where previously there were shortcomings in planning for the youngest children. Resource provision continues to be an area for development, particularly in reception classes. The use of ICT is underdeveloped throughout the foundation stage.

104 Teachers maintain good day-to-day links with parents. They also provide occasional workshop evenings to keep parents informed about new initiatives. An introductory meeting is held for new parents and children. Transition from part-time nursery to full-time education in reception classes is managed sensitively. The entry of new children to the nursery is delayed for a few days to enable the nursery teacher and trained nursery support staff to help children leaving them to settle into their reception classes.

105 The nursery teacher makes a suitable assessment of children's intellectual and physical attainment on entry. Satisfactory records of children's progress are maintained, but the day-to-day observation and recording of children's learning and progress is underdeveloped. Staff provide children with an appropriate range of activities designed around the nationally recommended curriculum. Activities, whilst generally satisfactory, could be improved further by greater emphasis on the promotion of independent learning.

106 More comprehensive assessment in reception, developed by the local education authority, gives teachers a baseline against which individual children's developmental progress can be further assessed. These help staff match activities satisfactorily to children's levels of development. They also help in the early identification of children whose progress may be affected by special educational needs. Effective individual support is provided for a child who has a statement of special educational need.

Personal, social and emotional development

107 The teaching of this area of learning is satisfactory in both the nursery and reception classes, with almost all children reaching the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Most children are confident and familiar with daily routines and organisation. When given the chance, they usually choose activities decisively and most have the capacity to concentrate well and persist with tasks. An example of this was observed when two boys worked highly collaboratively, over an extended period of time, to build an elaborate railway track on the nursery carpet and plan the routing of the trains. In reception classes, towards the end of the school year, children are satisfactorily prepared for more formal National Curriculum lessons as they participate in literacy and numeracy activities similar to those they will experience in Year 1. The children develop trusting, co-operative relationships with adults and peers. Most enjoy expressing their opinions,

knowing they will be valued. They respect each other's ideas and feelings and are well behaved, even when whole group teaching times are too long. Children are suitably familiar with the whole school behaviour code and even the youngest understand its implications for them. Most children are able to change independently for more formal physical education activities and manage their personal hygiene confidently.

108 All adults in the foundation stage work very hard to make children's learning experiences enjoyable. They are usually patient and understanding, helping to raise children's confidence and self-esteem through regular praise and encouragement. Although the overall contribution by teachers and support staff to children's personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory, some activities, particularly in the nursery, are insufficiently open-ended to challenge children's varied interests and abilities. As a result, opportunities are sometimes missed for them to make independent choices and to take the initiative in their own learning.

Communication, language and literacy

109 The quality of teaching in communication, language and literacy is satisfactory overall and has some good features. Almost all children attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teachers have a good understanding of this area of learning and make book experiences interesting for children. They use a combination of several learning strategies in teaching children about written language. A published phonics scheme is used consistently and the accompanying actions give obvious pleasure to the children and help to secure their learning. Lively home-school books are used regularly by most parents and teachers. These provide an effective aid to parents supporting their children's language learning at home. There are, however, insufficient good quality resources for language teaching and some are not used effectively. More picture books and storybooks are locked away in the nursery than are regularly accessible for the children. Some language activities with the whole class on the carpet sometimes go on far too long for young children. Although there are computers in classrooms, a lack of age-appropriate, relevant software means that they are not well used.

110 Children are usually relaxed with familiar adults and most listen well and articulate ideas with increasing confidence. Staff engineer appropriate group activities to provide opportunities for children to communicate fully with each other, particularly in play situations in the nursery and in more formal groupings in reception classes. For example, in a nursery session, children made up a play together with puppets and performed it in the puppet theatre. In a reception class, children gathered in small groups with an adult to plan their actions for a free choice session. Most children feel sufficiently confident to participate in whole class discussions too. Some make perceptive comments. One boy, when showing a photograph of himself as a baby, said that he was thinking before he could talk.

111 Teachers foster pleasure in reading successfully throughout the foundation stage. They regularly share books with children in a variety of situations. In the nursery, a high quality big book about mini beasts was used well in one session to help children name creatures they had disturbed during their flower planting. In reception, children read a funny story together as they learned more and more about how books work. They have a firm knowledge of the orientation of print and understand the connection between spoken and written language. Many children are already writing about their lives and their feelings. They are beginning to form letters carefully and accurately and are also starting to understand the predictability of some simple spelling patterns.

Mathematical development

112 Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall, with some good elements. As a result, children make sound progress in their learning and reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Staff have an appropriate understanding of provision for early years and of the needs of individual children. Their interventions are usually suitably matched to the learning levels of children. They ensure extra challenge for those who will benefit from it. Mathematical experiences permeate many of the enjoyable day-to-day activities and teachers make satisfactory provision for practical activities. Appropriate resources for water and sand play in both the nursery and reception give pupils opportunity to develop an early understanding of volume and capacity. Where adult support is present, children learn appropriate mathematical language. Recognition of shape and size help children to monitor the growth of plants they have successfully germinated from seeds. Opportunities to learn about numbers are equally well embedded in the curriculum. The singing of number rhymes is an everyday occurrence in the nursery. Children use their fingers as counters as they sing and in one session a child said that zero looked like the letter 'o'. Most children recognise numbers at least to six. They played a successful, adult-supported game with dice of various sizes, for example, as they accurately matched numbers to dots. In free play activities in the nursery and during 'plan, do review' sessions in reception classes, children know how many people may be involved in each activity at any one time and regulate their participation accordingly. During registration, children in both the nursery and reception regularly help to calculate the number of children present. Most count by rote to thirty and a few have a deeper mental understanding of addition and subtraction. Some also manipulate numbers to ten using formal addition and subtraction signs. The use of ICT for the teaching of mathematical ideas is underdeveloped.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

113 The teaching of this area of learning is satisfactory, with children learning appropriately and attaining the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teachers offer children a pertinent range of varied experiences to give them insights into their world. They usually give careful thought to choosing topics of interest to young children, but the organisation of activities is not always quite so successful. On occasion children sit for too long listening in large groups, even though they are usually patient and well behaved. Sometimes there are insufficient practical opportunities associated with a topic. The children appreciate human diversity and develop an interest in nature. They learn to observe carefully and begin to question and interpret what they see. In a rich learning opportunity in the nursery, two children proudly participated in introducing their respective, newly born sister and brother to the class. The children sat in awe as the two mothers, one a Muslim and the other Christian, talked about the age of their babies, how much they weighed at birth and their feeding needs. Both also explained graphically what distinctive traditions are followed in their faiths to celebrate the birth of a baby. Subsequently, the children were eager to take turns in role playing with dolls as they managed 'babies' in the home area. Children carefully watered flowers they had germinated from seeds, knowing that it is an essential element in helping all plants and animals to thrive. They looked carefully through a magnifier at the features of insects they had disturbed during a planting activity and described accurately the complex life cycle of butterflies. In reception children explore change. In one session, they observed and recorded an investigation managed by the teacher into the relationship between ice, water and steam, but did not engage in independent practical investigation themselves. Most children confidently manipulate a cassette recorder to access recorded stories. On the few occasions when children were observed using a computer with a mouse they controlled it quite confidently.

Creative development

114 Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory overall, but it is a mixed picture, with some unsatisfactory elements. Nevertheless, most children reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Creative role-play opportunities are varied and stimulating. In the nursery there is a suitably resourced home corner and a varied supply of dressing up garments. These include small versions of ethnic clothing and items such as doctors' uniforms and 'medical equipment'. A picturesque outdoor playhouse complete with inside stairs provides a further rich opportunity for creative play. In reception classes, some children experience the pleasures of space travel in their role-play areas, whilst others are dangerous pirates. Children have many opportunities to develop their creative drawing skills. They also enjoy painting, gluing and joining to create pictures, collages and structures. In practice their choice of resources is sometimes unnecessarily restricted, making it difficult for them to have genuinely independent choice. In music, children are beginning to identify high and low notes, though a lack of opportunity to experiment with the musical instruments informally impedes progress during more structured activities. Children have opportunities to sing nursery rhymes regularly, but generally the use of recorded music for pleasure, to bring children together and to create a calm atmosphere is underdeveloped.

Physical development

115 Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory and children attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children have many ongoing incidental opportunities to develop their physical co-ordination through various aspects of the curriculum. The use of a variety of hand tools, such as pencils, crayons and scissors, contributes to satisfactory progress in the development of children's manual dexterity. The spacious secure outside play area for nursery children, combined with varied physical play opportunities, makes a good contribution to the nursery children's feelings of pleasure and wellbeing and to their motor co-ordination. Resources in the reception outdoor play area are old and dilapidated, but reception children do have regular daily access to the infant playground. Indoor physical education activities on larger apparatus in the hall give nursery children limited opportunities for independent exploration and the development of self-confidence. During their hall time, reception children begin to be aware of how exercise affects their bodies as they complete energetic warm-up and calming cool-down activities. Their manual co-ordination and spatial awareness noticeably improve during the lesson, as they carefully throw and catch bean bags and lightweight balls with increasing accuracy.

ENGLISH

116 Standards have been maintained in Year 2 national tests since the last inspection. Last year they were above average in writing and average in reading. In 2000, pupils at Begbrook did better than their peers in similar schools in writing, and about the same in reading. Standards of writing in Year 2 were an obvious strength last year, with all the girls reaching the expected level 2. Standards have not risen as fast as nationally in Year 6 statutory tests. They were average at the time of the last inspection, but fell below average last year, mainly because higher attainers had not made enough improvement during their junior years. While the proportion of pupils reaching level 4 or higher was slightly above the national percentage, the average level of attainment shows that Year 6 pupils did not do as well as their peers nationally or in similar schools.

117 The inspection found that this year standards are above average in reading and writing in Year 1 and are average in speaking and listening in Years 1 and 2. Standards are above average in writing at the end of Year 2, with a high proportion achieving the nationally expected standard and an average proportion reaching a higher level.

Standards in reading are below average at the end of Year 2. A lower proportion than last year have shown average ability in assessments and very few achieve at a higher level.

118 In the current year, pupils are achieving better in Years 3 and 4 than they do in Years 5 and 6. This is partly as a result of staff turnover in the older pupils' classes and partly because there is a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6. Consequently standards for eleven-year-olds are below average in English overall. Pupils do better in reading than they do in writing.

119 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. They do better when supported by an adult, both during lessons and when withdrawn for extra help. In most classes teachers plan work that is within their capabilities, but this does not always happen in Years 5 and 6. On these occasions pupils struggle and do not move forward in their learning. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in some year groups, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6. The school does not analyse the progress of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds separately and therefore lacks evidence to indicate whether they are doing as well as other pupils. In sessions seen, these pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, were achieving as well as their peers. In 2000 national tests and assessments, girls did better than boys in Year 2. In Year 6 girls also did better, but the difference was only a little bit wider than nationally.

120 Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are wide-ranging, but average overall throughout the school. Pupils generally listen well to their teachers and each other. In all classes they speak confidently, with most of the opportunities for speaking in the class discussion time at the beginning of the lesson. Some other examples were seen. In a Year 2 class, for example, all pupils individually read their own tongue twisters to the class. All were confident and spoke clearly. In a Year 5 class the teacher gave the pupils 'thinking time' and as a result their considered answers were extended and cohesive. In younger pupils' classes, teachers make good use of the milk break to give pupils opportunities to talk about a wide range of issues. At the moment staff are considering a planning document which identifies the development of skills in this area. Currently specific speaking and listening activities are not formally identified in teachers' weekly plans. Similarly, drama is not an integral part of the curriculum, although pupils sometimes engage in role-play in history. In previous years, pupils have dressed up as Victorian school children, for example.

121 Standards in reading are wide ranging. In most year groups they are broadly average, but not so high in Years 2 and 6 this year because of the number of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are developing appropriate phonic skills in the younger classes, which many use well to help them read new words. Teachers plan for work related to phonic development in the literacy hour and explain new sounds clearly to pupils. Books from a number of published reading schemes are used to provide a structure for pupils' individual reading in younger year groups. As they become older and more confident, pupils select from the collection of non-scheme books. Some pupils bring their own books from home, but there is no guidance given about what is considered suitable reading. In some classes there are times during the day for pupils to read to themselves and this helps them to practise their skills.

122 Pupils are encouraged to take books home to share with their parents and carers and those who read regularly in this way are making good progress. There is some inconsistency from class to class on the information recorded in pupils' individual reading diaries. In some parents and teachers make comments, while in others pupils keep the

record. Often opportunities for a dialogue between home and school through the reading diaries are lost.

123 In the literacy hour, some teachers use books well to engage pupils' interest. This was the case in Year 3 and 4 classes during the inspection, where three stories by Dick King Smith were used very successfully as a basis for the work. There has been a focus on group reading this year, where a small group of pupils shares a book with their teacher. Extra time has been allocated for this and some of these sessions take place outside the literacy hour. In some classes teachers read stories to the whole class in order to foster their love and knowledge of books and authors. Partly as a consequence of this some pupils are developing firm favourites. In Year 6, for example, pupils talked enthusiastically about the work of Edgar Allan Poe, JK Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson. Others find reading a chore. For these pupils there is not enough to whet their appetites for reading. Class book corners, for example, are poorly stocked and do not draw pupils' attention to particular authors or books. There are very few classrooms where pupils can relax and enjoy a quiet moment with a book. At the moment there is no library and although pupils are adept in finding information in non-fiction texts, using the contents and index pages, they have no experience of using a classification system such as Dewey. The new library is now under construction and will enhance opportunities to develop research skills considerably.

124 More pupils than average reach the expected level 2 in writing by age seven, because of the good attention paid to teaching writing skills in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 1 are doing very well this year. They are given good opportunities to write independently and work as real writers. Useful prompts, such as key words, are stuck in the front of writing books. In Year 2 pupils also engage in some interesting tasks. They were writing rhymes and poems during the inspection, for example, and did well because they were so involved in the enjoyment of the activity. There are also some areas for development. Higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should and this is partly because teachers do not challenge them sufficiently. Pupils' presentation is often untidy, for example, and there is no clear expectation that pupils will transfer the skills learnt in handwriting practice to their other work.

125 In Years 3 to 6 there is also a balance between providing pupils with opportunities to write independently as well as setting exercises and tasks to help them to consolidate their spelling, comprehension and handwriting skills. Good links are made with other subjects and pupils frequently use their writing skills to good effect in history, geography and science. In a Year 6 session, for example, pupils were preparing for their trip to Torquay. They drafted a piece of persuasive writing based on a 'Summer camp experience' before transferring it to their final draft. Spelling is taught satisfactorily, but there are some inconsistencies between classes. These are especially related to homework arrangements. In one or two classes there are very clear routines and these are helpful for parents and pupils. In others, the expectations for learning spellings at home are not so well defined and this is confusing for parents particularly.

126 Overall, pupils are making steady progress in the development of their writing skills. Staff are using the national literacy strategy to guide their planning in this area. Consequently pupils are refining their skills because of the systematic approach to teaching about structure of language, spelling and handwriting and there is a reasonable balance between exercises and independent writing. There are some areas for development. The place of independent writing within English is established, but there is more scope for pupils to write for real audiences and for different reasons. The use of high quality published texts as a basis for pupils' writing is another area to build upon. Some pupils use

computers to word-process work, but there is room for more expansion here. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work vary from class to class.

127 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils make satisfactory progress as a result. In lessons seen it ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. The strongest teaching is in Years 1, 3 and 4 and pupils are moving forward more quickly here. Planning is soundly based on the national literacy strategy. Teachers plan together in parallel classes and this ensures that pupils in the same year groups cover the same work. In most classes tasks are designed well to meet different pupils' needs, but this is not so well established in the older pupils' classes. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to supporting pupils with special educational needs in the literacy hour and are sensitive and encouraging. In the very good lessons, teachers' enthusiasm and imagination bring the sessions alive and pupils achieve well because they are caught up in the enjoyment of learning. In one such session, pupils persevered very well in the activity part of the lesson and worked hard on a range of tasks because of the purposeful atmosphere established by the teacher. In one or two sessions, a slow pace and uninteresting work meant that pupils did not move on as quickly as they should.

128 Work in English has developed well this year because of the enthusiastic support of the co-ordinators. Planning structures are now more consistent, work has moved forward on guided reading, a handwriting policy has been introduced and more money has been spent on books. A very positive step has been the introduction of writing assessment books. These will enable teachers to track pupils' progress more closely.

MATHEMATICS

129 Results of national tests in 2000 show that Year 2 pupils attained standards in line with the national average and similar schools. Year 6 pupils' results were well above the national average and those of similar schools, with over a third of pupils achieving Level 5. Over the past four years standards have been steadily rising, following a dip to below the national average in 1997 in both year groups. Whilst the improvement in Year 6 results has been a steady and dramatic one, that for Year 2 pupils has been slightly more erratic. Results for seven-year-olds initially rose sharply to well above average in 1998 before returning to average for the past two years. Overall this represents a considerable improvement in standards, particularly at age eleven, since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and consequently make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are well provided for. Pupils learning English as an additional language also make good progress, receiving appropriate support. There are now no significant variations in performance between boys and girls at age eleven and the school has investigated and is addressing some variations between the two groups at age seven.

130 Pupils throughout the school achieve well. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are currently attaining standards in line with those expected for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. Standards seen in all years are often above expectations for at least a quarter of pupils. The current Year 6 standard reflects the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and recent pupil turnover, not a change in the quality of teaching. It also shows a significant improvement on this year group's results at age seven, which were below the national average. Within Year 6, as in other year groups, the strong emphasis on the development of mental arithmetic skills and the high level of challenge in lessons ensures that all pupils, particularly higher attainers, achieve well and are making good progress. An example of this is the speed and ease with which Year 6 pupils convert fractions into decimals and percentages.

131 Year 2 pupils have sound knowledge of place value to 100, while some go beyond this. They use this and good mental recall of basic number facts to 20 to solve problems. Pupils halve and double numbers and count in 2's, 3's, 4's, 5's and 10's. They measure, using both standard and non-standard units, and tell the time using o'clock, half past and quarter to. Pupils understand the mirror effect of straight-line symmetry and recognise and describe a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Data about the colours of their eyes or of 'Smarties' in a tube are pictorially displayed and interpreted.

132 By Year 6 pupils are quickly making mental calculations. They show very good recall of their tables and understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils use written techniques to add, subtract, divide and multiply numbers up to 10,000. Many go beyond this and work to two, or more, places of decimals. Pupils make good use of these arithmetical skills to solve problems involving distance, time, weight and money and to calculate the perimeter, area or volume of shapes. They draw, construct and measure angles and know the names and properties of different types of quadrilaterals. Data is represented in pie charts and frequency graphs. Pupils assess the likelihood of outcomes and investigate number patterns.

133 Most classes have numeracy displays that reflect the subject's high profile within the school, reinforce correct subject vocabulary and remind pupils of the equivalence of different terms such as minus and takeaway. Pupils occasionally make good use of their mathematical skills in other subjects as, for example, they use co-ordinates to find grid references in geography, accurately measure materials for design and technology or estimate time and distance in PE. The school does not have an overall plan, however, to ensure that there are regular opportunities for each year group to apply numeracy skills in the context of other subjects.

134 The quality of teaching and learning in lessons is good overall. In the infants it ranges from excellent to satisfactory and in the juniors it ranges from very good to satisfactory with most being good or better in both key stages. This is an improvement on the 1997 inspection when some unsatisfactory and poor teaching was observed. Since then staff changes and the introduction of the numeracy strategy have meant that the approach to mathematics within the school has become more systematic and focused. This improvement in the quality of teaching and learning is directly responsible for the gains pupils have made and the rise in standards.

135 In all classes pupils are encouraged to use their own methods to solve problems mentally. By discussing the methods they employ with the rest of the class, all benefit from stimulation of thought and sharpen their own techniques. Pupils are often supported in their work by the use of apparatus, although there is a greater emphasis on the use of written methods of calculation in Years 5 and 6. Year 1 pupils recognise and use the equivalent plastic coins as they buy and sell in their shops. Using squared paper, Year 2 pupils create arrays to show that 3×4 and 4×3 are interchangeable. In another Year 2 class, more able pupils use calculators to illustrate that multiplication is continuous addition.

136 Teachers throughout the school make good use of the three-part format of the national numeracy strategy as the basis for planning their lessons. They are generally secure in its use, although many have not benefited from the school's training because they are new to the school. As lessons begin, most are careful to share with pupils the purpose of their learning and how it is linked to or builds on previous work. They make very effective use of the quick-fire introductory mental and oral sessions to challenge and improve the speed of pupils' thinking. For example, Year 2 pupils count forward and back in 10s from different numbers to 100, correctly anticipating the next number in the

sequence before mentally halving different multiples of ten. Year 5 pupils carry out a similar activity working in 100s and 1000s. During these sessions, repetition and reinforcement of appropriate mathematical vocabulary ensures pupils develop use of correct terminology. The good use of questioning further stimulates and challenges pupils' thinking and provides teachers with opportunities to assess pupils' understanding. The pace and variety of these sessions ensures that pupils are fully occupied, feel a real sense of achievement and particularly enjoy this part of their lessons. It is this stimulation of pupils' mental agility that has clearly played a significant part in raising standards within the subject.

137 Within the main activities, teachers use well-prepared tasks to provide opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate their skills and to move learning forward. Good use is made of limited resources and teachers share these between classes to maximise their effectiveness. Teaching assistants are well briefed on the content and purpose of the lessons, providing good support to the pupils they work with. Teachers are careful to correct misunderstandings and errors to avoid misconceptions. The high level of challenge both in terms of content and pace of learning in most lessons is also responsible for the good standards within the subject and the significant proportion of pupils who attain the higher levels. Occasionally, however, the task on a worksheet has either insufficient challenge or is too difficult for the pupils. In a Year 5 group, pupils easily completed the written addition of Th H T U up to two places of decimals, whereas in Year 3/ 4 class they could only complete the first examples of number patterns in the time available. Neither helps to support or improve pupils' learning nor motivates them to try harder. Use of the plenary to briefly revisit the learning intentions of the lesson and check pupils' understanding is well established, but it is only occasionally used to introduce and prepare for the next stages of learning.

138 Throughout the school, the subject is inadequately resourced. Additionally, as a result of problems relating to the use of computer equipment, the use of ICT within the subject is underdeveloped. The only example available was of Year 6 pupils using a control program to draw a geometric flower pattern. Homework tasks are set each week to provide opportunities for older pupils to practise and consolidate their mathematical skills. Younger pupils learn their tables. A programme of regular assessments and standardised tests provides information about pupils' progress and is used to predict what pupils should achieve. Although marking is regularly carried out, it does not often indicate to pupils how they are doing or what they could do to improve. However, teachers are now using their marking and informal assessments to build a comprehensive picture of pupils in their class.

139 The current arrangement for sharing the responsibility for subject co-ordination between two senior members of staff and separating infants and juniors is not helpful in ensuring a cohesive approach across the whole school. This can be clearly seen in the three very different approaches used in the infant, lower junior and upper junior stages to selecting and adopting published materials and in the over-emphasis in Years 3 and 4 on the use of worksheets. It is also evident in the different formats of the scheme of work for each group. Consequently it produces a fragmented approach that does not assist continuity and progression through the school. Nobody has a full overview of standards or of the effect of the school's provision on pupils' progress. An experiment earlier this year into ability setting in Years 5 and 6 produced positive results but was abandoned because of organisational problems. A little monitoring of teaching has been undertaken. This now needs to be developed into a more systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning within the subject.

SCIENCE

140 Pupils aged seven achieved above average standards in 1997. This year, standards towards the end of Year 2 are again above average. Pupils show good understanding in their recording of their own observations and investigations throughout Years 1 and 2. Standards at age seven have improved since the last inspection, when they were average. Boys and girls of all abilities, including pupils from ethnic minorities and those learning English as an additional language are learning successfully and making good progress.

141 Results for eleven-year-olds in 1997, just after the last inspection, were below the national average. They improved faster than nationally over the next two years and standards were average both in 1999 and 2000. Standards at age eleven in the current year remain broadly average, sustaining the improvement since the last inspection. The instructional teaching approach in lessons, supported by revision homework activities, enables higher attainers and pupils of average ability to achieve well in test papers. They remember information successfully after completing detailed books, in which they record copious factual information. Pupils with special educational needs do not achieve so well through this approach, as it makes too great a demand on their literacy skills. Their books are poorly presented and incomplete and they do not retain the knowledge recorded, some of which they have not understood. Standards of scientific investigation and enquiry are unsatisfactory at age eleven. This is because the curriculum and teaching approach in Years 3 to 6 is too narrow. The excessive use of worksheets in Years 3 and 4 and of copied notes and illustrations in Years 5 and 6 does not encourage learning through scientific enquiry. There is little evidence of first-hand investigation, prediction, testing and analysis of results in junior classes.

142 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn successfully in the main. Classroom displays in Year 2 show a high profile given to learning through observation and enquiry. Pupils know what plants need in order to grow and name the main parts of a plant. Higher attainers show good understanding in the way they express themselves in their recorded findings in Year 1. Pupils know the five senses and carry out investigations into magnetism, floating and sinking, and the effect of different surfaces on the distance a vehicle travels down a slope. Year 2 pupils produce carefully labelled diagrams following their work on electric circuits. They make predictions about the effects of different forces on materials and are beginning to understand the principles of fair testing. They predict the effects of heating and cooling substances and discover a little about reversible changes. They also carry out investigations into the growth of seeds under different conditions. The books pupils use to record work are a good size and enable them to present their writings and diagrams clearly, as well as to have worksheets affixed where appropriate.

143 Pupils' work samples in Years 3 and 4 consist entirely of completed worksheets. There is no opportunity for pupils to record the process of enquiry and prediction to show a full understanding of the process of fair testing in their own words, with their own diagrams or tables of findings, for example. Worksheets are rarely dated and are mainly untidily and carelessly presented. They show work covered on electricity, magnetism, light, parts of a flower and the solar system, but few of the worksheets challenge pupils to think. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 cover the full knowledge content of the National Curriculum in considerable depth, but record far too much factual information, much of it copied. Higher attainers and pupils of average ability produce well-organised volumes of scientific factual knowledge. During the organisation of their work into books, they make good use of literacy skills, forming contents and glossary pages and sometimes bibliographies. Samples of book produced by less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, showed poor learning, however, as work included was often unfinished and badly presented. Teachers' marking in junior classes relates mainly to presentation or English. It does not promote

pupils' learning in science. Occasionally it shows very low expectations, congratulating pupils on presentation when work is clearly untidy and carelessly completed, for example. A lack of co-ordination is apparent in the repetition of some activities in a number of year groups, such as naming parts of a plant or what plants need to grow, with little difference in level of demand or content.

144 Pupils of all abilities, including those from ethnic minorities and learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers in the three distinct systems used in the infant classes, lower juniors and upper juniors. Infant pupils with special educational needs make good progress, but juniors struggle with written recording, particularly in Years 5 and 6, where too much is pitched at a level beyond their capability. The school has noted some differences between boys' and girls' attainment in science at age 11 in 2000, but this is not part of a common pattern.

145 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in both infant and junior classes in terms of imparting knowledge. It incorporates an appropriately broad approach in infant classes, but methods used are too narrowly instructional for junior pupils. The teaching of science in terms of helping pupils know how to conduct scientific enquiry is unsatisfactory in the junior years. In both lessons and work samples seen in Years 3 to 6, there is insufficient emphasis on pupils learning the skills of scientific investigation and enquiry. While teaching is satisfactory overall, there is a little unsatisfactory teaching in both infant and junior classes, due to a lack of challenge, slow pace and inappropriate choice of methods.

146 Parents of pupils in Years 5 and 6 have supported their pupils well, using revision books purchased through the co-ordinator. Events such as the science week, organised by the infant co-ordinator, have successfully raised the profile of the subject throughout the school. Valuable links with a local company through the British Association for the Advancement of Science are helping the school develop an environmental area in the grounds and providing opportunities for improved resources and teacher training.

147 The school has a co-ordinator for each key stage. This has contributed to a lack of continuity of approach, with separate schemes of work for infants and juniors. Because results in national tests have been satisfactory, the school has neglected to review provision and standards across the school. The inconsistency of teaching and the over-emphasis on imparting knowledge, to the exclusion of enquiry, are results of the lack of attention to the subject and the fact that no single teacher is responsible for an overview. Common assessment procedures are required. The subject is poorly resourced and the lack of resources has fed the narrow approach to the curriculum. The junior co-ordinator has committed considerable time and effort to develop a scheme of work and associated worksheets. Most Year 6 pupils, especially higher attainers, have achieved good results through this in recent years. Both co-ordinators are aware, however, that all staff now need to look together at the subject in order to broaden it. The school needs additional resourcing and one scheme of work, in order to avoid needless repetition, ensure continuity and support pupils with special educational needs.

ART AND DESIGN

148 Pupils' attainment in art at age seven and at age eleven is average, although recent improvements show children beginning to achieve well and some higher standards. While standards are broadly similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection, considerable improvement has taken place in the quality of teaching, which was described as unsatisfactory to sound and is now good in both infant and junior classes. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are now achieving well in lessons.

Resources are still inadequate, however, and the scheme of work is not yet fully embedded, in order to promote the development of skills year on year and a sufficiently broad experience of techniques.

149 Teachers are enthusiastic about art and their interest is contagious. Pupils learn well. They know that their work is appreciated. Other teaching strengths include the way lessons are well structured, planned and organised. There is a good balance of time between teaching and learning, with skills being systematically taught. The way the school develops pupils' confident manipulative abilities is shown by the following examples. Year 1 pupils learn careful joining skills as they create three-dimensional structures; Year 3 pupils bend and connect 'withies' to form exciting inner structures, which they shape to form giant fruits; by Year 5, pupils knead clay skilfully to form interestingly shaped high-sided pots. The transition from one phase of lessons to another usually works smoothly. Pupils are able to quickly get to work and concentrate fully and creatively because they are practically engaged and enjoying their learning experiences. In a lesson where lack of space meant that only half the class could be involved in practical activities, those involved in valid, but more theoretical aspects of art, for the most part concentrated and behaved less well than their peers.

150 There are good examples of two- and three-dimensional art in different parts of the school, with some interesting work on colour mixing and the development of texture. Good use is made of sketchbooks in some classes, but not all junior classes use these. Most pupils have regular opportunities for observational drawing in other subjects as well as art. Printing and textile work is underdeveloped due to poor resourcing, but some teachers are imaginative in planning art experiences for their pupils. A Year 2 class, for example, produced sand and shell textured pictures as a preliminary to an artistic field visit to a beach at Weston Super Mare, where they will experience sand sculpting with a local artist.

151 The subject is co-ordinated by a very enthusiastic pair of teachers. Because they work closely together and have high aspirations for the subject, the school enjoys a concerted approach. There is no sign of the disparity in approaches evident in other subjects where co-ordination is shared. The co-ordinators are conscious of the inadequacy of resources. This is a major factor, which impedes their quest to raise the profile of art in the curriculum. One of the co-ordinators organises a regular art club, during which pupils have produced some lively three-dimensional tiles. The aim is for every pupil in the school to produce one of these, in order to decorate a wall in the new school building.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

152 Standards at age seven are average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Only one lesson was observed in the junior classes, and there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on attainment at age eleven.

153 Younger pupils have opportunities to design and make a variety of puppets using simple tools. They successfully use elastic bands and cotton reels to make moving models, and are beginning to evaluate their work and make suggestions for improvement. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs. From discussion with the oldest pupils, it is apparent that they are given opportunities to use a range of tools and materials to make buggies, slippers and boxes. Unfortunately, insufficient time has been given to the subject in the past, so a lot of work remains unfinished. There is also little evidence of pupils being given the opportunity to evaluate their work. Evaluative skills were highlighted as a weakness in the last report, and do not appear to have been sufficiently developed. In the one junior lesson observed, in a Year

3/4 class, attainment was as expected for their age, when pupils were given opportunities to make a variety of mechanisms to be used when making a book.

154 In lessons observed in both infant and junior classes, the quality of teaching was very good, but no judgement can be made of the quality of teaching in the subject overall, as there was little recorded work and few examples of models in junior classes. In the two lessons seen teachers had very good expertise, and set challenging and interesting activities for their pupils. The progressive development of skills is emphasised, and teachers set high expectations. This ensures that the pupils do their best and show a pride in their work. In these lessons, pupils were encouraged to evaluate their work, and the work of others, continuously and to suggest improvements. For example, pupils in Year 2 plan how to make their wind-up toys, and then judge how well the finished models move. Pupils designing a book cover in Year 3/4 asked the opinions of their peers as to whether the type was big enough, or whether the colours were eye-catching. These pupils thought carefully about their products, and chose appropriate materials and mechanisms to produce work with a good degree of finish.

155 The co-ordination of the subject is weak. The co-ordinator is new to the subject and has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The school has not established a pattern of monitoring planning to ensure that skills are progressively developed, and no-one currently has a clear overview of provision for the subject or whether standards are high enough. Teachers plan activities to cover all the elements of the subject including food technology, but there is no assessment to track pupils' attainment and progress. Resources are unsatisfactory to enable pupils to further develop their skills.

GEOGRAPHY

156 Standards of attainment by the ages of seven and eleven are average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Pupils develop their geographical skills as they get older, and by the time they leave the school they know key world facts, such as the names of the important rivers, and mountains, they know about climate and environmental change, and have studied contrasting environments in different parts of the world. Pupils in Year 6 use their mapping skills well when they read Ordnance Survey maps, interpreting the key, and using six figure references to locate particular places. By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing their early mapping skills by drawing routes to school, and making plans of the school. They are beginning to compare and contrast different localities, such as Bristol and the island of Barra, and identify the different features of a coastal resort. Throughout the school geographical skills are developed through topics. All pupils' achievement, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment.

157 The quality of teaching in three-quarters of the lessons observed was good, but there was some unsatisfactory teaching. In the less successful lesson, time was not used efficiently, and the pupils' inattentive behaviour was not well managed, resulting in little gain in learning. The good lessons proceed at a brisk pace, and activities are interesting, stimulating the pupils to want to learn. Teachers show an enthusiasm for the subject, which ensures that pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. In a Year 3/4 lesson resources were particularly well used to show pupils the diversity and cost of packaging, and the waste involved when things are thrown away. This enhances the pupils' awareness of the necessity for recycling.

158 The co-ordination of the subject is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator, who is new, has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in the subject, so

does not have a clear overview of the subject. There are no assessment procedures to track pupils' progress, and the teachers have not begun to check pupils' attainment to see if it is at an appropriate level. Resources are unsatisfactory. For example, there are insufficient atlases and information books to help pupils with their research. There is a lack of information technology to support work in the subject, which limits the pupils' use of secondary sources of evidence.

HISTORY

159 Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and remain broadly average throughout the school. The school's main focus for development has been on English and mathematics and consequently there has not been a significant move forward in work in this area. Resources remain very limited and the subject co-ordinator has no time allocated to supporting staff and monitoring standards. However, the school has improved planning for history this year. A new framework clarifying the study units to be covered each year has been introduced and the school has also adopted nationally agreed guidelines as a basis for planning.

160 There is no significant difference between the achievement of different groups of pupils. Gifted and talented pupils, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those learning English as an additional language all make satisfactory gains in their learning. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Occasionally, older pupils, with special educational needs, struggle because the work set is too difficult for them.

161 Pupils throughout the school do better in developing their knowledge and understanding of the past than they do in other historical areas. Pupils in Year 2 are clear about the famous people they have learnt about. They talked with enthusiasm about Samuel Pepys burying his cheese to protect it from the Great Fire of London, for example. In one session, they also discussed the changes to ordinary people's life styles over the last hundred years and showed that they understood the impact of electricity on domestic arrangements. In Years 3 and 4, pupils are studying the Ancient Egyptians and in the lesson seen, developed an understanding of how pyramids were built. Year 5 pupils are learning about the Victorians this term and in the lessons seen were evaluating the main characteristics of a middle class Victorian house. Pupils in Year 6 were preparing for their annual residential trip during the inspection and were given information about a wide range of historical information relating to the Plymouth area. Their interactions with the teacher showed that most understood and noted what was told them.

162 In lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good. It is satisfactory overall and this ensures that pupils make satisfactory strides in their learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding because teachers have good subject knowledge. Some of the staff studied history themselves at an advanced level and in some lessons this expertise was reflected in the information given to pupils. In the better lessons, pupils achieved well because attention was given to developing other historical skills. In one very good lesson, for example, pupils' enquiry skills were developed by an imaginative problem-solving exercise to investigate how pyramids were built. In the same lesson pupils also refined their research skills by searching for information in pairs on specific questions. In this lesson pupils were involved and enthusiastic because the work was interesting and purposeful. Generally, however, work on historical enquiry does not feature strongly in teachers' planning, with more emphasis given to the information to be acquired, rather than how historians find out about the past. There is some use of trips and visits to bring the subject alive, but these do not lie at the heart of the topics. In some classes, there is an over emphasis on the use of

worksheets and pupils' own work is not well presented. In the weaker lessons insufficient account is taken of pupils' skills. Pupils with special educational needs, for example, are expected to work on tasks that are too difficult for them. Teachers are aware of the need to encourage chronological understanding and newly purchased time lines are now prominent in most classrooms. However, in some rooms these are displayed too high for pupils to see them easily.

163 The school is now in a good position to move forward and is aware that planning for the younger pupils needs to be adapted to reflect the history of the local area. There is potential for firmer links with English, including more work planned in the area of drama and the use of historically based texts in the literacy hour.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

164 Insufficient evidence is available to reach firm judgements about standards in the subject as only one lesson of direct teaching was timetabled in each key stage during the inspection. It is clear from the very limited examples available that attainment throughout the school is well below that expected and that all strands of the National Curriculum programme of study are not being covered in a systematic manner. Little use is being made of ICT to support learning in other subjects, other than through simple word-processing tasks. Computers in classrooms are invariably switched on but not in use. This is a similar position to that found by the 1997 inspection, when the need to raise standards in the subject was identified as a key issue. Until recently, only very limited progress has been made by the school in addressing this.

165 Pupils, particularly older ones, are underachieving and are well aware that they have only limited ICT skills. These have often been extended only if they have had access to computers at home or to equipment lent by their teachers. Infant pupils know how to use the mouse to select and confirm choices from the toolbar or interact with a program. Year 2 pupils have limited keyboard skills that are based on tasks such as entering a rhyme for a Christmas card or adjusting the text for a poem about Humpty Dumpty. In one of the Year 2 classes, pupils have used a digital camera to record images of their partner checking the composition and position of the portrait, before printing a copy for their coat peg. Year 1 pupils in another class learn to input instructions into a floor robot to make it move forward and back. They accurately estimate the distance between obstructions and learn how to link a series of movements together.

166 Junior pupils are developing their word-processing skills but their familiarity with the keyboard and the function keys is often very limited. Most, but not all, know how to save and retrieve their work from a disk. Those with access to computers at home often download information from the Internet and interrogate CD Roms about topics they are studying. In a Year 3/ 4 class, for example, they have compiled a booklet about the Ancient Egyptians to support their work in History. In the same class they learn how to change the size and font and insert a heading into the list of rules that they have saved. Year 6 pupils created complex geometric flower patterns using a control program to list the necessary moves. Some Year 5 pupils have used a buffer box to control a lighting sequence.

167 Pupils talk enthusiastically about their experience of ICT and the programs they know. However, the teaching and use of ICT shows considerable variation from class to class throughout the school. A significant proportion of pupils state that they have either not had regular access to computers or that there has not been a working one in their classroom. This picture of varied and limited provision means that pupils have not enjoyed equality of

access to this area of the curriculum and also supports and confirms the views expressed by some parents.

168 In the two lessons seen, both teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge in the clear instructions and explanations that they give to ensure pupils' successful completion of well designed tasks. For example, in the Year 1 lesson pupils learn to clear the floor robot's memory before entering a sequence of instructions to make it dance back and forth within their circle. Teachers make good use of questioning to develop and check pupils' understanding. In the Year 3/4 lesson pupils recall how to use a drop down menu to select a font style and size and how to save their text. As time is limited, pupils only see the demonstration of how to title their work. By the time they have the opportunity to try this, they are unlikely to remember all the instructions.

169 That the school has not yet addressed the recommendations of the last inspection is due to a number of factors. The previous lack of monitoring meant that there was no clear view of provision and standards in the subject. It is also evident that not all teachers feel confident about their own knowledge and skills in the teaching of ICT and a recent audit of their skills by the co-ordinator is being used to plan training to address this. A recently introduced outline scheme of work, based on national guidance, now provides a basis for ensuring that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed in systematic manner. Only very recently have steps been taken to replace outdated and unreliable computers. Since last September three modern machines have been added to the stock, so that all but one class now has a serviceable computer. The school plans to increase this number with updated machines in the near future.

170 The building of a new ICT suite, funded by national monies for school improvement, is now well advanced and plans are in hand to ensure that it is suitably equipped and in use early in the new school year. The facilities that it will offer for whole class teaching of skills will provide the opportunity for ICT teaching to move rapidly forward. The capable co-ordinator and headteacher have worked closely together on the development of this facility and the provision of equipment. However, there are currently no assessment procedures to establish what pupils already know, understand and can do or arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Both will be necessary if the school is to identify and address areas requiring development and thus raise standards in the subject.

MUSIC

171 Standards in music are below national expectations at ages seven and 11. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be broadly satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1, but unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory. This represents a decline since the school was last inspected.

172 In Year 1 pupils understand that some sounds are high and others are low. However, they are unable to sing tunefully, respond to different musical moods or identify simple repeated patterns. In Year 2, pupils use different body parts as a percussion accompaniment to a simple verse about a snail. They confidently discuss their actions. For example, some pupils clap their hands, others make popping sounds with their mouths whilst others rub their feet together to a steady beat. However, they are unable to use symbols to represent sounds and fail to have an understanding about different moods and effects in music.

173 In Year 3 and 4 pupils satisfactorily perform two tunes together and understand what a musical pulse is. They keep to a steady pulse and are starting to develop the idea of rhythm. For example, in one Year 3/4 class the pupils successfully and enthusiastically kept to the rhythm of '*Boom, Chick a Boom*' whilst singing. However, their ability to perform independently is hindered by the considerable lack of resources available. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have successfully linked musical activities with other areas within the curriculum. For example, pupils have designed, made and evaluated a variety of different musical resources. They have confidently discussed and categorized different types of music; for instance, they have compared classical variations with both pop and religious music. They also recognise a large number of percussion instruments. Enthusiastic pupils in Year 6 have benefited from the expert help of a professional musician, the school caretaker, who has worked with them to create a CD of computer music. Older pupils have also listened to and appreciated different types of music; for example, they listened to '*Fantasia*' and the '*Sorcerer's Apprentice*'. However, by the end of Year 6, pupils have not gained sufficient experience maintaining their own parts in music performed within a group and do not have appropriate opportunities to suggest to each other how their work might be improved.

174 During the inspection, evidence on the quality of singing was limited but pupils in an infant assembly were absorbed in a tuneful three-part round. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class were also observed singing '*Land of the Silver Birch*' satisfactorily in a two part round. No singing was observed in Years 5 and 6, so no overall judgement can be made about the quality of singing at the end of Key Stage 2.

175 The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory throughout the school. During the inspection four music lessons were observed. A music specialist taught one lesson in an infant class and this was of good quality. This teacher started the lesson with a good recap from the previous session and made sensible use of music from the adopted scheme of work. The lesson moved at steady pace and good use was made of questioning to assess pupils' learning. The pupils were generally well focused in the lesson but did make inappropriate responses to a piece of music being played by the teacher. Another lesson observed in an infant class was of poor quality. The teacher did not exercise sufficient control of a class who had returned from an afternoon playtime both excited and very noisy. Attempts by the teacher to manage rude and disruptive behaviour were ineffective and the lesson failed to make any impact on pupils' learning. Inconsistencies in teaching were also observed in junior lessons, where one music lesson observed was satisfactory and another unsatisfactory. In the satisfactory lesson, the teacher effectively recapped on previous learning, made appropriate use of the available time and planned the session well. However, unsatisfactory use was made of available support staff to help with pupils with behaviour problems and insufficient resources meant that not all pupils could be involved in their learning. In the unsatisfactory lesson, resources were also inadequate, the lesson was uninspiring in presentation and the pace was slow. In addition, subject knowledge was weak and unsatisfactory use was made of learning resources such as the overhead projector. As a result, pupils did not learn anything new and were certainly not motivated during this lesson.

176 At the time of the inspection the co-ordinator was on maternity leave and the subject was being managed by the deputy headteacher on a temporary basis. The school has adopted a suitable commercial planning framework. This ensures that musical skills are being taught progressively throughout the school. This scheme is particularly helpful to non-specialists and those who lack confidence in teaching the subject. However, teachers in Years 5 and 6 currently use their own schemes and this results in inconsistencies in the teaching and learning within Years 5 and 6. This is particularly evident when teachers have poor subject knowledge and lack confidence in teaching music. Individual teachers use

different forms of assessment within their lessons, but there is no whole school approach. There has been no monitoring or evaluating of teaching and learning and this has led to weak pockets of teaching in areas throughout the school. Resources are very poor and this has a negative impact on pupils' learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

177 Standards in physical education are average in both the infants and the juniors. This is a similar position to the last inspection in 1997. Since then the school has adopted national guidance as the basis for planning to address concerns about the balance of the curriculum. The adoption within this of a two-year cycle takes account of the mixed age groups in some classes and ensures coverage of dance, gymnastics, games and athletics skills. However, it also means that there is often a lengthy time delay before each strand or skill is revisited, adversely affecting continuity and progression of learning. Only games and athletic skills were being taught during the inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls.

178 Infant pupils work enthusiastically to develop their games skills by practising and applying them to simple games of attack and defence. They work with obvious enjoyment either with a partner or as part of a team. Pupils show a good degree of accuracy in their throwing and catching when passing a beanbag from one to another. They are beginning to learn tactics and to work together as a team as they pass to each other and try to block their opponents attempts to score.

179 Work is of a similar quality in junior classes. In games, pupils develop their bowling, catching and hitting skills with a small ball and a racquet or bat. They listen carefully to their teachers, enjoy their lessons and work well with one another. Pupils in Year 3/4 classes develop greater accuracy in throwing and catching the ball over increasing distance and in their ability to serve and return the ball with a racquet. However, their efforts to improve these skills are hampered by the space constraints of working in the hall. In Year 5 skills are extended further as pupils bat, bowl and field in a rounders game. In athletics, Year 3/4 pupils learn to pass and receive a relay baton or to throw for distance. They improve their technique as they practise and refine the skills. Year 6 pupils improve their sprinting by practising to achieve the fastest start. They estimate the time taken to cover a distance and work together as a team to match their pace to this.

180 In the one lesson seen in the infants teaching was good. Clear instructions and well-planned activities led to pupils maintaining a high level of interest and wanting to succeed. Good attention was paid by the teacher to ensuring that pupils watched the actions of others and thought about how they could improve their own catching and throwing or the use of tactics to win. Overall the teaching in junior classes is good and shows increasing focus on the development of skills. Teachers again encourage pupils to watch the performance of others and then to work on improving their own throwing, hitting or running. By considering the finer points of technique, as in for example the cupping of hands to receive a catch or the positioning of the body in a sprint start, they encourage pupils to improve skills and performance further. However, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to discuss or comment on what they have observed. Clear instructions and explanations further ensure that pupils know what is expected of them and how to successfully complete the task. In the better lessons, careful observation by teachers ensures that intervention to coach specific skills or move activities on is appropriately timed. This ensures that the challenge and pace of the lesson is maintained. Teaching is not satisfactory when the majority of pupils are not actively occupied in the lesson, as occurred in a Year 5 whole class rounders game.

181 Throughout the school, pupils and teachers are well aware of safety issues. Care is taken to avoid the many obstructions in the hall, to use equipment safely and to begin and end lessons with warm up and cool down activities. Pupils show increasing awareness of the effects of exercise on their body as they progress through the school. In Year 2 they feel their heart rate return to normal as they rest after activity, whilst in Year 6 pupils know that it is important to stretch muscles before exercise to avoid injury and that exercise improves stamina. Local provision for swimming has contracted over the years and currently only Year 3 attend a local pool for weekly instruction in swimming and water safety.

182 The school has yet to develop its own scheme of work to show expectations for each year group and inform the setting of learning objectives for each lesson. At present there is an interim arrangement for co-ordinating the subject and the school intends to address this shortly. There are currently no formal arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' performance or for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, in order to raise standards or ensure continuity and progression. A very successful annual 'Begbrook Olympics' combines a traditional sports day with a range of team mini-games. Strong links exist with Bristol Rovers, who provide visits and coaching courses. There is provision for extra-curricular sports coaching and competitive games, with the focus currently on football and netball. The gymnastic apparatus in the large hall provides good support for the subject, but its storage and that of other furniture restricts the space available for activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

183 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, examination of teachers' planning and talking to pupils suggest that standards of attainment of pupils aged seven remain average, as they were at the last inspection. However, standards have declined for pupils aged eleven, and do not now meet the required standard according to the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Year 6 have a very sketchy knowledge and understanding of the main world faiths and do not appreciate the impact religion has on people's lives. This is because in the past pupils have not had regular religious education lessons, and the content of lessons has been superficial. However, sufficient curriculum time is now allocated to the subject, and the profile of the subject has been raised, in order to improve standards.

184 Infant pupils learn about Hindu and Muslim festivals, the special clothes worn, and the special food eaten. They have a secure knowledge of the Christian faith, know some Old Testament and New Testament stories, and can retell important details from the story of the life of Jesus. They discuss relationships between different people, in particular the people who help us, and what we can do to help people we meet 'feel good'. These young pupils are therefore developing a sound knowledge of different world religions, and are beginning to appreciate that Christians live by a particular moral code. Pupils' achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory in relation to their prior knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs do the same tasks as their peers and make similar satisfactory progress.

185 Pupils in Year 6 have a superficial knowledge of other world religions besides Christianity, and do not know the core beliefs behind the religions, so do not appreciate the fundamental differences between different faiths. They know that different religions have special books, such as the Qu'ran for Muslims, and that Hindus worship many gods, but they do not understand the importance of the five 'Ks' for Sikhs, and that the fundamental principle of Christianity is love. They are beginning to appreciate that the ten commandments are a moral code for Christian life, but do not understand that other

religions have their own rules. Pupils in Year 5 recognise that pilgrimage is important to different religions, while pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about Islam and the importance of facing Mecca when praying. Although pupils know the importance of Jesus to Christians, they were unable to name the important Muslim prophet. Overall pupils' progress is unsatisfactory, and they do not have sufficient insight into the meaning behind religions.

186 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in junior classes. No judgements can be made on the quality of teaching because, although one of these lessons was timetabled as religious education it was really a history lesson about Buckfast Abbey, in preparation for camp. Examination of teachers' planning shows that a range of activities are set to meet the demands of the syllabus but scrutiny of pupils' work shows that topics are covered in a very superficial way.

187 The co-ordination of the subject is weak, as the co-ordinator has had no opportunities to monitor the quality of teaching or learning, and has no clear overview of standards within the subject. There is no up-to-date policy statement, although the scheme of work is based on the demands of the local syllabus. The school has not established routines for the co-ordinator to check teachers' planning to ensure there is sufficient coverage of the subject, and there are no assessment procedures to enable teachers to judge pupils' attainment or progress. The co-ordinator's role needs to be developed to ensure that standards rise.