

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLANDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

Crowthorne

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 109809

Headteacher: Mrs S Baughan

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Richardson
6676

Dates of inspection: 29 - 31 January 2001

Inspection number: 193894

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Butler Road Crowthorne Berkshire
Postcode:	RG45 6QZ
Telephone number:	01344 773496
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Alison Mitchell
Date of previous inspection:	27/01/1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
6676	Joy Richardson	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14214	Gillian Smith	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19227	Paul Missin	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
23009	Anne Hogbin	Team inspector	English Music	
23010	Loretta Watson	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 272 pupils between the ages of seven and eleven. There are eight classes with between 33 and 35 pupils in each. Pupils join the school from the infant school which shares the site. The schools serve the village of Crowthorne and are heavily oversubscribed. Standards on entry to the junior school are well above the national average overall, though the range of attainment is wide. There are 74 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, of whom a small number have specific learning difficulties but none currently has a statement. Very few pupils come from an ethnic minority background and none speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school which provides a high quality of education. Pupils achieve good standards because they are well taught. The school is very well led and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are good in most subjects and particularly high in reading.
- Pupils learn well because of thorough and effective teaching and a well-planned curriculum.
- The school is very well led and strong teamwork by staff contributes to its success.
- Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported.
- The school promotes very positive attitudes and provides a wide range of learning opportunities.
- The partnership with parents is very effective in helping pupils to learn successfully.

What could be improved

- Information from assessment could be used more fully to set sights high for all pupils.
- More use should be made of information and communication technology in other subjects.
- New initiatives for strengthening liaison with the infant school need to be developed further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. There have been further improvements in standards since then, notably in English, history, geography and religious education. The quality of teaching is now even better than it was then. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented effectively. The school's provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly with the establishment of a networked computer suite, though the application of skills within other subjects remains limited. Other key issues in the last inspection report have been addressed effectively. The school has developed its long-term planning and enhanced the role of subject co-ordinators in keeping the curriculum up to date. The school's leadership and management are effective in evaluating the school's performance. The school is well placed to maintain what it does well and to pursue further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A	A	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A	A	B	C	
Science	A	A	B	C	

The results of national tests for eleven year olds show that standards were well above the national average in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, they were well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science when compared with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Over recent years, the school has maintained good standards, though schools nationally have improved at a faster rate, particularly in mathematics and science.

In 2000, the school came close to its target of 90 per cent of pupils reaching at least Level 4 in English, but fell 10 per cent short of its 88 per cent target in mathematics. Although standards were not quite as high in 2000 as in the previous years, these pupils did well in relation to their test results as seven year olds, particularly in reading. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to achieve higher standards overall than those shown in the 2000 results.

The work seen on inspection shows that pupils are achieving very good standards in English, and particularly in reading. Standards in writing, though good, are not as high as in reading and the school is working effectively to remedy this. Standards are good in mathematics and science, though information from assessment is not yet being used to ensure that expectations are high enough. In the rest of the curriculum, pupils reach good standards in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. Their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations in physical education and in information and communication technology. Pupils benefit from the wide range of musical opportunities provided by the school and they sing well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are eager to learn, intellectually curious and prepared to work hard. They enjoy school and take pride in their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils settle to work well in lessons and co-operate readily. They play together amicably and show consideration for others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are confident and articulate. They develop independence and responsibility in their learning. Older pupils relish tasks such as answering the phone at lunchtime and show maturity in relating to others. Relationships are very good throughout the school community and pupils thrive in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
Attendance	The overall level of attendance is high, but holiday absences have a detrimental effect on learning at times in some classes.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good

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

The school provides good quality teaching and this results in effective learning. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen during the inspection, good or better in 80 per cent and very good in 15 per cent.

The teaching is thorough and systematic, ensuring full coverage of the curriculum and steady progress in pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned and have clear aims and pupils complete a good amount of work in the time available. Classes are well managed and teachers are skilled in the organisation of practical activities. Teachers and support staff provide good additional support for those who need it.

Teachers have a good level of knowledge and expertise in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. They introduce pupils to a wide range of literature and help them to read with understanding and enjoyment. Numeracy is also well taught to ensure that pupils have a firm understanding of mathematical language and concepts, and can use mental and written methods with ease.

Teachers mark pupils' work carefully and carry out assessments in some subjects to check how well pupils are learning. Fuller use could be made of the results of tests and assessments throughout the school to set sights high for all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum. This is much enriched by extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school, and by special events such as the very popular 'Curriculum Week'.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides very well for pupils with specific learning difficulties, identifying individual needs precisely and giving effective support. It also helps those who are achieving below the expectation for their age to catch up, particularly in literacy, by providing focused teaching in smaller groups.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' personal development is cultivated very effectively. Through their lessons and participation in the wider life of the school, pupils are given a broad view of the world and helped to develop social awareness and moral understanding.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well known by adults in the school community who work together well to provide a high level of care. Standards are set clearly and consistently. Pupils' personal welfare is closely monitored. Assessment procedures are in place but could be used to greater effect in identifying how well pupils are doing and how well they should be doing.

The school works very effectively in partnership with parents, and pupils' learning benefits significantly from this. Many parents help in school and children are very well supported in their learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher knows pupils well and is clear and purposeful in setting the school's educational direction. Senior staff help to create a cohesive team and subject co-ordinators are effective in developing the curriculum.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They give the school strong support, helping it to determine its priorities and to achieve its educational aims.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is evaluating its performance with increasing insight. It is extending the analysis of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning in order to take action where it is needed.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well, seeking to provide the best possible quality of education for all pupils. The deployment of staff and the organisation of teaching groups are carefully considered with a view to maximising pupils' learning.

The school is well staffed and has good learning resources. The accommodation is adequate and the school is inventive in making the fullest possible use of what is available, as seen in its creation of a computer suite. The use of teaching areas is very carefully timetabled, but there is a shortage of space for work with small groups.

The school's financial planning is very good. The principles of best value are applied well in making decisions about expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The headteacher's leadership and knowledge of pupils. • The school's expectation that children will work hard and achieve their best. • The good quality of the teaching. • Children's enjoyment of school and their interest in the work they do. • The recognition of children's individual needs and the extra help given when needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Information about how their children are getting on, particularly when they first start. • The closeness of the school's partnership with parents.

Most parents are very well satisfied with the school and many are very strongly appreciative of what it achieves for their children. The judgement of the inspection is that parents' confidence in the school is well founded. Although two thirds of parents who returned the questionnaire believe that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons, a third of parents disagree. The inspectors consider that the school organises a good range of extra-curricular clubs and offers a rich variety of other opportunities outside lessons, including visits and special events. Most parents feel that they are kept well-informed about their children's progress, but a fifth do not consider this to be the case, particularly if they cannot visit the school regularly. In particular, some parents want more communication to help children who have just started to settle in. The inspection team considers that the school keeps in touch with parents well, through homework diaries, half-termly outlines of work, consultation meetings, good quality written reports and curriculum evenings. The school is seeking to develop more effective liaison with the infant school to promote continuity and a smooth transfer for pupils and inspectors agree that this is needed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results in the national tests for eleven year olds were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science in 1998 and 1999. In 2000, the results were again well above average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science. By comparison with those in similar schools, results were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. While the school's results in English have improved in recent years in line with the national trend, other schools have improved at a faster rate both in science and particularly in mathematics.
2. Boys generally do well: over the last three years their results have exceeded the national average by a wider margin than those of girls. The school analyses its results and takes appropriate action. For example, it has worked successfully to raise girls' attainment in science.
3. On entry to the junior school, standards are well above average though the attainment of pupils ranges widely. For example, half the pupils who started in 2000 gained at least Level 3 in reading in the national tests for seven year olds, the standard expected of nine year olds, while a fifth reached a standard below Level 2B, the average for seven year olds. The school includes on Stage 1 of the special needs register all those who are achieving below the expectation for their age in Year 3 and provides a programme of work in literacy to help them catch up. This is proving effective in the lower years of Key Stage 2. Though the results of pupils who left the school in 2000 were lower overall than in the previous two years, these pupils achieved well in relation to their test results at the age of seven, particularly in reading.
4. In 2000, 43 per cent of pupils in English, 38 per cent in mathematics and 42 per cent in English reached Level 5, the standard expected of thirteen year olds. A total of 88 per cent of pupils in English achieved or exceeded Level 4, the standard expected at eleven, almost meeting the school's target of 90 per cent. Only 78 per cent reached this level in mathematics, falling short of the target of 88 per cent. The school is setting more challenging targets each year in English and mathematics, aiming this year for 91 per cent of pupils in English and 90 per cent in mathematics to reach at least Level 4. These are appropriate targets, though fairly ambitious in mathematics. The school is beginning to use assessment information more fully in all years to monitor the progress of individuals and groups and to set sights higher from the start, but more remains to be done.
5. The work seen on inspection shows that pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving better standards overall than shown in the 2000 results. By the age of eleven, pupils are achieving very well for their age in English. Their reading is very good and although their writing is not as well developed, standards are rising because of the school's current focus in this area. High standards in speaking and listening underpin pupils' learning across the curriculum. Standards are good in mathematics though more pupils than in English are falling short of the expectation for their age. In science, pupils are well skilled in carrying out scientific investigations. Almost all are achieving at least the expectation for their age and some pupils are exceptionally knowledgeable and interested.
6. Standards by the age of eleven are good in art and design, design and technology, history, geography and religious education. This reflects good teaching and a well-planned curriculum which provides a broad and interesting range of work. Music plays an important part in the life of the school. Pupils sing well in assembly and in the choir, and they have good opportunities to learn an instrument. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected nationally. In information and communication technology, pupils are now benefiting from the use of a new computer suite with networked computers. Work is beginning to ensure development in the acquisition of skills through the school, but these skills are not yet being widely applied in support of learning in other subjects.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. The school takes great care in identifying low attainment, and pupils' specific learning difficulties, and in deploying staff and resources with a view to helping all pupils to succeed. Gifted and talented

pupils are identified and encouraged, though the provision of enrichment or extension activities for them is not consistently planned.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good, showing improvement since the previous inspection when attitudes and behaviour were found to be satisfactory overall.
9. Pupils of all ages and levels of ability have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school and buzz with ideas and enthusiasm. They are highly motivated and approach their work with a genuine commitment and desire to learn. This is a significant factor in the good progress they make. When it is required, pupils listen very well and a forest of hands often shoots up when their teacher asks a question. Pupils wait their turn politely, rarely shouting out their answer, and they respect each other's views.
10. Pupils are very keen to help during the school day and want to be involved in as much as possible. They enjoy volunteering, occasionally thinking up homework even when the teacher had not actually planned to set any! One in five of the pupils is learning to play an instrument and this enjoyment of music pays dividends at other times during the school day. For example, pupils sing with gusto in a daily assembly and this serves as a fillip half way through the morning. This wish to be involved can occasionally backfire, as when other pupils became restless during a music lesson when not chosen to play an instrument.
11. Pupils generally behave very well in and around the school. It has not been necessary to exclude anyone for many years. Pupils are confident, socially adept and very interested in what is going on around them. The relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. They are built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect and this helps to make the school a calm and pleasant place to be. Pupils co-operate well and, when required to do so, work very constructively in pairs and in groups. Boys and girls approach their work equally conscientiously. Pupils spontaneously offer each other help when it is needed. They socialise well at lunchtimes and adults provide consistently good examples of how to behave. Pupils approach members of staff with confidence and do not hesitate to ask for help if they need it.
12. Pupils' personal development is very good. Within each class, pupils undertake a wide range of tasks, from returning registers to the office to helping to tidy away equipment. Pupils of all ages use their initiative and relish responsibility. Year 6 pupils undertake a residential trip to the Isle of Wight and, as well as encouraging independence, this helps to develop a sense of team spirit. Pupils may also, for example, be nominated as a monitor and all Year 6 pupils take it in turns to manage the school office during lunchtime, which they do very well.
13. The previous inspection found attendance to be good and, over the last four years, this has continued to improve. The gap between attendance at this school and the national average has steadily widened and overall attendance is now very good. There have been no unauthorised absences during the 12 months preceding the inspection and when pupils are absent, it is usually because they have been ill. The majority of parents appreciate the importance of regular attendance. However, in some classes almost one quarter of pupils lose time as a result of family holidays. Although these holidays are usually only for a few days, they interrupt the continuity of learning for the pupils concerned. Occasionally, when a number of pupils in a class are taken on holiday at the same time, this effectively prevents the teacher from starting any new work. This limits the progress that the rest of the class is able to make.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching provided by the school is good. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen during the inspection, good or better in 80 per cent, and very good in 15 per cent. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the extent of good or better teaching.

15. Literacy is well taught. Teachers develop pupils' reading skills very effectively, introducing them to a wide range of literature. They extend comprehension through exploration of the use of language, as when pupils discussed the 'old-fashioned language' of Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, or the imagery of Tennyson's poem 'The Lady of Shalott'. Teachers are working to improve writing further by analysing pupils' work and focusing on the development of specific skills in creative writing sessions. In numeracy, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of what needs to be taught, and of the best way of teaching it. They explain clearly and encourage pupils to compare the effectiveness of different methods of working.
16. The teaching is very thorough across the curriculum and pupils achieve good standards in most subjects as a result. Teachers draw on and contribute to full and effective planning for each subject and this ensures good coverage of all aspects of the curriculum. Teachers are generally knowledgeable about what they teach and are well supported by subject co-ordinators and by opportunities for staff development. Teachers swap subjects in some sessions, so that one teacher teaches art, for example, to both classes in a year group, making use of teachers' interest and expertise.
17. Many of the staff have lacked expertise in information and communication technology but are now participating in training to remedy this.
18. The management of classes is very good. Teachers capitalise on pupils' positive attitudes and eagerness to learn while actively fostering good behaviour, co-operation, independence and responsibility. They explain clearly, questioning pupils well to check their understanding and encouraging them to express their own ideas. Time is well used and lessons proceed at a good pace. Work is matched at least to the level expected nationally for each age group. In subjects such as mathematics and science, however, not enough consideration is given to the pitch of work for the most able to ensure that their thinking is extended as far as possible.
19. Carefully-targeted teaching helps lower attaining pupils and those with special needs to make good progress, often catching up lost ground. Teachers draw up clear and well-focused individual education plans for pupils who require them, and pursue the targets set for these pupils in their teaching. Part-time support teachers work with lower attaining pupils, for example providing a well-taught and effective programme of additional literacy support in Year 3. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the teaching of this programme, and also to the support of individuals and groups within lessons. Very supportive arrangements are made to ensure that pupils with specific needs are able to participate fully and to learn successfully.
20. Teachers mark work thoroughly. They are increasing their focus on helping pupils, through marking, to improve specific aspects of their work. The setting of individual targets for pupils is beginning, mainly in writing. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed in literacy and numeracy, though the information from standardised tests and assessments is not yet being fully used to ensure that sights are set appropriately high for individuals and classes. Short tests are used to check specific learning, for example in geography and history, but more systematic assessment is needed in science in order to identify the levels at which pupils are achieving. There is insufficient tracking of pupils' progress and achievement in information and communication technology as they move through the school.
21. Homework generally complements pupils' work in school well, preparing pupils for work to come and providing practice and reinforcement of what has been learned previously. For example, pupils planned the writing of a myth in school, based on their study of Greek myths, and then completed it at home, benefiting from the opportunity to elaborate their ideas at length. Pupils are clear about what is expected and homework diaries, introduced this year, are contributing to this.

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

22. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which fully meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, and religious education is provided in accordance with the local Agreed Syllabus. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively. The planning of subjects takes full account of the coverage of work expected in each year group.
23. The school is concerned to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, and equal opportunity to succeed in learning. This concern is reflected in its policies and practice. For example, the school monitors the achievement of boys and girls and takes action where needed, for example taking account of boys' reading preferences, and helping girls to achieve better in science. Pupils receive individual musical tuition on a rota which ensures that they do not regularly miss the same lesson. Teaching groups are arranged with the needs of all pupils in mind. Pairs of large classes are split into three smaller groups for some sessions. This particularly benefits lower attaining pupils where they follow a programme of work closely matched to their needs, as in Year 3 literacy. Pupils are set for mathematics from Year 4, but the level of work across the sets is not sufficiently differentiated to ensure that higher attaining pupils are fully challenged.
24. The curriculum is made particularly relevant through the way that local, national and international issues, such as the effect of local parking arrangements, or the impact of the recent Indian earthquake, are investigated and discussed. The school provides appropriate sex education and drugs awareness education. Personal, health and social education is well developed within the curriculum, supported by participation in the 'Healthy Schools' project, though a programme of teaching through the school has yet to be formalised.
25. The curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of learning opportunities beyond the classroom, a strength which was also identified at the last inspection. Residential visits are organised for Year 4 and Year 6 pupils. Pupils in all years visit local and regional places of historical and geographical interest. For example, younger pupils visit the River Blackwater and the Roman museum at Reading, while older pupils visit Wellington College and enjoy a 'Victorian day' at a local Victorian museum and schoolroom. The school provides a good range of lunchtime and after school clubs, mainly for older pupils. These include choir, stamp club and a magazine club as well as a variety of sports clubs depending on the season. The school hall is used for an after-school club, run by parents, on three days a week, which approximately 30 pupils attend each day.
26. The curriculum is also enhanced by visitors invited to the school. These include local artists, science theatre groups, an African tribal music group and representatives of different faiths. Pupils are taught cycling proficiency and older pupils take part in the community police awareness week. The whole school participates annually in a Curriculum Week, following a non-statutory theme such as 'a journey back through time', and this is much appreciated by pupils, parents and governors.
27. The school has developed appropriate links with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. Teachers from that school make visits to Oaklands and pupils attend familiarisation days at their new school. The school works well with the local cluster of primary schools to share curriculum development issues. New initiatives are being taken to extend liaison with the adjoining infant school, from which pupils transfer, in order to assist pupils' smooth progression. Subject co-ordinators are working to develop continuity in curriculum planning. More remains to be done, for example to ensure a full and timely transfer of assessment information and to develop reciprocal visiting by teachers and the shared moderation of work.
28. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory.
29. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well. Assemblies are led sensitively and sympathetically, sometimes involving outside speakers. The special character of an act of

worship is emphasised by the playing of appropriate music, sometimes by a group of pupils, as pupils enter and leave the hall for assembly. Hymns and songs are sung enthusiastically and expressively. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the assembly theme and to apply it to their own circumstances, for example through the saying of prayers. All these elements make the daily act of collective worship an important spiritual occasion. In religious education, pupils' work on Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Judaism gives them a good appreciation of the spiritual values and beliefs of these world faiths. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of wonder, for example as they explore the means of conveying in words the beauty and majesty of winter scenes.

30. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school has clear aims which include promoting positive values such as honesty, confidence, respect for others and self esteem. A strength of the school is the sharing of these values by all the adults in the school community, and the consistent and sensitive way in which pupils are treated. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are well aware of the rewards and sanctions that are part of the agreed code of behaviour and readily accept the boundaries which this provides. Much of the discipline in the school is maintained through pupils' own awareness of what is reasonable and unreasonable, rather than a rigid adherence to the behaviour code. Pupils are also well aware of the responsibilities of living in the school community and apply their perceptions of fairness and honesty in discussing issues which are important to them.
31. Pupils' social development is strongly cultivated. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility within the school community, for example as house captains or school building monitors. Pupils help to prepare for and take part in morning assembly. The school has plans to extend opportunities through the creation of a school council. Residential visits help pupils to develop their social skills away from the home setting and to take further responsibility for their own welfare. Pupils visit other schools and places in the community, and take part in football and netball matches. Older pupils' appreciation of citizenship is developed as they take part in challenges associated with the police awareness week. Pupils' wider social responsibility is developed well as they contribute to local and national charities. Harvest produce is donated to a local homeless charity and pupils sometimes devise and organise their own responses to national charity appeals.
32. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are made aware of the importance of their own culture. They celebrate the main Christian festivals and take part in local events such as the Crowthorne Carnival. Older pupils have a good appreciation of literature and they listen to a variety of recorded music. The school choir takes part in local festivals and has also joined in a combined choir performance at the Albert Hall. Individual pupils have entered local poetry competitions. Pupils learn about the cultures of people in different periods, such as the Ancient Greeks and the Tudors, and in different places, including India. The school has a collection of musical instruments from other countries, and a dance group promoting African tribal music has visited the school. Pupils are aware of other faiths within the community and take a lively interest in the world around them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The previous inspection found that the school supported its pupils well. Over the intervening four years, this has improved further and the educational and personal support provided for pupils is now very good. Teachers and non-teaching staff work very well together and all members of staff do their best to ensure that pupils are looked after carefully during the school day and that their personal and medical needs are met in full.
34. There are good procedures for assessing the standard of pupils' work and for monitoring the progress they are making. The majority of pupils join from the neighbouring infant school and links between the two schools are strengthening. Lower attaining pupils are identified at the time of transfer and given effective additional literacy support in Year 3. Pupils' special educational needs are very carefully diagnosed, and great care is taken in ensuring that pupils receive the additional support they need from teachers and learning support assistants. Staff have a good understanding of specific learning difficulties or disabilities and how to deal with them.

35. As pupils move through the school, teachers use an appropriate range of assessment methods to check how well pupils are learning. Individual target setting is currently being introduced for all pupils, with an initial focus on writing. The school is developing its use of information from standardised tests to set targets for individuals and groups. There is more to be done in using assessment throughout the school to identify pupils' progress and potential, and to guide teaching.
36. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are largely informal but, nevertheless, effective. Despite the fact that classes are large, teachers know their pupils well and members of staff liaise closely in order to ensure that any emerging problems are identified at an early stage. Circle time has recently been introduced and this provides a forum when pupils may choose to discuss matters that are troubling them. In addition, personal, social and health education is effectively taught within science and religious education. Pupils are appropriately warned of the dangers of drug misuse. The high quality educational and personal support provided by this school helps pupils to make good progress in all areas of the curriculum and to achieve a high standard of work.
37. A strong emphasis is placed on good behaviour and the procedures used to ensure that standards remain high are very effective. Pupils who have done particularly well in their work or those who have, for example, been especially helpful or considerate may be rewarded with an individual certificate. House points are awarded for academic and non-academic achievements and for all aspects of good work or behaviour. Members of staff provide consistently good examples of how to behave and there is an unspoken understanding of the type of behaviour expected.
38. Procedures for monitoring attendance are very good. Registers are carefully completed by teaching staff and are thoroughly reviewed each fortnight by the governors. The attendance record of each pupil is monitored and checked. Great care is taken when authorising absence and all absences are scrupulously followed up. Parents are regularly reminded of the need to avoid booking family holidays during the term, although some still do so.
39. The procedures for promoting child protection are good. Routine health and safety procedures are very good and risk assessment is well established. Statutory requirements are met in full.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The previous inspection found the partnership between home and school to be strong and this continues to be the case.
41. This school places great emphasis on working closely with parents. It works hard to ensure that parents are kept closely informed about the day-to-day life of the school as well as the progress made by their children. Parents respond positively to these overtures and hold the school in very high regard. They are particularly impressed with the standard of behaviour and are confident that the school expects their children to work hard and to do their best. Parents like the way in which the school is led and managed and are pleased that their children enjoy coming to school. Some concerns, however, were expressed about the range of activities provided outside lessons and the provision of information about children's progress, particularly when they are new to the school. The inspection found there to be a good range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of information provided for parents compares very well with other schools.
42. There is a formal consultation evening in the autumn and spring terms when which parents are invited to discuss any aspect of their child's personal or academic development. In addition, teachers are very flexible in arranging to meet parents to discuss any concerns as and when they emerge. Each half term, parents in each year group receive an outline of the work that will be taught in each subject. This advance notice helps to keep parents in touch with what is going on at school so that they can support their child's learning. Annual reports contain detailed comments and give a very clear idea of how each child is progressing. The school prospectus and governors' annual report contain relevant and interesting information about the day-to-day life of the school. Although the school organises information evenings, for example about the literacy and numeracy hours, these are not usually very well attended.

43. Parents are keen to contribute to school life and offer very generous support in a number of ways. For example, they regularly hear their children read at home and encourage them to complete their homework on time. The newly introduced homework diaries are used very well and provide a valuable channel of communication between home and school. Attendance at parents' meetings is very good and the parent teacher association is very active. The various fundraising and social events organised, such as the Summer Fete and Christmas Fayre, are very well supported by parents and the local community. Significant funds have been raised and a large amount has recently been put towards the new computer suite, creating a very useful facility for the school. As well as contributing to the provision of learning resources, parents also fund one of the learning support assistants. Numerous parents regularly help in classrooms and offer well-informed support to the pupils. The impact of parents' support for their children's learning at home is very positive. Their involvement contributes to pupils' interest in learning and high standard of work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. The school is very well led and managed and there has been further improvement since the last inspection. It school seeks to provide 'a high quality of education which meets the needs of each child' and this aim is pursued consistently in its policies and practice. The headteacher provides thoughtful and tenacious leadership, steadily steering the school's development with a clear sense of educational direction. She knows pupils and their parents well and is alert to individual needs and responsive to parents' concerns.
45. The deputy headteacher and senior staff give strong support in fostering effective teamwork and the development of staff is given a high priority. Subject co-ordinators are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and generally very effective in developing the provision for their subject. They contribute well to the quality of curriculum planning which is a strength of the school. The school has implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies effectively and revised its curriculum in order to keep up to date with the requirements of the National Curriculum's programmes of study.
46. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well, using the expertise of governors effectively within its committee structure, and helping to determine the schools priorities. Governors maintain a well-informed oversight of the school's work and several work frequently in school as volunteers. Co-ordinators make regular presentations to governors about aspects of the curriculum and this helps the governing body in its decision making. The school development plan clearly identifies what needs to be done and how to do it.
47. The management of numbers and space poses a major challenge for the school. Inventive use is made of the available accommodation, as seen in the conversion of small spaces for storage or use as a medical room, and the creation of a computer suite. Decisions about class organisation are carefully considered in order to achieve the best conditions for learning. This is seen in the re-grouping of two large classes in a year group into three for practical science, or to meet the needs of different ability groups in literacy and numeracy. Full use is made of the additional 'terrapin' classroom, but space for work with small groups remains very limited, despite resourceful planning of the school timetable.
48. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well managed by the headteacher, special needs co-ordinator and support teachers, in close liaison with class teachers. Needs are identified early and precisely, and progress is closely monitored. Teachers and learning support assistants are deployed well with a view to maximising learning opportunities for all pupils.
49. The school is developing procedures for evaluating its performance. Standardised assessment information is now being collected for tracking progress from year to year. This information is being used to set challenging targets for pupils by the time they leave. It is not yet being used to the full to set targets for progress in all year groups, to set sights high for pupils of all abilities and to guide teaching and learning. Classroom observation is being extended to strengthen the evaluation of teaching and learning in all subjects and the refinement of good practice. The school makes thorough and supportive arrangements for the induction of new teachers and the mentoring of students in initial teacher training.

50. The school is well organised and administered. Financial planning is good and principles of best value are applied in making decisions about the best strategic use of the school's resources. A surplus carried forward has been put to good use in developing the new computer suite and extending the provision of learning support. The school's expenditure per pupil is broadly average and it provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build on its strengths and to improve further the school should:

- (1) Use information from assessment more fully to set sights high for all pupils by:
- checking more closely the level at which work is pitched, particularly in mathematics and science;
 - expecting more pupils to achieve standards which are high for their age;
 - enriching and extending learning opportunities for the most able;
 - involving all staff in tracking pupils' progress, identifying underachievement and setting targets.
- (paragraphs 4,7,18,20,23,35,49,64,71)
- (2) Develop the use of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects by:
- tracking pupils' progress in the acquisition of ICT skills through the school;
 - identifying the use of ICT within subject plans and developing the necessary software resources;
 - extending pupils' use of ICT, particularly for finding information and handling data.
- (paragraphs 6,55,61,77,82,94-98)
- (3) Further extend the developing liaison with the infant school to ensure continuity in learning by:
- securing the early transfer of assessment information;
 - arranging reciprocal classroom observation and moderation of work;
 - strengthening continuity for pupils between Years 2 and 3.
- (paragraph 27)

The school should also consider the following minor points:

- keeping the marking system under review (paragraph 56);
- developing the programme for personal, social and health education (paragraph 24).
- continuing to discourage holiday absences (paragraphs 13,38).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

56

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15	65	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	-	272
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	74

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	43	26	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	38	36	39
	Girls	23	18	23
	Total	61	54	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (90)	78 (85)	90 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	34	38	41
	Girls	23	23	25
	Total	57	61	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (82)	88 (85)	96 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	267
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.4
Average class size	34.0

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	460710
Total expenditure	460523
Expenditure per pupil	1687
Balance brought forward from previous year	41071
Balance carried forward to next year	41258

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	272
Number of questionnaires returned	158

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	43	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	33	58	6	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	53	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	64	13	1	0
The teaching is good.	42	50	3	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	46	18	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	4	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	50	13	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	29	1	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	46	3	0	3

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

19	46	23	6	6
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PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

51. Standards in English are very good. This is reflected in the results of national tests for eleven year olds which were well above the national average in 1998, 1999 and 2000. Pupils who took the tests in 2000 achieved results above the average for similar schools and they achieved well in relation to their test results at seven, particularly in reading. In 2000, the school fell just short of its target of 90 per cent of pupils reaching at least Level 4 and the current Year 6 are on course to achieve a target set slightly higher.
52. Pupils by the age of eleven achieve high standards in speaking and listening and in reading. Their writing is good, and is improving rapidly as a result of the school's increased emphasis on this area. A high proportion of pupils throughout the school are achieving at least the standard expected for their age in literacy and many are achieving well beyond this. Boys and girls are achieving equally well. This reflects an effort on the part of the school to provide books and to use teaching methods that capture boys' interest and raise their achievement. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in literacy and make good progress as a result. This is helped by the early identification of pupils who are falling behind, the provision of good quality additional literacy support in Year 3, and by effective 'booster' support in Year 6.
53. High standards of speaking and listening support pupils' learning and achievement across the curriculum. Whilst there is no planned programme to develop speaking and listening skills, or assessment of attainment, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their skills. Pupils listen very attentively when their teachers are explaining and giving instructions. They ask sensible questions to clarify their understanding and extend their knowledge further. They enjoy talking with visitors such as the children's authors and poets who visited during 'Book Week'. Pupils have opportunities to speak to larger audiences, for example taking part in school performances, reading in church services or participating in the local poetry festival. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy reading plays, and taking part in role-play. They use their listening and speaking skills well when working in groups, for example when planning and carrying out science investigations. Year 6 pupils confidently debated, as part of their geography study, whether planning permission should be given to build a hotel on an area of unspoilt coastline. They listened keenly to each other's point of view and presented their arguments with conviction.
54. Pupils achieve very good standards in reading. A high proportion of pupils read at least at the level expected for their age and many achieve well beyond this, reading widely and ambitiously. Pupils have high levels of comprehension and a great love of books. They read aloud fluently and with expression. By Year 6, pupils knowledgeably discuss different authors. For example, one pupil compared a trilogy by one author she had previously read with his latest book. They have reasoned preferences for different styles and genres showing wide-ranging reading habits. The reading of most pupils includes a good range of modern fiction writing. The reading of higher attaining pupils encompasses books by authors such as Arthur Conan Doyle, J.R Tolkein and Jules Verne. Apart from their independent reading of whole books, pupils respond with enthusiasm to a range of texts, including modern poetry and Shakespeare's plays, during their literacy hour work. They show an understanding of the most significant ideas and structures. Pupils find library books using the Dewey system and use the library effectively to support their learning. They employ skills of skimming and scanning for information from non-fiction books, for example when finding out about aspects of Tudor life. Pupils who have computers at home know how to find information connected with their school topics on the Internet. However, because of a lack of access in school to CD ROMs or to the Internet, pupils have learnt much less at school about accessing information stored in this way than in many schools.
55. Writing is good and standards are improving further because of focused teaching and marking and the development of creative writing in literacy sessions which are organised in smaller groups. Specific individual targets set by pupils and teachers to raise standards are proving very effective.

Throughout the school, pupils produce very neat work, increasingly using pen as they become older, and work is presented well. However, although taught the correct methods to do so, several older pupils do not regularly produce joined up handwriting. Pupils draft and revise their work, showing improvements in style and punctuation in their final copy. Pupils often extend or edit work and discuss ideas with their parents during homework sessions, and the support from home reinforces pupils' learning. Spelling is good and pupils make a great effort to learn the words specified in the literacy programme. They are keen to do well in their spelling tests and they are skilled in using a dictionary or thesaurus when appropriate. Pupils write in a variety of different styles, such as autobiography, verse and play scripts. They use language precisely and for best effect. Pairs of Year 5 pupils produced very beautiful descriptive writing about winter, showing a sensitive use of language to describe their feelings. Pupils use bullet points effectively for note taking and write precisely when recording science experiments. Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of punctuation and grammar, knowing, for example, when to use brackets and dashes, and what constitutes a conditional sentence. Pupils rarely draft, edit or present their work using wordprocessing skills, because there are few opportunities to do so. However, a few older pupils use a wordprocessing computer program very well during a club time to produce a school magazine.

56. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons seen, mainly good and occasionally very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have a good level of knowledge and expertise in teaching literacy and this is strengthened by opportunities for staff development, such as recent training for all teachers on raising standards in writing. Teachers now mark work by highlighting the parts of pupils' writing that meet the objectives set, as well as putting thought-provoking comments at the end of work to enable pupils to recognise what works and to improve further. However, this new style of positive marking means that some common spelling mistakes remain unchecked in pupils' work. The school recognises this and is evaluating its procedures. Teachers regularly assess pupils' independent writing in relation to National Curriculum levels in order to identify where further work is needed. Teachers' clear focus on writing skills is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. In reading, teachers make good use of a wide range of reading material, including the school's graded scheme. They continue to listen to pupils read individually, in addition to literacy hour work, with the help of learning support assistants and volunteers. They set reading tasks for homework and ensure that pupils read regularly at home. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, use questioning skills well and explain points clearly. They have good relationships with the class and encourage the pupils in their learning. Where teaching is very good, a high level of challenge engages all the pupils, the lesson proceeds at a cracking pace and the teacher's enthusiasm and love of language is infectious. On occasions, the pace of learning slows when pupils move from whole class work to group activities and take too long settling down. At times, lower attaining pupils in a large mixed-ability class become bewildered by work which they do not understand.
57. Teachers use homework well to extend classroom learning, whether it is to learn specific spellings, find information from books or finish a piece of writing. Teachers ensure that pupils literacy skills are used well across the curriculum, supporting learning in subjects such as geography, history and science.
58. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinator who is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Teaching in literacy has been monitored and this has helped to ensure consistency and to raise standards. Strengths in the school's teaching have been recognised by the local education authority and used as the basis for some training materials for other teachers. The library co-ordinator works hard to keep the library and book stock in the school up to date and in good order. Pupils help to select books for class libraries. Learning in literacy is enriched by many additional opportunities ranging from visits by actors, authors and poets, to book clubs, book fairs and the production of a school magazine.

MATHEMATICS

59. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds, results were above the national average, but broadly average when compared with those in similar schools. These results were lower than in the two previous years. Since 1996, pupils have continued to do well overall, but the gap between the school's results and those of all school nationally has narrowed because of the

national improvement. In 2000, the school missed the target of 88 per cent of pupils reaching at least Level 4 as only 78 per cent did so, though a number of pupils fell short of Level 4 by only a few marks. The school is on course for better results this year. It is aiming for 90 per cent of pupils to reach at least Level 4, which is a realistic though challenging target.

60. The work seen on inspection confirms that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The school has analysed pupils' strengths and weaknesses in the 2000 national tests and has collected information about pupils' attainment in tests at the end of each year. Teachers are providing work more closely related to pupils' needs, and especially the needs of lower attaining pupils. However, information from assessment is not yet being used fully to ensure that teachers are sufficiently ambitious for pupils of all abilities, and that weaknesses in attainment are recognised and remedied early.
61. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of number are very good. Pupils of all ages use a range of strategies when approaching mental calculations. They apply their knowledge in investigations and respond well to challenges, for example when calculating discounts, converting currencies and exploring number patterns. Pupils confidently describe and justify their methods of working and recording. They ask thoughtful questions when learning new concepts or skills such as estimating angles or measuring to within one degree. Older pupils correctly relate fractions, decimals and percentages to each other and have a good understanding of ratio. They accurately calculate the area and perimeter of circles and know the names of most three-dimensional shapes. Pupils know how to collect and record data and correctly interpret a good range of representations, including bar and pie charts, pictograms and line graphs. Year 6 pupils are beginning to recognise that statistics can be represented in different ways in order to convey different messages. However, this work is not sufficiently extended through the application of information and communication technology.
62. All pupils are keen to learn and want to achieve. Pupils are making better progress than at the time of the last inspection. They achieve well in lessons and pupils develop good work habits, concentrate well and persevere. These positive attitudes help them to learn. They approach tasks confidently and organise their work and resources sensibly when working independently and within small groups. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from learning support assistants and make good progress in relation to their previous attainment. Individual education plans are drawn up with specific targets in numeracy where this has been identified as an area of weakness.
63. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good and it has improved since the last inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of the concepts and skills they teach and provide stimulating activities to which pupils respond enthusiastically. Explanations and instructions are clear, enabling most pupils to understand new concepts quickly and make good progress in learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own methods of working and to organise resources independently. Teachers' marking, constructive comments and searching questions provide opportunities for pupils to consider ways in which they can improve their work.
64. The co-ordinator has ensured that the subject is well resourced and appropriate materials are available for all aspects of work. The mathematics curriculum provides good coverage of all attainment targets. It closely reflects the expectations of the numeracy framework and offers pupils a wide range of learning experiences. Thorough planning provides opportunities to revise, consolidate and develop pupils' knowledge and skills as they move up through the school. Assessment is used to check what pupils have learned. However, information from assessment is not used systematically to track the progress of all pupils over time and to identify underachievement. The pitch of work, particularly in sets which are organised by ability from Year 4, is not sufficiently differentiated to take account of the progress more able pupils are capable of making. Although some pupils are achieving at a high level for their age, work is not planned consistently to challenge the thinking of higher attaining pupils.

SCIENCE

65. In the 2000 national tests for eleven year olds, results were above the national average, and average in comparison with similar schools. Ninety per cent of pupils reached Level 4, slightly fewer than in similar schools, while 42 per cent achieved Level 5, which was broadly in line with similar schools. These results were slightly lower than in previous years. Over the last four years, other schools have improved at a faster rate.
66. The work seen on inspection confirms that pupils achieve above average standards by the time they leave. In Year 6 and throughout the school, almost all pupils are achieving at least as well as expected for their age and many are achieving beyond this. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding in all areas of the science curriculum. Pupils draw on wide background knowledge in the course of their work in school and some are exceptionally knowledgeable and interested. Pupils are well skilled in planning and carrying out scientific investigations and drawing conclusions from their findings. The teaching of investigative science in three smaller groups re-organised from two large classes in each year group has helped to develop this strength. The school has worked effectively to improve the attainment of girls in science, and boys and girls are now achieving equally well.
67. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils learn well as a result. The teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils then were not given sufficient opportunity to devise their own experiments and this weakness has been very successfully remedied.
68. The teaching is based on a thorough scheme of work and is very well planned. Detailed lesson plans include the specific learning intended in each lesson and a list of key vocabulary to be introduced. Thorough planning ensures that concepts and skills are taught progressively throughout the school and that the work covers all the required elements of the subject in sufficient depth to promote a good level of understanding.
69. The teaching is interesting and pupils are managed well. A lesson for younger pupils, who were investigating the strength of different magnets, illustrated several features of good teaching. The pupils were given very clear instructions about the task, good links were made with their existing knowledge of materials, and they were constantly encouraged to be precise in their thinking, speaking and written recording.
70. Wherever possible, teachers approach topics through experimental work. This ensures that, as they get older, pupils develop a good understanding of fair testing and the importance of controlling different variables. This was demonstrated as older pupils investigated how different types of sugar dissolved in water, and were able to identify and control variables such as water temperature, grain size, number of stirs and time. Pupils were encouraged to discuss their work and to agree on their own investigational focus. Another strength of the teaching is that teachers insist on pupils thinking about their results. After enjoying the challenge of separating mixtures of sand, rice, paper clips and dried peas, younger pupils were asked by their teacher to justify their use of equipment and the order of their actions, and then to record each step carefully. Teaching was less effective at times when the teacher allowed pupils to make inappropriate comments in class discussion, undermining concentration on the task in hand, or when insufficient direction was given to groups as they worked.
71. Teachers are supported by a clear policy and an outline of the work to be covered in each year group. Assessment tests are used well to check on pupils' understanding at the end of each topic. However, assessment is not related to National Curriculum levels and insufficient consideration is given to the level at which the work should be pitched. This means that it is difficult for teachers to gauge the progress pupils are making or to ensure that more able pupils are challenged to achieve their full potential. Not enough use is made of information and communication technology, particularly in recording and analysing the findings of investigations. Resources are good, and they are well organised and maintained. Learning is enriched by visits from theatre groups who perform drama based on scientific themes. The school's environmental area is used well to support work on life processes.

ART AND DESIGN

72. Pupils reach good standards in art and design by the age of eleven, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The curriculum is well planned to cover the full range of work expected in Key Stage 2 and a reasonable amount of time is allocated for the subject. The teaching is carefully organised in units and is developed in depth over a number of weeks. As a result, pupils become involved in elaborating their ideas and improving their work, often thinking about it at home, as shown when they brought in carefully-selected textured materials for use in a collage.
73. Pupils develop their work from a range of starting points. These are related to work in other subjects in ways which enhance pupils' knowledge and extend their skills. For example, pupils in Year 4 have learned about Tudor monarchs through studying portraits and this has led into copying pictures and making their own. These portraits show keen observation and careful composition and a good understanding of proportion. Learning in art and design is regularly enriched by visits, as when pupils visited 'Arts Place 2000' and were introduced to Tudor arts such as the making of stained glass windows and illuminated manuscripts. Visitors and volunteers give pupils expert help, for example in printing and working with textiles.
74. Sketchbooks are used in each year. Observational drawing is encouraged, and designs are thought through in preparation for the making of images or artefacts. However, the quality of drawing, as shown in pupils' designs and illustrations, does not develop consistently throughout the school. The standard of work in pupils' sketchbooks, and the extent of pupils' mastery of drawing techniques, vary widely.
75. Pupils are introduced to a good range of materials and techniques and become confident in making choices in order to express their ideas effectively. They learn to mix paint, and older pupils use watercolours well. Pupils work confidently with clay, for example making tiles in Year 3 and clay pots in Year 5. The school benefits from having a kiln and pupils are able to glaze and fire their work. Work with textiles is well developed and pupils in Year 6 used fabrics imaginatively in constructing collages based on Greek myths, experimenting with colour and texture. Pupils have good access to visual resources such as reproductions of well-known paintings. They develop knowledge of the work of a few famous artists, as seen in landscape pictures developed in the style of David Hockney. Art and design from other cultures is explored, for example in making African masks.
76. The quality of teaching is generally good. Teachers swap subjects so that one teacher teaches art and design to both classes in each year group, making use of teachers' interest and expertise. The teaching is purposeful and well organised. Teachers intervene effectively to help pupils think about and improve their work. Pupils enjoy learning and strive to achieve a good end product. The knowledge and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator is reflected in the richness of the learning opportunities provided for pupils, the quality of resources and the support available for other staff.
77. Pupils learn to make simple pictures and to design titles using art and design programs on the computer, but information and communication technology is not widely used to extend learning in art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

78. Pupils reach a good standard by the age of eleven across a broad range of work. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Work in design and technology alternates with art and design, and the subject is allocated about an afternoon a week for half of each term. Each unit of work is well-planned to develop pupils' skills in investigating, designing and making products. Pupils learn to plan ahead and refine their ideas, to handle tools and materials confidently, and to achieve a good finish to their work.
79. Design and technology books have been introduced for recording each stage of work. These are generally well used and show the evolution of work from initial design brief to evaluation of an end product. However, there is insufficient development in the quality of this recording through the school, in terms of the accuracy of measurement, the elaboration of designs from different angles and the rigourousness of evaluation.

80. There is a good balance in pupils' work between the acquisition of skills and their application in context. Work in progress and completed work from previous terms show that pupils' skills in making develop well through the school. Simple techniques such as the construction of a wooden frame are applied subsequently in making more sophisticated moving toys and vehicles. Pupils' knowledge of electrical circuits is applied and extended in the controlling of light, sound and movement, for example in making fairground rides.
81. Teaching was good or very good in the lessons seen. Teachers anticipated what pupils would find hard and ensured that pupils had the necessary skills to complete work to a good standard. For example, in Year 3, pupils were taught how to measure and to cut wood, with a strong emphasis on accuracy and the safe use of tools. Pupils enjoy their work, developing their ideas confidently, responsibly and independently and taking pride in their achievements.
82. The subject is well planned and resourced. The work done in design and technology complements work in art and design well, particularly in the attention given to achieving a high quality of decorative finish. However, there are some areas of overlap which need further thought to ensure the progressive development of skills and the best total use of time. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology in supporting and extending pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

83. Standards in geography are good at the end of Key Stage 2 and have improved since the last inspection.
84. Pupils demonstrate well-developed mapping skills when identifying a range of journeys. These include the route from the school to the library, the roads used in travelling from the school to the Isle of Wight, and the countries over which they would fly if visiting a location they have been studying. Pupils' maps clearly identify features such as rivers, coastlines, hills and marshes. They confidently interpret contours on a map and explain why certain types of features determine land use, for example when discussing a suitable location for a new settlement. Pupils conduct traffic surveys within the local area and use their results to produce graphs. These stimulate interesting discussions concerning traffic movement, potential dangers caused by parked cars and comparisons between major and minor roads.
85. Pupils compare habitats and ways of life in different countries. They have a good understanding of how climate and natural features influence people's everyday lives. Pupils correctly name the oceans and continents. They keep regularly updated records of major events and incidents which occur around the world. This provides excellent opportunities for the extension of pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Older pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues such as pollution, erosion, coastline protection and appropriate use of land. Their knowledge is well demonstrated in mature, thoughtful and lively debate. Pupils also understand the effects of weather and sea on the environment, recognising features such as rock falls, landslides, gullies and coastline erosion.
86. Pupils show a keen interest in geography and approach their work with enthusiasm. They make good use of the knowledge and skills they are developing and reveal a good level of understanding when discussing their tasks. Pupils work with thought and care and make good progress as they move up the school.
87. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers demonstrate well their interest in and knowledge of the subject. Tasks are carefully planned to stimulate pupils' interest and extend their factual knowledge and understanding of a wide range of issues. Teachers encourage pupils to work with care and accuracy and to think about the significance of the information which they obtain from books, photographs, maps, newspapers and surveys. Pupils are given opportunities to develop their research skills and to work independently or in pairs on projects. Their work is regularly assessed and constructive comments help pupils to develop their knowledge and skills further.
88. A good scheme of work is in place and geography is now taught by each class teacher. Planning has recently been reviewed and continuity between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is being

established. The school has a good range of resources, including appropriate software which is to be extended further when suitable material becomes available. Pupils' achievements are assessed through testing, discussions and problem-solving activities. The information gained from these enables teachers to check the progress being made and to plan accordingly.

HISTORY

89. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
90. Pupils have a good sense of chronology and of change over time. They make thoughtful comparisons when looking at styles of dress, homes, work, education and leisure activities in different periods. They learn how and why the Romans invaded Britain and accurately describe the changes they brought to town and country life. While studying life in Tudor times pupils use artefacts, costumes and wall pictures well to make deductions. They use well-informed arguments when expressing opinions about a range of aspects of Tudor life. Older pupils demonstrate a good understanding of Victorian attitudes. They describe how advertising styles have changed over time and understand the main differences in life between rich and poor Victorian homes. Pupils compare maps of ancient and modern Greece. They know that the Marathon and Olympics are legacies from Ancient Greece. They understand that myths and stories about Greek gods were often used to explain natural events and can explain symbols associated with these gods.
91. Pupils make good use of their research skills in order to gain knowledge from a range of resources including software, photos, books and posters. Pupils willingly share materials and handle them carefully. Many pupils are keen to extend their research at home and this interest is fostered by teachers. Discussions with pupils reveal good levels of retention of the information they have gained. The quality of pupils' work and the way in which it is presented are consistently good.
92. The teaching is good. Teachers' effective questioning techniques encourage children to challenge information and make use of a variety of sources in order to confirm what they have learnt. Hands-on experiences are arranged whenever possible. Pupils benefit significantly from opportunities provided at the Reading Museum, residential trips to Ufton Court, a visit to a Victorian 'schoolroom' and talks given by outside visitors. Teachers' own interest in history engenders enthusiasm within the classroom. Their clear explanations bring topics alive and ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of the periods they study.
93. There is a good broad scheme of work in place. Careful planning ensures that pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences as they move through the school and that their learning is checked as they complete units of work. Resources are well organised and appropriate. The co-ordination of the subject across the school is effective and contributes to the good standards achieved.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. By the time they leave the school, most pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age. This was also the judgement of the previous inspection. There has been significant improvement in the resourcing of the subject with the equipping of a computer suite which became fully operational from September 2000. However, its use has not had time to impact fully on the standards achieved, particularly in Year 6. There is underachievement in this year group which is largely masked by the very good access to facilities, including the use of e-mail and the internet, which many pupils have at home.
95. By the time they leave the school, pupils have a sound range of wordprocessing skills. Older pupils are confident with functions such as highlighting and moving text, changing the font size and colour and importing pictures into their work. Younger pupils' work on databases and spreadsheets has been thorough and well planned. During the inspection, one class was confidently adding information about minibeasts into a prepared database. Another group was experimenting with branching databases. They were able to define the requirements for a range of data fields, by deciding the questions which might need to be asked. Interesting work relating to this topic was displayed in the pupils' classroom. However, across the school, there are limited

opportunities for pupils to apply skills in information and communication technology to their work in other subjects and there is a lack of cross-curricular planning to support this. For example, the work on branching databases required a collection of minibeast data, but this did not fit in with the current science topic.

96. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Much of the teaching in the computer suite is provided by the technician and this teaching is effective. Specific vocabulary and techniques are introduced clearly and pupils are given good opportunity to refine and reinforce their skills by good access to computers. However, there is a lack of specific lesson planning to ensure that pupils' learning is built progressively. The development of skills from year to year is not clearly planned. For example, there was little difference between the work of pupils in Years 3 and 4 on a similar topic. Links between the work of the information technology technician in the computer suite and that of the class teacher are not sufficiently defined. Although work in the computer suite is broadly linked to topics being pursued in class, the application of skills within other subjects is not systematically planned.
97. The resourcing of the subject is now good. The provision of the computer suite has extended opportunities for pupils and the pupils also have access to computers in their own classrooms. The computer suite can accommodate up to 20 pupils, though not a whole class and this poses a timetabling challenge. However, the school arranges groups and deploys staff well in seeking to make the best possible use of this valuable facility. For pupils in Year 6, the annual residential visit also provides opportunities to develop skills in information and communication technology. Pupils have access to activities including the use of a digital camera, picture animation, the use of spreadsheets and the programming of robotic toys. A few older pupils use their computer skills well as they write, edit and publish items for the school magazine. At the time of the inspection, the school's internet access had only very recently been established and no pupils had yet had the opportunity of using it.
98. There is currently no whole-school system for recording pupils' attainment or the progress they make from year to year in acquiring skills. Staff expertise is being developed through appropriate in-service training, but the work of the subject co-ordinator has had limited impact on teaching and learning across the school.

MUSIC

99. Few lessons were seen during the inspection, because of the timetabling of specialist music teaching, but a range of musical activities were observed. Pupils sing well. The very many pupils who take part in the choir and have individual instrumental tuition achieve high standards. Music makes a strong contribution to the life of the school.
100. The singing in assembly and at choir practice is enthusiastic and tuneful. Pupils sing with great expression, becoming louder or softer in response to the music, the meaning of words and the conductor's wishes. They can sing a round in three parts. Year 6 pupils sing in African chant style and know the length of different notes. Year 5 pupils, working in small groups, compose and play instrumental expressions about planets, using symbols on a musical map. A recorder ensemble demonstrated good skills at playing in harmony during a music assembly.
101. A specialist part-time teacher takes all the music lessons, except in one Year 5 class. In a music assembly, the specialist teacher worked at a very good pace in practising hymns and songs with the whole school, picking out those parts that needed improvement. As a result, pupils improved their performance and thoroughly enjoyed doing so. They responded very well to her enthusiasm, lively approach and high expectations. The school benefits from the musical expertise of a number of staff and the subject makes an important contribution to the overall life of the school.
102. The leadership and management of music are good. The new part-time specialist teacher is about to take over the co-ordinator's role and has already completely rewritten the music scheme of work. Ongoing assessment of pupils' achievements is reflected in comments in the end-of-year report. However, as yet there is no assessment which relates pupils' standards to National Curriculum attainment levels. The school has good resources. Work in music makes a strong contribution to pupils' appreciation of their own and other cultures.

103. Visiting musicians extend pupils' musical knowledge well. For example, teachers who give instrumental tuition also present concerts and talk about their instruments. Visiting groups such as a brass ensemble and percussionist encourage pupils to try out their instruments and ask questions. A fifth of pupils learn an instrument at school. The school is proud of the high standard of its choir, which has recently taken part in a concert at the Albert Hall. It also participates in the local 'police day' for the elderly and in the Crowthorne Music festival. At the Christmas church service and school productions, the choir and instrumentalists contribute to performances which are greatly appreciated by parents and visitors.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104. Pupils' attainment at the age of eleven is broadly in line with national expectations. Standards in gymnastics have improved since the last inspection.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed a good sense of balance and they control their movements well, especially in dance where they respond well to music and move with a good sense of rhythm. Pupils are beginning to use these skills in gymnastics. They create their own very appropriate warming up and cooling down activities and sensibly take turns to call out instructions for the rest of the class to follow. Pupils are learning to use a range of movements such as stretching, jumping, climbing and rolling to produce sequences both on and off large apparatus. They demonstrate good control as they change height, speed and direction. Although pupils work hard and persevere to improve their performance, many lack the level of stamina expected of pupils of this age. When practising skills needed in order to play basketball, pupils demonstrate satisfactory eye-hand co-ordination. They handle and control hockey sticks and balls well and quickly learn to dribble and pass accurately. They understand the importance of teamwork.
106. Pupils approach all activities with enthusiasm and all pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress. They listen carefully to instructions and are attentive when observing demonstrations. They are learning to evaluate each other's performances and offer constructive suggestions and encouragement when appropriate.
107. The quality of teaching is consistently satisfactory or better and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers are now more confident and plan lessons which are well structured. They provide opportunities for pupils to develop a good range of skills and encourage them to persevere until they achieve. Pupils are given responsibility for organising apparatus and all teachers ensure that pupils are aware of safety aspects when using or moving equipment. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good, pupils were given tasks to do but these were not extended to ensure that pupils steadily improved their performance. The teaching of physical education has benefited significantly from recent in-service training. The revision of the scheme of work and the new approach to lessons mean that provision for the subject is well set to continue to improve.
108. The subject is well resourced and pupils are given the opportunity to experience a wide range of sports including football, netball, basketball and hockey. Golf lessons are planned for the future. The school regularly plays friendly inter-school matches and participates in the District Athletic Events.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109. By the time they leave the school, most pupils achieve standards that are above those expected for their age by the local Agreed Syllabus. The standards achieved, and the quality of teaching in the subject, have improved since the last inspection.
110. The quality of teaching, and the quality of pupils' learning, are now good. Teachers make clear reference to the learning intended for each lesson in their planning and they use well-chosen resources to good effect. For example, in a lesson for older pupils about Sikhism, an appropriate section of an explanatory video was used well to show aspects of Sikh custom and lifestyle. Pupils were amazed at the length of the fabric making up a turban, and the difficulties young Sikh boys have in learning how it should be worn. Teachers introduce their lessons effectively and this helps to quickly gain pupils' interest and attention. For example, a lesson for younger pupils explored the reasons why different people had contrasting views of Jesus. This was set in context by asking pupils about their memories of a previous teacher and the evidence they had to substantiate them. This approach skilfully moved from the familiar to the more abstract.
111. The carefully-planned scheme of work ensures that pupils have a good understanding of important aspects of stories from the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. For example, older pupils talk about the Ten Commandments and know how Moses received them, and they know stories from the life of Jesus, such as the Good Samaritan or the Unforgiving Servant. Pupils also have a good appreciation of the special features of other world faiths, such as Sikhism, Hinduism and Judaism, and how they compare and contrast with aspects of Christian belief.
112. A strength of the teaching across the school is the sensitive way in which issues are discussed and pupils' contributions are valued. Discussions reinforce speaking and listening skills and help to widen pupils' perspectives. This was seen when older pupils considered the importance of some Hindu artefacts and were encouraged to widen their discussion to consider the impact of the recent earthquakes in India. Pupils made some very thoughtful, mature reflections on the problems of faith, religion and suffering. This approach positively supports the very good provision the school makes for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
113. Pupils' learning is reinforced effectively in a variety of ways. Pupils write in a range of styles, using their literacy skills well. For example, older pupils write eyewitness accounts of meetings with Jesus. They make illustrated comparisons of the creation stories of different faiths. Pupils devise and produce dramatic playlets about the call of the first disciples at the lakeside.
114. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who has recently been part of the working party involved in the revision of the local Agreed Syllabus. This has ensured that the school has had access to the most recently published local materials. The co-ordinator has helpfully devised the half-termly plans for each year group and liaises with teachers to ensure continuity of approach. Assessment opportunities are identified in the scheme of work and in teachers' planning, but the outcomes are not analysed or used systematically across the school. A checklist has recently been introduced, but this does not provide a clear picture of what pupils have achieved or the progress that they make. Overall, resources are good though there are limited Christian artefacts. Appropriate use is made of the local area to support the curriculum. For example, pupils visit a local synagogue, and members of other faiths and Christian denominations visit the school to talk to the pupils.