

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MATTHEW'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stroud

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115699

Headteacher: Mr P. Nicholas

Reporting inspector: Mrs K. Reed
17188

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th February 2002

Inspection number: 194038

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Road
Cainscross
Stroud
Gloucestershire

Postcode: GL5 4JE

Telephone number: 01453 764705

Fax number: 01453 762033

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. D. Sutch

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17188	Mrs K. Reed	Registered inspector	Science Design and Technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are the pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9545	Mr K. Greatorex	Lay inspector		How high are standards? 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?
6926	Mr G. Morris	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communication Technology	How well is the school led and managed?
27365	Mrs D. Bonnette	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Equal Opportunities Art Physical Education	

21396	Mr A. Cox	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs English Geography History Music	
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The inspection contractor was:

Milton Keynes LEA

Milton Keynes Council
Saxon Court
502 Avebury Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 3HS

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Matthew's is an aided Church of England Primary school situated in Cainscross, to the west of the centre of Stroud town and draws its' pupils mainly from this area. Currently there are 273 pupils (147 boys and 126 girls) on roll between the ages of four and eleven. Pupils are predominantly white and the proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (0.4 per cent) is very low. Attainment on entry is broadly average though locally the percentage of adults with higher education and the percentage of pupils in high social class households is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (4.5 per cent) is below the national average, though this may not be truly representative as there is no cooked meals service and so some parents do not necessarily register their eligibility. Twenty-seven per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is above the national average; the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly in line with the national average. The current headteacher has been in post for four terms.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. By Year 6 standards in mathematics and science are high and pupils achieve well. Standards in English are average. The new headteacher and staff form an effective team, and with the chair of governors and governing body work well to take the school forward. The quality of teaching overall is good and pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards achieved in mathematics and science in Year 6 and the progress pupils make in these subjects in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school and the relationships they form with teachers and one another.
- Attendance is very good; pupils love coming to school.
- Teachers' management of pupils is very good and contributes significantly to pupils' learning and the way in which they approach school.
- The moral and social development of pupils.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities and the way in which the curriculum is enhanced by opportunities for visits and contacts from the community.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing and the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1
- The provision for higher attaining pupils and the standards they achieve.
- A greater degree of focus in the school improvement plan linked to standards, and the role of the headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- The monitoring of curriculum provision and the way the curriculum is organised.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in April 1997 satisfactory improvement has been made. Pupils in the foundation stage continue to achieve the expected levels in most areas of experience and exceed them in personal and social development. Standards in English have been maintained and have improved in mathematics, science and design technology. Although a small number of unsatisfactory lessons were seen, the proportion of good and very good teaching has improved. The school now has an assessment policy and a range of tests to monitor pupils' progress. Strengths and weaknesses in performance are being identified. This policy is in the early stages of implementation and so the use of assessment to support pupils' progress is not fully developed. Standards in ICT and writing remain an issue for the school. In-service training has taken place and the quality of resources for English, design and technology and ICT have improved, though further resourcing is needed for ICT. Some monitoring and evaluating of pupils' work has taken place but this needs to be extended. The school has the capacity to sustain improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	D	C	E
Mathematics	C	C	A	A
Science	A	B	B	C

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

Similar schools comparisons are based upon schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals.

At the end of Year 6 performance in the core subjects generally over the last four years has been in line with the national trend. Taken separately, the performance of pupils in English was in line with the national trend whereas performance in mathematics and science exceeded the national trend. Inspectors found that pupils' reading and writing skills are broadly average. Handwriting is good and presentations skills are improving. The steps the school have taken to improve the quality of writing have yet to impact on standards. Inspectors found standards in English in Year 6 to be broadly at the national average and those in mathematics and science to be above the national average. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science. The school exceeded its targets for 2001 in all subjects.

Baseline assessment shows pupils are broadly average on entry. By the end of the Foundation Stage children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all areas and exceed them in personal, social and emotional development. In the 2001 tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' performance was close to the national average in reading but below the national average in writing and mathematics. Due to lack of challenge, too few pupils reach the higher level 3 in Year 2 in each of the subjects, which depresses the overall level of performance.

Higher attaining pupils could achieve more at all stages. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are a major strength and have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils sustain high levels of interest and concentration and take great pride in producing work of high

	quality.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the high standards expected of them, even when unsupervised.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are of the highest quality. Pupils consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding of others.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils come to school eager to learn. There is virtually no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

A high proportion of the lessons observed were good or better. Although there were three unsatisfactory lessons, the proportion of lessons that were good and very good has improved since the last inspection. The teaching of English is good overall; teachers' subject knowledge is secure and basic skills are taught well. The teaching of mathematics is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1. The skills of numeracy are taught well. Very good lessons were observed more frequently in the foundation subjects than in English and mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Higher attaining pupils are not provided with sufficiently challenging work and do not do as well as they could. The very good relationships between teachers, pupils and Learning Support workers (LSWs), and the very good behaviour of pupils contribute significantly to pupils learning. Learning support workers make an effective contribution to teaching and learning in the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This aspect is generally satisfactory. However, there is insufficient monitoring of curriculum provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for these pupils is well planned and effective. They are fully involved in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good overall, with the moral and social development of pupils a particular strength. Cultural development is satisfactory. The personal and spiritual development of pupils is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff show great concern for the well being of pupils and effectively promote their welfare, health and safety in a warm caring environment. Pupils' attainment and progress are monitored but the use of assessment data to support pupils' progress and plan appropriate work, particularly for higher attaining pupils, is not as well developed as it should be.

Parents are generally supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strengths. Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in school and many are involved in helping in lessons,

hearing readers and with extra-curricular activities. There is an active PTA. The school values highly the contribution made by parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has been effective in making important improvements since taking up the post in September 2000. The deputy headteacher provides good support. The area of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on standards is under-developed, including the subject co-ordinators' role.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is raising its level of involvement in the work of the school and fulfils its statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school compares itself with other schools using nationally provided data and has identified areas that need to be developed. There is further scope for more monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher, senior management team and co-ordinators.
The strategic use of resources	Grants are used for their allotted purposes. The school improvement plan sensibly allocates money to identified priorities.

The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers, who are supported effectively by dedicated Learning Support Workers (LSWs). LSWs support groups and individuals well, but they are not always effectively deployed in whole class sessions. The accommodation is not sufficient to meet the needs of the school. The hall and library are used to teach additional literacy and numeracy groups which limits use for their intended purposes. Learning resources have improved since the last inspection but are still inadequate in ICT, history, geography and art. The library is under-stocked, but the PTA have raised a substantial sum to redress this.

The governing body has made reasonable progress in using best value measures to guide the school's work.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems. • The school expects children to do their best and work hard. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work to do at home. • The information parents receive about how well their child is getting on. • How closely the school works with parents. • The range of activities provided outside lessons.

Parents are rightly supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strengths. Inspection evidence supports the positive views held by parents. A strength of the school is the range of extra-curricular activities and the degree to which the curriculum is enriched by visitors and visits. The team agrees with parents concerns about the homework as, although homework is set, the policy is not implemented consistently. Information provided for parents is satisfactory overall but the new reports do not always

give sufficient information about progress pupils make or targets for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Baseline assessment data indicates that attainment at the point of entry is broadly average. Children make a sound start to their education and make steady progress in developing and improving skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all areas and exceed them in personal, social and emotional development.

2. In 2001 test results at the end of Year 2 in reading were average when compared with all schools and in writing were below average. Compared with similar schools results were well below average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was well below average for reading and below average for writing. Over the last four years improvement has been on a par with the national trend for reading and lower than it for writing. During the inspection standards were judged to be broadly in line with the national expectation and similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Pupils do not have enough opportunities for shared, guided and independent writing and have not developed a sufficiently wide range of strategies to help them decode words when reading. Attainment in mathematics was below the national average in the 2001 test results and well below compared with similar schools. Standards observed during the inspection were below the national average because pupils repeat work that is already well understood and there is insufficient challenge, particularly for more able pupils. In science standards are broadly average, but fewer children achieve the higher level 3 than nationally.

3. Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2001 showed standards in English were average and well below average when compared with similar schools. Inspecting findings indicate that standards are broadly average in English. The school has identified the need to raise standards of writing in Key Stage 2 and the actions taken are beginning to impact on standards. In mathematics, standards in test results were well above average compared with all schools and also above average when compared with similar schools. During the inspection standards in Year 6 were found to be above average, though the highest attaining pupils are not making sufficient progress. Mathematics is taught well, with direct teaching of new material enabling pupils to learn quickly. Interesting activities motivate pupils. Standards in the Key Stage 2 tests in science were above average when compared to all schools, and average when compared with similar schools. In the current Year 6 standards continue to be above average. Attainment in knowledge and understanding is higher than in scientific investigation. Targets set for 2001 were exceeded significantly in mathematics and science, and just exceeded in English.

4. Standards in design technology, history and physical education in Year 6 are at expected levels. Those in ICT and art and design in Years 2 and 6, and physical education in Year 2 are below average. It was not possible to make judgements about standards in geography and music.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They achieve well, as a result of both the appropriate targets set for them and the sensitive support they receive. Higher attaining pupils are generally not challenged sufficiently and could make better progress

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The standards of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development have continued to improve since the last inspection. They are a major strength of the school and have a very positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

7. All pupils have very positive attitudes to the school and their work. They show great enthusiasm for what they are asked to do and apply themselves very well to their work. Almost always pupils sustain high levels of interest and concentration. This is particularly true when teachers plan tasks that challenge and motivate them, as shown in a Year 5 maths lesson. Only very occasionally does their interest wane during the long lessons. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing good work and are keen to share their results with others as seen in the Year 3 art lesson where much very good work was achieved.

8. Behaviour is now consistently very good and this confirms the views of parents. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils behave very well. Pupils move around the school in a very orderly manner and have a clear understanding of the standards expected of them. In lessons, behaviour is invariably good and pupils conform to the high expectations even when not closely supervised. Exclusions are infrequent and used only as a last resort. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or lack of respect for school property. Pupils confirm that oppressive behaviour does not happen in this school.

9. Relationships in the school are of the highest quality. Pupils form very constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively together, demonstrating that they will listen with interest to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. Pupils show genuine pleasure in the achievements of others as shown in the spontaneous applause in a Year 3 English lesson when a boy read out his own creative effort. Virtually all pupils act in a mature and responsible way. They consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding for others.

10. Pupils' personal development is good. The school continues to provide a wide range of opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and take responsibility and they demonstrate that the trust is well placed. From the earliest stages of their time in school, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they perform jobs within the classroom. As they progress through the school greater degrees of independence are encouraged. Older pupils act as monitors in an extensive number of activities around the school particularly exemplified during assemblies and at the school Bank.

11. Attendance and punctuality have also improved and are now very good. There is virtually no unauthorised absence. Almost all pupils are punctual and many arrive early. They come happily to school, eager and ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good overall. Of the 54 lessons, 10 were very good, 24 were good, 17 were satisfactory and three were unsatisfactory. Examples of very good teaching were observed less frequently in English and mathematics than in the other foundation subjects. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers, the very good behaviour of pupils and the way in which pupils work together and support one another contribute significantly to pupils' learning. Teachers and support staff work well together, though support staff could be used more effectively in whole class sessions. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is slightly stronger than in Key Stage 1, particularly in the area of appropriate expectations of what pupils can and should be able to do. Planning and provision for higher

attaining pupils is unsatisfactory. There are instances of marking which is diagnostic and provides constructive comment for pupils, in Year 6 for example, but greater use of marking could be made to inform pupils of why their work is good and to indicate ways in which their work could be improved. Opportunities for the use of on-going assessment during lessons e.g. the use of whiteboards and digit cards are not always sufficiently exploited.

13. Teaching in the reception year is mainly good. The development of children's personal, social and emotional development is a major strength. Planning links appropriately with the early Learning Goals, but does not sufficiently well address the needs of higher attaining pupils who could be further challenged within a play based environment. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. Plans for this age group are too closely aligned to the national literacy strategy for Year 1 rather than teaching elements of the strategy in appropriate ways for these young children. The teaching of both mathematical and physical development is generally good. Teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development is satisfactory.

14. In Key Stages 1 and 2, where lessons are good or better they are well planned and structured, and lesson objectives are clear, often being shared with pupils, although the learning outcomes are sometimes not communicated as well. Activities are well chosen to meet objectives and there is a good variety of different activities to maintain interest and momentum. In a Key Stage 1 literacy lesson based upon 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' for example, the teachers' engaging and enthusiastic delivery results in high quality responses from pupils when asked for words to describe feelings. Pupils read together with considerable expression. A good variety of activities maintained momentum and the Learning Support Worker and teacher worked exceptionally well together to maximise learning for these young pupils. Teachers are skilled in developing specialist vocabulary. They use terminology precisely and model its use well. They have high expectations with respect to pupils' use of specialist language. There were examples of particularly good links between subjects, for example an art lesson in Year 6 focussing on how movement can be reflected in 2D art drew well on physical education and science. A foundation stage physical education lesson gave an opportunity to revise parts of the body and developed pupils' knowledge of vocabulary associated with movement and balance.

15. Where teaching is unsatisfactory work does not challenge pupils sufficiently. The match of work to pupils' prior attainment is poor and the pace of lessons does not promote good learning. Low level tasks such as cutting and sticking are set which contribute little to progress. The time allocated to tasks tends to fill the time available, especially for longer lessons, so time is not used effectively.

16. Planning is thorough in English and mathematics. The literacy and numeracy strategies are being implemented satisfactorily. The quality of teaching in English is good overall; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and basic skills are taught well. The school's priority of improving writing in Key Stage 2 is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of writing. This has not yet been extended to Key Stage 1 where it will provide a more substantial base for progress into Key Stage 2. Teaching in mathematics is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2.

17. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are taught well. They generally work in their own classes with support and are withdrawn occasionally to work individually or in small groups. Class teachers and support workers are now more aware of the targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) and their teaching generally pays good attention to them. Teachers and support staff want pupils with SEN to succeed, and have high expectations of them. As a consequence pupils with SEN generally have positive attitudes and make good progress. The presentation of their work is good.

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

18. The quality and range of curriculum that the school provides is generally satisfactory. However, there is not sufficient monitoring of the whole school curriculum or the way in which it is organised. This leads to weaknesses throughout the school that have a negative impact on learning and progress for some pupils.

19. Timetables show that there is an uneven allocation of time for subjects across the school. Pupils in the same year groups but in different classes do not have the same amount of time for subjects such as physical education and art and design. During the lengthy preparation time for events such as the Christmas production and the music festival, which are enriching experiences for many pupils, the curriculum does not remain broad and balanced for all pupils. The practice of using the hall every morning for maths for Year 6 reduces the amount of time other pupils have for more active lessons, affecting their attainment and progress in these subjects. Lessons in English and mathematics, particularly for the younger pupils, are too long. These lessons do not always help pupils to make the progress expected and younger pupils spend too much of their time sitting listening to their teachers. Some pupils are withdrawn regularly for individual reading, guided reading and extra support for maths or English. While this practice is sometimes justified, it does mean that some pupils miss key elements of their learning in other subjects.

20. Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. It is well planned and effective, and meets the needs of the pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs have individual educational plans drawn up to help teachers plan work specifically to meet their needs. SEN pupils are fully included and involved in the life and work of the school. The LEA Inclusion Project is a successful element of the school and the pupils are well supported by a range of outside agencies.

21. The National Numeracy Strategy is being effectively implemented and there is satisfactory implementation of the National Literacy Strategy throughout the school. Teachers use this national guidance to plan their lessons and are committed to the approaches suggested. The school recognises the need to quicken the pace of training, as some aspects are less well developed than schools nationally. National guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority helps teachers to plan National Curriculum subjects. The quality of planning is generally good for literacy, mathematics, science and design technology.

22. The school provides a very good range of after-school activities for junior pupils. A number of teachers and parents allocate their time to run a variety of sporting clubs, such as cross-country, athletics and rounders. There is also line dancing, a mathematics game club and many pupils join the football and netball teams. There are good curriculum links with the local secondary schools. The vicar takes assemblies regularly and there are very strong links with the local church. The school is involved in collecting for charities and has raised significant amounts of money over time. The school received a Distinction award for the work linked to the Farmers Market. Staff in the school are producing learning materials in collaboration with a local business. There are positive links with the local playgroup. There are a large number of visits out of school and visitors to the school that strengthen the curriculum. The annual visit to the Wilderness Centre is a particularly good example of this.

23. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, although there is room for further development. The co-ordinator is in the process of writing a policy for the subject and auditing resources to support the teaching. Local authority materials are used as an outline for the scheme of work. Good use is made of circle time.

Health, environmental issues and sex education form an appropriate part of the science curriculum. There are good links with the school nurse and the 'Life Education Van' visits the school.

24. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social and moral development, good provision for spiritual development and satisfactory provision for their cultural development. Collective worship makes an effective contribution to the pupil's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. There were many occasions during the inspection when teachers promoted the pupils' sense of their own worth. There are very good levels of trust between pupils and teachers. This enables junior class teachers to discuss sensitive issues such as vivisection with their classes. Teachers act as excellent role models in the way they talk to each other and by the standards they set for pupils. They give explicit guidance about the differences between right and wrong and ensure the pupils understand the consequences for their actions. Pupils work extremely well together throughout the school and in all lessons. The values and beliefs of the school are clearly demonstrated in all areas. Pupils are given a range of opportunities to take responsibility within classes and across the school. There are fewer opportunities, especially in the younger year groups, for pupils to be more independent in their learning.

25. The school is not providing pupils with the breadth and balance of the curriculum. With this exception, the school is meeting all other statutory requirements in teaching the National Curriculum and religious education.

26. The school has continued to develop the strengths indicated in the last report and has made some improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. Policies and schemes of work are now in place and there is a separate policy for the Foundation Stage. However, there is still no whole school curriculum overview to provide the structure to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and monitor curriculum provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school continues to provide good quality support and guidance and effectively promotes the pupils' welfare, health and safety in a warm and caring environment. Staff continue to know their pupils well and have a clear picture of their personal strengths and weaknesses thus enabling them to offer effective counselling and support. All staff show great concern for the well being of pupils, and a range of measures exists to promote their development. Updated information regarding academic and pastoral care is shared regularly by staff in order to alleviate pupils' worries or concerns. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the pupils and consistently monitor well their personal development and their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis.

28. Two new assessment co-ordinators have been appointed. Procedures are now in place for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress in the core subjects. Use is made of a range of optional materials provided by the QCA to monitor progress in English and mathematics. Analysis of standard assessment tasks is carried out to identify weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Improvements have been made to monitoring procedures in the core subjects, but the new arrangements are at an early stage of development and so the use of assessment to support pupils' progress is not fully developed. The use of assessment to inform planning, particularly to plan appropriate work for higher attaining pupils, needs further development, as does work to exemplify attainment and ensure accuracy and consistency of judgements.

29. The statutory requirements outlined in statements of special educational need (SEN) are met well. The provision identified is implemented and reviews are regular and up-to-date.

Individual education plans (IEPs) are drawn up where necessary. The quality of IEPs has improved since the last inspection. These now contain appropriate and specific targets that are communicated well to all relevant staff; teaching and other support staff are now paying better attention to these targets. As a result SEN pupils make good progress towards the targets set.

30. The school continues to have very effective systems to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact made with parents to explain the absence. Attendance figures are properly aggregated and emerging patterns of absence are noted for follow up. There was virtually no unauthorised absence recorded last year.

31. The headteacher and other staff provide very good role models in promoting high standards of good behaviour. There are satisfactory procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour have been made clear and are understood by all pupils. The policy is consistently applied by all members of staff who were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm intervention maintaining good control.

32. Child protection issues continue to be handled effectively. All members of staff are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Health and safety is promoted effectively. Potential hazards are identified and remedial action taken as necessary. Of the two minor issues noted during the inspection, one was remedied before the inspection closed.

33. All staff members are safety conscious as shown during the Reception/Year 1 design and technology lesson when the use of potentially hazardous equipment was very well supervised with clear direction and monitoring a strong feature.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Parents are generally supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strengths. Almost all those responding to the questionnaire agree that their children like school and it is helping them to become more mature and responsible. They believe that the school expects their children to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. They also believe that the behaviour in the school is good. In addition, a very large majority feel that the teaching is good and their children are making good progress. They feel that the school is well led and managed

35. A number of parents expressed reservations about the amount of homework and the information about how their children are getting on. These reservations were supported by inspection evidence. They were also concerned about how closely the school works with parents and the range of activities outside lessons. These reservations were not supported by inspection evidence. There is a good range of extra curricular activities that includes music clubs, after school construction club, maths games, computer club and various sports some of which are seasonal.

36. Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and many respond enthusiastically in a wide range of activities. They help with particular activities in classes including ICT and design and technology and listening to readers as well as helping around the site. In addition, parents are very supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. There continues to be an active parent teachers association that, in addition to raising substantial amounts of finance in support of

the school, also helps out in other practical ways around the school. The school values highly the contributions made by parents that materially enhance the children's learning and personal development.

37. The homework policy is clear and perfectly suitable for the age range of the pupils at the school. It emphasises in its application the need for increasing the amount of work as pupils approach secondary school age where the amounts will increase. There is a clear mismatch in the perception of the implementation. The staff believe that the amounts of homework are in line with the policy. However, many parents feel that the amount of homework set is insufficient to prepare their children for the secondary school expectations. Whilst some homework is set and marked properly, there is a lack of consistency across the school.

38. Information to parents is satisfactory overall. The school prospectus is clear and comprehensive. It gives parents a good overview of the school's values and its curriculum. Reports to parents provide much good information about what the children know and can do. They are particularly good for the younger children. However, the new computer generated reports do not give parents sufficient information about what the children are learning or about their progress. None of the reports produced contain any information about targets or areas for improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The school has seen a period of change in the last two years, following a long period when the previous headteacher had been in post. During this time the governing body has changed significantly, with a new chair taking up post, and the governors have appointed a new headteacher to the school.

40. In his four terms in post, the headteacher has led the school in making important changes. These have moved the school forward on crucial aspects of teaching and learning. Much improvement has been made to planning systems, where medium term planning is generally of a good standard. The school's systems for assessing pupils have been revised and it is now able to measure pupils' progress from year to year. Alterations have been made to the organisation of classes and the expectations of the standards of work set for pupils have been raised. All these changes have been carried out at a pace which has been appropriate in moving the school forward, while continuing to maintain the confidence of staff, parents and the community. During this time standards at Key Stage 2 have risen and the excellent relationships among pupils, which are at the heart of the school's mission, have been strengthened. Overall the headteacher has been effective in making these improvements.

41. The deputy headteacher provides good support to the headteacher. She is a good role model in her own teaching and she organises staff development efficiently and effectively. Induction for new teachers and professional development for all staff are organised well. Teachers have received training in the national strategies and, most recently, successful in-house professional development in ICT. The deputy and the head of infants take a full part in the performance management of teachers. This complements a system of annual discussions the headteacher holds with each teacher, providing a useful framework for managing the staff.

42. The governing body has recently reviewed the way it works, to raise its level of involvement in the work of the school. Meetings are well organised and fit together well within the structure now established. All governors now link to an area of the curriculum and this provides them with helpful information about the work of the school. A governor of the month

scheme enables further linking between the governing body and the school.

43. However, while these strategies provide some necessary information, overall the senior management team and the governing body do not know enough about the quality of the education provided for pupils. With the exception of the mathematics co-ordinator subject co-ordinators do not do enough monitoring of provision and standards. There is too little monitoring of teaching by the headteacher, with a corresponding lack of influence on improving aspects of teaching. Senior staff have too little understanding of the curriculum offered to pupils because there has been insufficient monitoring of the timetable and planning to ensure that pupils receive a suitably broad and balanced programme as they move through the school.

44. Appropriate decisions about how to spend money have been made recently. Standards fund and other grants are used for their allotted purpose and the school improvement plan sets out the use of funding against the school's priorities. The school has chosen to invest heavily in employing additional staff, including teachers and learning support workers (LSWs). These decisions have been successful in making better provision for pupils in two ways: through additional classes for mathematics in some years, thus reducing the size of groups, and in providing extra learning support for pupils in lessons. The school makes good use of new technology to track pupils' attendance and their academic progress. Teachers make very effective use of computer software to enhance the high-quality displays around the school.

45. The governing body has gone some way to working within the principles of best value. It has consulted parents on their views about the school (and in some classes pupils have also been consulted on aspects of their work). The governing body ensures it is able to compare prices before committing to spending, in order to get value for money. In the last year it has begun to use assessment information provided by Ofsted to compare the performance of the school with other schools in similar circumstances, and it has started to provide a degree of challenge to all in the school to improve further. Overall, this adds up to reasonable progress in moving to using best value measures to guide the school's work.

46. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is beginning to fulfil its role in steering the school forward. However, while the school improvement plan is a useful document in some respects, it has weaknesses that are preventing it from being as effective as it should be. The plan:

- is too large in scope to ensure that all in the school community are working towards the same clear goals;
- lacks detail of how work in it is to be monitored and evaluated;
- shows INSET which is sometimes unrealistic.

47. The school is well-staffed with teachers, LSWs and other staff. LSWs are used well to support groups of pupils in the main parts of lessons but need more training in their roles when the teacher is working with the whole class so that they can work actively with pupils at these times. The level of staffing to support pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last report and is now effective.

48. The leadership and management of special educational needs (SEN) are good. The procedures for SEN are thorough and systematic, and the paperwork is well organised. The co-ordinator is managing the implementation of the new 'Code of Practice' well. Significant improvements have been made to the quality of IEPs and to the school's procedures and classroom provision. As a result teaching staff are now taking more responsibility for SEN pupils. Support staff make a positive contribution to the progress SEN pupils make.

49. The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection by the conversion of a kitchen into a classroom but is still not sufficient for the needs of the school. There are not enough classrooms or other areas for the school to teach the additional groups in literacy and mathematics. As a consequence, the hall and the library have to be used too much for teaching these groups, and so cannot be used for their intended purposes. Although the school is making the best possible use of space, one of the classrooms is too small, having been converted from a kitchen and the accommodation for ICT is inadequate.

50. In English and mathematics, which have been the focus of national strategies, resources have improved significantly since the last inspection. Resources have also improved in design and technology but further improvement is required in ICT, history, geography and art and design. The library stock is insufficient and the range of books is poor. However the PTA has raised a considerable sum of money to improve provision.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In Order to improve further the quality of education the school offers its pupils, the headteacher and staff together with the governing body should:

(1) ***Improve standards in writing :**

- in Key Stage 1 by increasing the opportunities for shared, guided and independent writing and
- in Key Stage 2 by continuing current strategies which are beginning to be successful;
- by using marking more constructively to indicate how pupils can improve their work.
(Paragraphs 2, 12, 16, 72, 76.)

(2) **Improve standards in mathematics in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that:**

- work is appropriately challenging and
- there is no undue repetition of work pupils know well.
(Paragraphs 2, 79, 80.)

(3) ***Ensure higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged by ensuring that:**

- planning differentiates appropriately for these pupils;
- work is at a level to stretch the most able;
- classroom strategies are explored which enable these pupils to achieve more.
(Paragraphs 5, 12, 28, 80.)

(4) ***Improve monitoring and evaluation by:**

- ensuring this is included in the school improvement plan so that the success of developments can be measured;
- monitoring and evaluating the curriculum and the way it is organised;
- extending the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher, senior management team and subject co-ordinators.
(Paragraphs 18, 19, 43, 46, 53, 91, 97.)

Governors should also consider the following more minor issues for inclusion in the action plan:

*Review the application of the homework policy to ensure that the best use is made of homework to raise standards. (Paragraphs 35, 37.)
Use assessment more in planning appropriate work particularly the higher attaining pupils.
(Paragraphs 2, 28, 76, 95.)

*Continue to press for improvements in accommodation and resources. (Paragraphs 49, 50, 110, 120.)

Ensure that reports indicate areas for improvement. (Paragraph 38.)

* Matters that the school is aware of and has included in its latest school improvement plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	24	17	3	0	0
Percentage	0	19	44	32	6	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	273
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	75

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	26	21	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	26
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	43	42	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (97)	89 (92)	100 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	23	26
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	42	43	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (95)	91 (92)	100 (92)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	13	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	18	21
	Girls	10	12	13
	Total	26	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (68)	86 (74)	97 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	6
	Girls	10	10	5
	Total	26	29	11

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (72)	83 (74)	85 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	203
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	178

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	450950
Total expenditure	448047
Expenditure per pupil	1679
Balance brought forward from previous year	1903
Balance carried forward to next year	4806

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	188
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	37	4	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	37	47	12	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	60	6	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	40	27	15	6
The teaching is good.	33	51	5	1	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	44	22	9	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	41	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	42	8	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	24	45	24	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	31	54	8	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	58	8	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	50	12	6	9

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to the nearest whole number, sum may not = 100

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. At the time of the inspection there were 34 children in the Foundation Stage, 27 in a reception class and 7 of the older children in a mixed reception and Year 1 class. They attend initially on a part-time basis during the year in which they are five and the school negotiates full-time attendance with individual parents. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

53. The curriculum is generally broad but not as balanced as it could be. There is due emphasis on literacy and numeracy but the length of these sessions, sometimes an hour and a half, does not allow time for children to access the six areas of experience in the depth they should. The length of the sessions requires children to be sitting for too long and does not equate with greater rates of progress. Those children in the mixed age class do not have equal access to the provision for the Foundation Stage, although the class teacher works hard to ensure that they have as many of the experiences as possible, despite the constraints of the organisation.

54. Teaching in the reception year is mainly good. It has a positive effect on the children's learning and, as a result, children make sound progress. The teachers have an understanding of how children learn, and the importance of play and first-hand experiences in children's learning. The teachers' planning is satisfactory and links to the national Early Learning Goals. Plans are clear and detailed with learning intentions linked to activities that focus on achieving the learning intentions. Plans for reception are too closely aligned to the National Literacy Strategy for Year 1 children, when guidance given suggests teaching elements of the strategies throughout the day in meaningful contexts. Weekly plans do not focus sufficiently well on the needs of the higher attaining children in the reception class who could be challenged further, within a play-based environment. Children in the mixed age class are appropriately challenged. Teachers support children's progress through a wide range of well-focused questions that give steps in learning. This is very positive for the majority of children but sometimes there are too many steps inserted for higher attaining children who should be allowed to move forward at a faster, more independent pace. There are fewer opportunities for child-initiated experiences as adults lead many of the activities. Children are encouraged to choose from a range of activities during 'planning time', which they enjoy. These sessions need to be offered more frequently. Children with special education needs are particularly well supported by all staff. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal and social development throughout the nursery. Children are given very clear instructions about what they are expected to do.

55. Children are assessed when they enter school using a scheme recommended by the Local Authority that checks literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills. The baseline results are shared with parents and are used in lesson planning. Group and individual assessments are made against the Foundation Stage stepping-stones. Adults do make observations of children but this process is not as well developed as it should be. Targets are set for children, for example in mathematics and in home-school reading diaries, that give clear guidelines to support the children's learning. The teachers and learning support workers relate well together and this has a positive effect on children's learning. They are enthusiastic and regularly discuss aspects of the provision. Learning Support Workers are given clear guidelines for their work with groups of children and make good evaluations of achievement. Parents are involved in their children's learning through sharing books at home whenever they can. There is an effective system for induction to the Foundation Stage and parents are

given a range of supportive information in an induction pack.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a high priority and this is a major strength of the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave the reception, all children are achieving beyond the Early Learning Goals in this area. The teaching of this aspect is very good. Children enjoy coming to school and respond well to its rules and routines. They are eager to learn. Good emphasis is placed on developing understanding of suitable behaviour and the difference between right and wrong. Children are very sensitive to the needs of others and look after each other well. Staff provide very good role models for the children. Children learn to share and work together in a variety of situations, for example, in their role-play. They demonstrate a very caring attitude towards each other, are friendly and confident. They select and use many resources independently. They can listen and work for sustained periods of time, although this is not always appropriate for the youngest children who are sometimes expected to sit and listen for too long.

Communication, language and literacy

57. The children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with adults. The teaching of this element is satisfactory and children are expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they join Year 1. Teachers encourage children to choose books and take them home regularly. All adults talk to the children, encouraging the development of language. The children are very good listeners and speak clearly and audibly.

58. Children are provided with a range of experiences and activities to develop their language and literacy skills. Key words are displayed and clearly labelled, and displays and name cards help children to develop their early reading skills. The younger children can handle books appropriately and understand stories. Many of the older children can hear and say the initial sound in words and know the characters in the reading scheme. When adults share books with children, they ask them well focused questions to ensure that they are beginning to use pictures, sounds and known words to understand the text. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper as they play in the role-play area and understand that marks have meaning. During the inspection, few children chose to write but are encouraged during teacher-led group work to use their skills to label parts of a story using their own writing, for example. Children are taught to write their name accurately through well-focused teaching and are able to hold pencils correctly. Too much time is devoted to literacy in one session. Children spend an hour and a half before break and sometimes another half an hour after break in the mornings concentrating on literacy activities. The length of the sessions does not necessarily lead to greater progress as children sit for too long listening to information that is either too easy or too hard. This needs urgently reviewing.

Mathematical development

59. There is an appropriate range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Teaching is generally good and most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1, with some achieving beyond the goals. Teachers model answers well and give clear instructions. Children learn how to use mathematical ideas and skills, such as when they are estimating and weighing objects. They have opportunities to compare, match, sort, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Staff use number rhymes to develop children's early ideas of number and simple calculations. Number lines are used to good effect to develop an understanding of order and position. Many of the younger children can count to 10, with higher attaining pupils counting well beyond, recognising the numbers and sequencing accurately. Children use

mathematical language with confidence such as when making slopes higher and lower for their cars. The teachers effectively use objects to help with counting and sensitively help children who need to think a little more to be accurate.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Teaching is satisfactory and the children are expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they are six. Children are given opportunities to be curious and examine living things. They are beginning to understand aspects of the natural world, for example the weather and how differences in weather affect our lives. The children blowing bubbles and using streamers outside were excited by their experience and learned about the way the wind carried their attempts. All children can use the computer with confidence, can use a mouse and recognise the 'enter' and 'arrow' keys. They are taught how to use the computer and work on programs to support their learning. Tape recorders are available to use and there are clear instructions to help them with this. Children are not always given the opportunity to explore materials and simple tools independently as adults tend to over-direct the children on these occasions.

Physical development

61. Teaching is good and the children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children have access to a large playground and an environmental area. There is a wide range of wheeled toys that children use. The use of the outdoor area as an extension to the classroom experiences is not planned for regularly and access is limited, particularly for the reception children in the mixed age class.

62. In PE lessons teachers take every opportunity to encourage learning, using children to demonstrate, for example when drawing attention to the features that help balance. There are good links with language development with the use of appropriate vocabulary to describe actions. Children understand the effect healthy exercise has on the body and demonstrate good body movements. Sometimes children are withdrawn from PE lessons to participate in guided reading sessions, which means that these children miss essential teaching time in this area of learning.

63. Children move around the school safely and are able to line up in order. They make good progress in their physical skills and handle tools and construction toys competently. Due emphasis is placed on the development of skills to help children to hold pencils correctly.

Creative development

64. Teaching is satisfactory and children are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they finish the reception year. Children enjoy a range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play, although these are not as frequently available as they should be. Songs and rhymes help children to develop their understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Children enjoy singing. There are opportunities for children to develop their creative skills, although workshop tools and materials are not continuously available and are sometimes templates or pre-cut shapes. Art and creative sessions are sometimes over-directed by adults. This practise does not give enough opportunities for children to develop independence in their work. For example, groups of children were making kites using paper plates. They obeyed instructions and made them carefully but did not have the opportunity to investigate a wider range of materials better suited to the purpose of flying a kite.

65. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory improvement. There is

now a satisfactory policy, planning has improved and clearer assessments are made of children's progress. The number of large toys has increased and the school has identified money for more resources. An area still to be developed is the range and quality of child-initiated creative opportunities, which was identified as an area for development previously.

ENGLISH

66. Standards in English are broadly in line with national expectations, and are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection.

67. In reading, the 2001 national test results for seven-year-olds were average when compared to all schools but well below average when compared to similar schools. In the writing test the results were below average compared to all schools and well below average compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels was well below average in reading and below average in writing. Results in reading have improved in line with national trends between 1997 and 2001; in writing there has been less improvement than national trends.

68. In 2001 the English test results for eleven-year-olds were average compared to all schools but well below those of similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels was below average. Results in the reading test were significantly higher than those for writing. Results in English have improved in line with national trends between 1997 and 2001. Comparison of the 2001 cohort at age eleven, with their performance at age seven, shows they have made less than average progress. The targets set for 2001 were just exceeded.

69. Inspectors found that, throughout the school, pupils' reading and writing standards are broadly average and speaking and listening skills are good. The pupils' handwriting is good and work is presented neatly and carefully. Pupils currently, are making satisfactory progress. The quality of teaching observed was good overall, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good as is the quality of their learning. They behave well in lessons.

70. Speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school. By the age of seven most pupils express themselves clearly, take part in discussions and communicate enthusiastically with their classmates and teachers. Teachers' questioning of pupils is good and as a result they are keen to respond with relevant answers, indicating that they have listened and understood well. Older pupils use and understand a wide vocabulary, and express their opinions and knowledge precisely. This was illustrated well in discussions with Year 6 pupils about their history work. Work in a range of subjects provides regular and useful opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson about estimation pupils were able to reason and justify their thoughts carefully.

71. A considerable amount of time is allocated to the teaching of reading, with regular grouped and individual reading sessions. Younger pupils enjoy reading and respond well to stories, as shown in a Year 2 lesson focussing on 'The fish who could wish'. Their reading is generally accurate and confident and the children read regularly outside school, although they do not always read aloud expressively. The pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy, and by the age of eleven they have encountered a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, including myths and legends, poems, science fiction and Shakespeare. They remember stories well, and enjoy discussing characters and situations from books they have read. Older pupils are able to find books in the library and to use the contents and index to find information. When reading aloud they are accurate and fluent, but their reading sometimes lacks expression. Their general understanding of texts is good and they are learning to infer

and deduce. Their ability to appreciate meanings beyond the literal is less well developed. Throughout the school pupils have positive attitudes to reading and use phonic skills, which usually enable them to correctly work out unknown words, but they rarely use a wider range of skills.

72. In Years 1 and 2 writing is just sound. The pupils have written simple stories based on texts read in literacy lessons which show they are starting to apply the basic rules of grammar and punctuation. Some use dialogue and interesting words like 'tiptoed' and 'sneaked'; their increasing knowledge of phonics helps their spelling of polysyllabic words. Work is carefully presented, and letter formation is usually correct. The pupils are learning to join their letters, though few currently do so outside handwriting lessons. However, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have too few opportunities to raise the standard of their writing through shared, guided and individual writing.

73. The older pupils' writing is sound. Work is neatly presented, and their handwriting is good, with many pupils using ink pens. The purpose and organisation of their writing is satisfactory, but their punctuation is often weaker. Teachers use a wide range of interesting starting points for writing, which capture the pupils' interest and stimulate them to write well. These include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to consider similarities and differences and *Oliver Twist* to write from different points of view. Laurie Lee's *Cider with Rosie* was studied by the Year 5 and 6 class, whose work included a visit from the author's widow who brought some original manuscripts with her. The children learned about how a real author edits and improves his text, and were well aware of how special their opportunity was. Several commented that probably no other class in the country had ever worked from his original drafts in the way they were doing. They felt that the session had had a lasting effect on their desire to choose the right word for their writing, not just the first one which would do.

74. The quality of teaching is good overall, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and basic skills are taught well. Teachers use their time well in lessons, and the pupils are well managed. Lesson plans are effective, and show clearly what the pupils are to learn, though it is often less clear how success will be judged and progress measured. Effective questioning makes pupils think carefully about what they are doing, and helps teachers to challenge all of the pupils. This was demonstrated well in a Year 6 lesson looking at balanced arguments where the teacher asked questions like 'What does that mean?' and 'How do you know?' Some very effective role-play was seen in a Year 4 /5 class. In the middle of a shared writing session children took on the roles of a rock and a man. Their brief conversations showing how the rock might persuade the man to move it developed the story significantly and showed considerable understanding of the characters.

75. The pupils' attitudes are good; they behave well in lessons and are usually keen and enthusiastic. They work productively, and co-operate well. However, some lessons are too long, which makes it hard for the pupils to sustain concentration right to the end. English skills are practised in a wide range of other subjects – for example writing letters about Victory Park to the council in geography in Year 4 and note taking about Florence Nightingale in history in year 2. Discussion and debate in a wide range of subjects enable pupils to develop their skills of speaking and listening, and on occasions computers are used to record the children's work.

76. Information from tests is now used to monitor progress and set targets; record sheets have recently been introduced which will allow teachers to make on-going records of pupils' performance in the key areas they have been taught. However, day-to-day assessment is less well developed. Marking is generally thorough, but includes few comments highlighting what pupils have learned or what they need to do to improve.

77. Useful additional support is provided for some Year 3 pupils outside lesson times; last year the children receiving this support made good progress. SEN pupils are well supported when working in small groups, but learning support workers are currently under-used in whole-class teaching.

78. The National Literacy Strategy is now being implemented in a satisfactory manner. A high priority is currently being given to improving children's writing in Key Stage 2. The clear focus of this initiative is helping to improve the quality of teaching and raise standards; similar attention should now be given to writing in Key Stage 1.

MATHEMATICS

79. Results in national tests for mathematics at age eleven have risen greatly since the last inspection and are now well above the national average. The results are also much higher than in schools similar to St. Matthew's. At seven the results in national tests have not made the same improvement and are now lower than those nationally and much lower than the results in similar schools. The progress pupils make through Key Stage 2 is very good and by the end of Year 6 in 2001 pupils' achievements were much better than would have been expected, given their Key Stage 1 results.

80. Work in lessons and in pupils' books shows that standards in Key Stage 2 classes are higher than those nationally. The exception to this is in the top set in Year 6 where the work is not challenging enough for the highest attaining pupils and the standard of the work they produce is too low as a result. In Key Stage 1 the work set for pupils needs to stretch them more, particularly those at the top of the ability range. Progress in Year 2 is limited by the unnecessary repetition of work that pupils can already handle confidently. Overall, standards in lessons have improved slightly since the last inspection report.

81. Pupils' in Key Stage 2 are able to use suitable paper and pencil methods to work out the results of problems. However, they are not as skilled at checking their results by using a different method. Most pupils at Key Stage 1 can tell the time and they know the names of properties of two and three dimensional shapes. Pupils' mental skills with number have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Throughout the school, pupils can talk more confidently about mathematics, using the language of the subject appropriately. This is a result of the work the teachers have put into these aspects of mathematics as they have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy.

82. Pupils use their number skills well across a range of subjects, such as design and technology, science and physical education where, for example, pupils in Year 6 drew on their knowledge of angles in working on body pivots.

83. Mathematics teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1. Teachers plan work thoroughly, using the national framework, and structure lessons suitably. They ensure they are developing pupils' mental skills through whole-class teaching, before setting work to groups of pupils at an appropriate level. Teachers plan interesting games and other activities for these parts of the lessons. As a result, pupils work hard and concentrate on what they are doing. They enjoy the subject and work particularly well together in pairs and groups. This helps them to make good progress in their learning in most lessons. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to the subject are very good and have remained so since the last inspection. Most lessons end with the whole class together but this is the weakest part of lessons. Teachers need to use these times to look at pupils' difficulties or to emphasise the main learning points from the lesson. In Key Stage 1 teachers need to ensure that lessons do not drift on for too long, affecting pupils'

learning.

84. Teachers are spending the right amount of time teaching new material directly to the class: this is successful in enabling pupils to pick up new ideas quickly. A particular strength of the teaching is the way teachers use models and images of mathematics to help pupils learn new ideas. For example, in a junior class the teacher used a number line for the nine-times table very effectively, gradually removing the numbers to help pupils to learn the table. This showed a very good understanding on the part of the teacher about how pupils learn best. In another lesson a different teacher used several images of angles to give pupils real experience of the size of different angles, making the topic much more accessible than it might have been. Throughout the school, teachers model the language of the subject for their classes and help pupils to develop their own use of mathematical terms.

85. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in mathematics lessons because they are supported well by the school's learning support workers (LSWs) in the main parts of the lessons. Teachers do not involve the LSWs sufficiently in the starts and ends of lessons, where they could be working more actively with pupils than at present.

86. The mathematics taught in the school is better balanced across the different aspects of the subject than at the last inspection and follows the national framework closely. Pupils have some opportunities to use computers to support their mathematics learning, mainly to record data and to draw graphs of the results. Although this is an improvement from the last inspection, too few mathematics programs are used and more could be done to develop the use of ICT in mathematics.

87. Mathematics has been managed reasonably well through a time of national development. The monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator has been very useful in helping her to gain an understanding of how the subject is taught and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school lacks a numeracy action plan in order to set out the way the subject will be developed and how teachers will continue to improve their teaching.

SCIENCE

88. In science by the end of Year 2 pupils broadly attain the expected National Curriculum levels. Last year's statutory teacher assessments indicated that the proportion of pupils achieving level 2 was above the national average but that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was below the national average. A similar pattern was observed during the inspection. Standards at the end of Year 2 are about average and the same as at the time of the last inspection. By Year 6 the school attains above the national average and in line with similar schools. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils do well compared with their prior attainment. During the inspection standards observed in lessons were above average, though standards in knowledge and understanding were higher than those observed in scientific investigation. By the end of Year 6 many pupils can, for example, name the reproductive parts of flowering plants and explain their function. They are able to explain photosynthesis in simple terms. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test, but are less able to use scientific knowledge in making predictions and in explaining patterns in their findings from investigations or in drawing conclusions.

89. Pupils respond very well to science. They are enthusiastic and show keen interest in their work. They behave well and carefully follow safety advice. The presentation of their work is good, showing the pride they have in their achievements.

90. The quality of teaching in science is good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning is good, with learning objectives clearly identified. Despite the difficulty of

planning for mixed age classes, progression is evident throughout the school. Meaningful contexts are used to engage pupils in scientific enquiry; for example, a letter from 'Fireman Sam' expressing concern at his sandwich fillings melting was used as a stimulus for an experiment on melting for younger pupils. Teachers model the use of scientific terminology well and as a result pupils use this with increasing accuracy. They make very good use of pupils' observations to widen their knowledge and understanding. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, a pupil's observation that his magnet had made another magnet spin round was used effectively to investigate the attractive and repulsive forces between the different ends of magnets and generated much interest among pupils. In a Year 6 lesson a pupil's research on the movement of plants towards light provided an extension to the topic under consideration. Questioning is used effectively to revise previous work and check pupils' recall and understanding. Teachers make good use of ICT to produce attractive recording sheets for pupils and some CD-ROMs are available to enhance the teaching of science. The use of computers for sensing changes in experiments and data logging is not well developed. In the curriculum there are too few opportunities provided for quantitative work and scientific investigation is insufficiently used to provide greater differentiation and so challenge higher attaining pupils more.

91. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She provides a good role model for the teaching of science. An analysis of Year 6 tests has been undertaken to identify weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observation. The new assessment policy has introduced a formal system for assessing scientific investigation. As yet there is no portfolio of pupils' work to use as a basis for moderating work and ensuring consistency of judgements, but the co-ordinator has plans to develop one. The curriculum is enriched by the use of visits and visitors to school and the school has an attractive environmental area. There are good links with the secondary schools

ART AND DESIGN

92. Few lessons were observed in art and design and judgements have been made on the evidence of the work completed in the lessons and by looking at pupils' work in sketchbooks and on display. Standards are below expected levels at both seven and eleven. Around the school pupils' carefully mounted and displayed work shows a range of two-dimensional and some excellent three-dimensional work of characters from Shakespeare. However, skills are sometimes at a basic level and do not improve sufficiently throughout the school. The time made available for teaching art and design is too limited.

93. Teaching is satisfactory and often good when the teacher is confident and has a secure knowledge and understanding of what it is that the pupils are to learn about art, as in a Year 6 lesson on how movement can be reflected in 2D art. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas and through a lesson improvements are made. Too much art and design teaching throughout the school is teacher-directed and formulaic rather than an expression of the pupils' imagination or demonstration of a wide range of skills. In the Years 1 and 2 there are too few opportunities for pupils to explore materials or mix their own colours independently, although there are some examples of collage work and portraits. In Key Stage 2 pupils have made Egyptian masks using coloured papers and paint and charcoal pictures of scenes from Macbeth. The pupils can talk about the work of Constable and Dali and express personal opinions on the quality and differences between each. Work in sketchbooks is not of a standard expected by Year 6.

94. Pupil's attitudes and behaviour are very good. They collaborate well, listen to each other and persist with their work until completed to their satisfaction.

95. Teachers generally follow the national scheme of work which is helping to focus more

strongly on the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding but teacher's planning does not give enough detailed guidance to ensure that the pupils skills are steadily reinforced. In consequence, pupils do not systematically develop and extend their use of materials, media and techniques as they move through the school. Formalised procedures for assessing pupils' progress and using the results in planning the next steps of pupils' learning are at the early stages.

96. The school organises visits and ensures that art is strongly linked with other curriculum areas. A good example of this is when Year 6 pupils made pictures that showed movement having looked closely at their body movement in physical education and studied skeletons in science. There are plans to have visitors to school who will enhance the work of the pupils. Year 5 and 6 pupils were offered the opportunity to map out a sculpture at Hailes Abbey, which they enjoyed and gained a good understanding of this medium. The proposed school grounds development will also help pupils to use art within other curriculum areas. Artwork is entered into a local exhibition that celebrates primary school art.

97. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her subject. Resources are not satisfactory but the co-ordinator intends to provide more resources when finances are available. There has been insufficient opportunity to monitor teaching and learning or standards of achievement. The policy, which was written in partnership with a governor, and the action plan for development are satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

98. Although only three lessons of design and technology were observed, a selection of work on display was also available. Standards are broadly in line with those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils now record their designs with clear annotated diagrams and are able to list sequences of actions taken to make products. They select materials appropriate for different purposes and take considerable care to ensure their finished product is of good quality. There is further scope to develop pupils' ability to use various sources of information when generating ideas for products and to develop an awareness of resources as a constraint.

99. The teaching observed was good. Planning is good and identifies clear learning objectives and outcomes. The co-ordinator completes long term planning to ensure that pupils have enough opportunities to work with an appropriate range of materials and equipment. There is a good balance of different types of activity. Pupils learn skills through focussed practical tasks, for example, investigating different methods of joining materials to make a sandal and how to make hinges. They evaluate different items, for example different types of packaging and different shoes to appreciate why they are as they are, and consider the needs of users. Teachers provide helpful prompt sheets to enable pupils to evaluate products and draw their attention to relevant features. As a result of this children make perceptive comments about how to improve their designs. Good links are made with other curriculum areas, for example, the use of circuits in a model vehicle and testing to see which materials are waterproof, but opportunities to use ICT are insufficiently exploited.

100. The co-ordinator has received in-service training to enable her to advise staff and her influence is evident in the improvements seen in provision since the last inspection. Resources have improved and pupils' experiences are enhanced by involvement in design and technology challenges.

GEOGRAPHY

101. Only three lessons were observed in geography. There was insufficient evidence to

make a judgement about the standards attained by seven or eleven year olds. At the time of the last inspection standards were above national expectations.

102. In a successful Year 1/ 2 lesson pupils role-played an African journey. They were captivated by the idea, thoroughly involved in the activities, and made good progress in their understanding of how life is different in Africa. In a Year 4 lesson pupils reviewed their study of Victory Park to help them to recognise how people seek to improve and sustain their environment. They then wrote letters to the local council offering their suggestions for improvement, which allowed them to practise literacy skills. A Year 4/5 lesson was observed in which pupils developed their knowledge and understanding of the world by considering the location of recent news stories from around the world.

103. All the teaching observed was at least satisfactory. Planning was effective, with clear learning objectives, and teachers used effective questioning techniques. In the best lesson the teacher used a starting point that inspired the pupils, and involved them well. Where teaching was less satisfactory there was insufficient emphasis on geographical skills and knowledge. One lesson was too long, and as a result the pace was slow.

104. The subject has not been a priority in school in recent years, and resources are insufficient. While work is planned in geography in all year groups it does not progressively develop children's skills and knowledge, and the gaps between teaching times are currently too large in some year groups.

HISTORY

105. The satisfactory standards in history identified in the last inspection have been maintained for seven and eleven year olds. The pupils make satisfactory progress.

106. Year 2 pupils can remember well previous work about Samuel Pepys and other significant figures from British history. They can deduce information from pictures and describe similarities and differences between now and Victorian times. They show a developing understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory and are beginning to realise why people like Florence Nightingale and Louis Braille acted as they did. They are learning about the passage of time, aided by their 'washing line', which goes from 'a very long time ago' when Jesus was born to 'nowadays'.

107. The oldest pupils have been studying the Tudors. They show suitable factual knowledge and understanding of the period, and can describe changes within it, like the advent of the Church of England and changes to food following the exploration of America. They accurately describe some of the main events and people of the period, saying that Henry VIII was sporty and musical, but also ruthless and liked to get his own way. They can give reasons for some of the main changes and events, such as Drake's voyage around the world. The pupils are beginning to select and combine resources to further their research, starting from books in the classroom, then using library books and finally the Internet to locate the information they need.

108. The quality of teaching observed was good overall. The strengths include planning which makes it clear what pupils are to learn. Interesting activities capture the children's attention and interest, and teachers use effective questions to make them think and develop their speaking and listening skills. There are other good links to literacy. These included purposeful opportunities for note taking when Year 2 pupils followed up a video they had watched, and Year 6 pupils acted as historical detectives sorting rubbish to learn about inference and deduction. Teaching would be further improved if the teachers focussed more on what pupils have learned by the end of a lesson, and on what they need to do to improve

further.

109. The pupils' attitudes to their studies are good and they behave well in lessons. They are keen to work and discuss what they are doing. Many Year 4/ 5 pupils studying Ancient Egypt have spent a considerable amount of time researching the topic at home. As a consequence their knowledge and understanding of this area of history is good.

110. All of the Key Stage 2 pupils study the same two topics each year. To ensure that the pupils make sufficient progress it is essential that teachers secure a clear progression of historical skills, knowledge and understanding during this four-year period. Resources for history are insufficient.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

111. Standards in ICT have risen since the last inspection and in the limited range of work seen during the inspection were broadly in line with those expected nationally. However, the school faces two major problems with its use of ICT: the small number of computers it has and the lack of space to house them. The school has worked hard to overcome these problems and is making the best use of space it can at the moment. For example, although a small suite of computers has to be sited in a corridor, it is linked to the Internet and pupils use the machines throughout the day to find information about their work in subjects such as history. However, significant parts of the ICT curriculum, such as sensing and control, have not been taught and, inevitably, standards overall remain below those nationally.

112. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a range of software to support their learning. For example, pupils have used a painting program to create pictures with associated text. Pupils confidently use the mouse to click and drag images around the screen. In Years 3 to 6 pupils learn about the use of computers for communicating: Year 3 pupils, for example, use e-mail to send and receive messages. By Year 6 most pupils use the computer to write and amend text and excellent examples of work using text and pictures to create a poetry booklet were seen. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are supported well; work on display about the environmental area shows their good achievement.

113. The school has taken proper steps to ensure pupils can use the Internet safely: it has a good policy and takes sensible precautions such as asking parents for permission for their children to use the Internet.

114. A small amount of teaching was seen. This was of good quality despite the difficulties of a small number of computers and, in one case, a very cramped classroom. No teaching was inspected during the previous inspection. The direct teaching of ICT skills enabled pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding in a relatively short time. The use of parent helpers is a useful way of ensuring that pupils can access the computers throughout the day. Teachers' recording of pupils' skills is at an early stage and the school will need to ensure that this remains manageable by keeping the records to the minimum of useful information.

115. Pupils enjoy learning how to use the computers. In ICT lessons and at other times when they are using the computers to support their learning, pupils show great interest. When they work in pairs they help one another to use the computers. As a result, pupils with access to the computers make good progress during lessons in their learning about ICT.

116. The ICT co-ordinator has been trained and has trained the staff successfully using New Opportunities Funding. This has been a very successful strategy, resulting in a better-trained staff than in most schools nationally. The provision of this training has been a major

improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

117. It was only possible to observe two music lessons, and there was not enough evidence to make a judgement about the standards attained by seven or eleven-year-olds. During the last inspection the standards in music were in line with national expectations.

118. A Year 3 lesson was observed in which children listened to the storm from the Alpine Symphony of Richard Strauss. They then developed and compared their own graphic scores, and represented them musically. In Year 6 the pupils were observed learning a new song to perform at a forthcoming local music festival. They were all involved in their work, and enjoyed the lesson. Their singing was tuneful and well phrased. In assemblies the pupils sing tunefully but a little quietly.

119. The teaching was at least satisfactory. The strengths of the teaching included good management of the pupils, the way the teacher made the work fun, effective questioning and good choices of music. The planning seen was effective, and teachers made good use of a recently purchased commercial scheme, which has helped to boost their confidence. Peripatetic teachers visit the school to teach violins, keyboards, woodwind and brass lessons.

120. The range and quantity of musical instruments are just satisfactory. There is no music room, and the instruments are stored in the hall, which makes access difficult. Lessons take place in classrooms, which limits the range of opportunities. A co-ordinator has been appointed since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. Standards are below expected levels in Year 2 and in line with expected levels in Year 6. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. Standards are adversely affected by the lack of time given to physical education in Years 1 and 2 and the variation of time allowed in Key Stage 2, which is not monitored. Lessons are also sometimes disrupted by arrangements for lunch.

122. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work enthusiastically in lessons and enjoy their work. They co-operate well with each other and know the routines of the structure of the lessons. Pupils use space well and are exploring simple skills. They are developing control of their bodies, although movements are not well co-ordinated or imaginative. Standards in Year 2 are less than satisfactory. Not enough lessons were observed in Year 1 and 2 to make a judgement about teaching. In some instances pupils were withdrawn in the middle of the PE lesson to read to an adult. If this is immediately after a warm-up then it is not healthy, if it is during the main part of the lesson then it interrupts learning. In one lesson a pupil was withdrawn in the middle of his demonstration of skills to his class. This is not good practice.

123. Overall teaching in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Teacher's expectations are high. In each lesson pupils make very good progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding because of the clear learning intentions of the teachers and the focused improvement points given. Pupils understand and are taught the importance of evaluating their work and that of others. Where this is focused on skill development then it helps pupils to make progress, although occasionally this becomes a routine rather than a supportive part of the lesson. By Year 4 pupils' skills of throwing and catching balls are not as well developed as they should be. By Year 6 they demonstrate a satisfactory ability to control their body movements and plan a

sequence of movements in gymnastics. As a result of good teaching the standards of the pupils are raised considerably by the end of Key Stage 2.

124. Pupils at the end of their time in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2 learn to swim in the local pool and standards are above average. Lessons are well structured with emphasis on praise and encouragement. Pupils are carefully observed and given good advice on appropriate techniques. The majority of pupils make very good progress. The range of sporting activities that take place outside school time for junior children enhances the PE curriculum.

125. The co-ordinator is a specialist PE teacher and sets a good example for other staff, promoting effective teaching. She has a good action plan for development but has no time to monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching or standards. The national scheme of work sets out model coverage that the school follows. This is more difficult when there are split year groups. There is no assessment system. Resources are just satisfactory but not well used.