

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **OAKRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110289

Head teacher: Margaret Jordan

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott  
3674

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April to 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 194665

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Address:	Oakridge Road High Wycombe Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP112PN
Telephone number:	01494 520341
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Christine Croft
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3674	Grace Marriott	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Religious education	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught?
9053	Vivienne Phillips	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23233	Jo-Anne Cheadle	Team inspector	Art, Geography, Music Equal opportunities	
23487	Patricia Kitley	Team inspector	English Physical education Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
31421	Susan Rogers	Team inspector	Science History	How well is the school led and managed?
5565	Bimla Thakur	Team inspector	Mathematics English as an additional language	
20506	John Tyler	Team inspector	Design and technology Foundation Stage	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Oakridge Combined School is in effect a new school. At the time of the last inspection it was a first school with a nursery and its pupils left at the end of Year 3. It is now a primary school with a nursery, and pupils will leave at the end of Year 6. At present the school has only five pupils of Year 6 age and the current Year 5 will be the first full year group to go through to Year 6. The school has 265 pupils on roll, with slightly more girls than boys overall and noticeably so in the Nursery and Reception classes. Pupils join the Nursery with very low levels of attainment. Most pupils live in a less affluent area of High Wycombe and over a third are eligible for free meals. This is high compared to national averages. Almost 90% of pupils are from ethnic minorities and speak English as an additional language. About a third are at a relatively early stage of learning English, with a few at a very early stage. Most pupils are of Pakistani origin and the main languages are Punjabi, Urdu and Malayalam. A few pupils are refugees. The proportion of children with special educational needs is about average. The main needs are moderate learning difficulties, with a few pupils who have speech difficulties or dyslexia. The judgments made in the report relate to pupils from all ethnic groups. Where appropriate, additional comments are made on any specific provision for different groups of pupils, such as those at the earliest stage of learning English.

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

Oakridge provides its pupils with a good education in a secure and happy environment. Pupils achieve well overall in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, from a very low starting point. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, but is improving because the quality of teaching in those years is now good. Though standards are below, and sometimes well below, average overall, those pupils who have received all or most of their education at Oakridge are working at an average level. Teaching is good overall though satisfactory in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). The school is well led and managed. The head teacher, staff and governors work well together and have sensible priorities for development. They have worked particularly hard to manage successfully the change from a first to a primary school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Good teaching in Years 1 to 6 motivates pupils to want to learn and do well
- Most pupils' are achieving well and make good progress from a low starting point. Children in the nursery make rapid progress
- Good relationships and a high level of trust lead to good behaviour and pupils respond well to what the school offers
- The school shows a high level of care and concern for pupils' welfare and progress
- The school is well led and managed, with a clear emphasis on promoting achievement and reaching high standards in all aspects of school life

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

- Writing skills are not being developed systematically enough across all subjects
- Subject planning, though satisfactory, could be improved to provide a broader and richer range of experiences particularly in Years 3 to 6
- Classrooms and other areas of the school could provide a more stimulating environment to help extend pupils' experience, particularly for the youngest children
- Pupils at the very earliest stage of learning English could make faster progress with more focused support

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in May 1997 when it was still a first school, taking pupils up to the end of Year 3. The main priority in the last three years has been establishing securely the provision for the older age group and this has been successfully achieved. The buildings and facilities have been extended and improved with additional classrooms, the provision of a well-equipped outdoor area for the youngest children and the creation of an ICT suite which gives all pupils better access to computers. The key issues identified in the last report have mostly been dealt with well. The monitoring of teaching is now systematic and effective in bringing about significant improvement. Design and technology, physical education (PE) and history are all much improved and the provision in music is good in Years 3 to 6, though not yet in Years 1 and 2. The school has worked hard to improve attendance and punctuality, but these still remains an area of concern with a minority of pupils. Despite the school's best efforts, extended holidays overseas are having an effect on some pupils' progress.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 in National Curriculum tests. *\*similar schools means schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals*

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	D	D	E	D
writing	B	B	D	C
mathematics	C	D	E	D

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

In the national tests taken in Year 2 in 2001, the results of pupils who had been at Oakridge since the Nursery were close to the national average, though overall, results were well below average, both nationally and for schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Standards in writing were much better than in reading or mathematics and matched those of similar schools. The results in 2001 were affected by the late arrival of 9 pupils who joined the school in Year 2, some of whom had very little knowledge of English. In general, the boys have done better in reading and writing and the girls have done slightly better in mathematics. The school has not yet entered pupils for the national tests taken in Year 6. The targets for 2003, when the first full year group will take these tests, are ambitious but achievable.

Pupils join the Nursery with very low levels of attainment. To start with they make rapid progress, and, though this slows down, their achievement is still good overall. At the end of the Foundation Stage standards are well below national expectations in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment is below expectations in mathematical and creative development. In physical development, most children are meeting the early learning goals and attainment is in line with national expectations.

The work seen during the inspection showed that in Years 1 and 2 pupils are generally achieving well in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, ICT PE, and RE compared with their starting point in the Foundation Stage. The standards in the present Year 2 are better than last year mainly because more pupils have been at the school since the Nursery. Except for English which is below average, attainment is broadly average in all subjects. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are achieving well in mathematics, design and technology, ICT and RE and satisfactorily in English and in the other subjects. Attainment is average in mathematics, design and technology, ICT, geography and RE. It is below average in English, science, PE, art and history.

In English, standards in speaking are generally better than in reading or writing. In Years 1 and 2 most pupils are reading simple books accurately and are writing independently. In Years 3 to 6 some pupils do not have a secure enough understanding of the structure of the language or of phonics to enable them to cope with the increasing demands in English and in other subjects as they get older. Standards in numeracy are sound overall and pupils use their numeracy skills well in other subjects. Standards in ICT have improved because pupils have many more opportunities to use computers. Pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress. Most pupils in the school, almost all of whom have English as an additional language, achieve well overall, though those at the very earliest stage of learning English are achieving at a satisfactory rate.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils like school and their attitudes are good. They want to please teachers and to earn rewards for trying hard with their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around school is usually good. Pupils of all ages respond well to the school's simple rules and expectation of courtesy.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good, in response to the positive example set by staff, who foster a real sense of community and trust. Pupils develop self-confidence and their overall personal development is satisfactory.

Attendance	Attendance is well below average because of extended overseas visits. The school's level of unauthorised absence is lower than usual.
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When children start school many of them lack the range of everyday and wider experiences that most children of their age have had and their personal and social skills are not well developed. The school helps them to develop self-confidence and basic respect for others. The school has accepted and authorised parents' requests for long absences overseas, but recognises that this is not always appropriate.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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.*

The teaching in the Foundation Stage was never less than satisfactory and there were strengths in the well-established routines; in the good questioning that challenged children and deepened their understanding; and in the way in which teachers encouraged children to work and play well together. Bilingual staff are good role models for pupils and provide good levels of support through using pupils' home languages. Where the teaching was less effective, adults and children were not always clear enough about the purpose of activities and adults sometimes missed opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding or give them guidance on choosing activities. The main weakness in the teaching is that teachers are not creating a rich enough environment in the classrooms to help stimulate learning, develop children's knowledge of English, and show that all languages and cultures are valued.

In Years 1 to 6 the teaching is good overall, with more strengths than weaknesses. There was very little unsatisfactory teaching or learning. The best teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6 where there was a high proportion of very good and some excellent teaching. As a result the learning is improving and this should over time lead to higher standards. The teaching of English and mathematics is good overall and the literacy and numeracy strategies are securely in place. The teaching is also good, but not quite as good, in Years 1 and 2. Most ICT teaching is now good as teachers have become more confident in their own knowledge and skills and are able to exploit the improved resources to raise the quality of pupils' learning.

The main strengths in the good and very good teaching are good planning of a step by step approach which supports the pupils and helps less experienced teachers. Teachers make good links between different parts of the lesson so that written work enables pupils to build on oral work. Teachers have high expectations and questioning helps pupils to learn to think and to extend their first answers. Specialist staff working alongside teachers in the classroom provide good general support for bilingual pupils though this could be more precisely targeted for the pupils at the earliest stage of learning English. This works particularly well in practical activities. Teachers and support assistants also work well together to give good support to pupils with special educational needs.

Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects or to develop pupils' vocabulary were missed. There was some lack of consistency in ensuring pupils, particularly boys, learn through listening carefully to the teacher and each other. The teaching of handwriting is not good enough. The best marking gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work, but this is not consistent enough across the school. As in the Foundation Stage, most classrooms are not providing a stimulating environment which will help children learn. On a few occasions the specialist skills of an English as an additional language teacher were not being used to best effect.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets requirements and the strong emphasis on English is very appropriate for the needs of the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The support is good both in classes and in the small groups withdrawn from mainstream lessons for additional literacy work.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	All teachers take responsibility for supporting pupils' language development within their classroom and this meets most needs, though a few pupils need more closely focused support.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes satisfactory provision overall for pupils' personal, development and good provision for spiritual and moral development, but opportunities to widen and enrich pupils' experiences are not always planned systematically enough
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's systems and procedures provide a firm foundation for teaching and learning because they help pupils to feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Information from assessment is being successfully used to track pupils' progress.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall but could be developed further to extend pupils' experiences at all stages by providing a more stimulating environment and culturally broader range of activities. Displays could be used more effectively to support this. A good range of extra-curricular activities that are well supported by both boys and girls enriches pupils' learning in Years 3 to 6. However there are no activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2, though they are involved in events and festivals during the year. The partnership with parents is satisfactory.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The school continues to be well led by the Head teacher. Her vision is shared by a hardworking team of staff and a supportive governing body.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is committed, experienced and appropriately involved in monitoring the school's work and planning its future.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher, senior staff and governors monitor teaching and pupils' progress systematically and effectively.
The strategic use of resources	The school plans well to use its resources to create a purposeful and supportive working environment.

The head teacher and governors have worked hard to ensure that as the school expands, it is well staffed. Staff are generally well-deployed but some of the support for pupils at the very earliest stage of learning English is not as well-targeted as it could be to maximise their progress. The accommodation is spacious and well maintained. Learning resources are satisfactory overall and good in mathematics. In English, the book stock is satisfactory for most pupils, but not yet extensive enough for some older pupils. The school's finances are carefully managed to support the school's development and the school is applying satisfactorily the principles of best value to all aspects of its 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"> <li>• Their children like school and make good progress</li> <li>• The school has high expectations for work and behaviour</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and staff are approachable</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The school helps children to become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework</li> </ul>

The parents were very positive about the school. The only real criticisms were about homework where parents were divided about the amount their children should receive. They were agreed that it was not always set consistently. The inspection team felt that the parents' confidence in the school is largely justified and that the provision of homework was satisfactory overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The school has not yet entered pupils for the national tests taken in Year 6. Results of the national tests taken in Year 2 show that in 2001, the pupils who had been at Oakridge since the Nursery were close to the national average. The results in 2001 were affected by the late arrival of nine pupils who joined the school in Year 2, most of whom had very little knowledge of English.
2. The overall results were well below average, both nationally and for schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Results in writing were much better than in reading or mathematics and matched those of similar schools. The results in recent years were closer to the national average in reading, and better in writing. Boys have done better in reading and writing and the girls have done slightly better in mathematics. The school has not yet entered pupils for the national tests taken in Year 6 but the targets for the current Year 5 who will be the first group to take these tests, are ambitious but achievable.
3. Pupils join the Nursery with very low levels of attainment. To start with they make rapid progress and though this slows down, their achievement in the Foundation Stage is still good overall. Most children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals except in physical development where attainment is in line with expectations. In personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world standards are well below national expectations. Attainment is below expectations in mathematical and creative development.
4. The work seen during the inspection showed that in Years 1 and 2 except for English which is below average, pupils' attainment is broadly average in all subjects. The standard of work seen was better than the previous year's test results mainly of differences between the year groups and most pupils had been at the school since the Nursery. Pupils are generally achieving well in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography, ICT, PE, and RE compared with their starting point at the end of the Foundation Stage. Their achievement is satisfactory in music.
5. In Years 3 to 6 pupils' attainment is average in mathematics, design and technology, ICT, geography, music and RE. It is below average in English, science, PE, art and history. Pupils are achieving well relative to their starting point, in mathematics, design and technology, ICT and RE. It is satisfactory in most other subjects though not in art.
6. Standards in English across the school are below expectations at all stages. However pupils make good progress in relation to their starting point. The achievements of higher attaining pupils and those who have been at the school for all or most of their education, are close to the national average in all aspects of English. However, some average and lower attaining pupils have not yet developed the control of written language required for the standards expected by the age of eleven. Similarly in reading, their knowledge of phonics is not secure enough. In speaking and listening pupils are keen to contribute orally, though with a wide variation in their ability to express themselves fluently. Standards of handwriting are below average across the school because pupils do not take enough care to form letters properly.

7. In mathematics standards have risen this year throughout the school, particularly in Year 5/6, where performance closely matches expected standards. Standards in numeracy are sound throughout the school. Pupils are able to recall number facts at expected levels, and make their calculations using mental methods and written methods. Older pupils are beginning to check if their answers are reasonable. Pupils' knowledge of tables is sound and they use numeracy skills increasingly in their day-to-day work and in other subjects such as science. Problem solving skills develop satisfactorily, though pupils' achievement is occasionally limited by their difficulties in understanding more demanding language.
8. Pupils are benefiting significantly from the opportunities provided by the ICT suite. Standards are average overall and are improving as pupils rapidly acquire a wide range of skills in, and understanding of, ICT. They use ICT in a variety of subjects such as music, history, English and mathematics and are keen to experiment to see what they can achieve.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the clear and appropriate targets set for them in both key stages mainly because of good support in lessons, but there are some small withdrawal groups for early and additional literacy support. The school has as yet no provision to identify pupils with particular talents and gifts. Most of the pupils who have special educational needs also have English as an additional language.
10. Overall, the pupils, almost all of whom have English as an additional language, make good progress, though for those at the very earliest stages of learning English it is satisfactory. The difference becomes most evident in their written work and in their ability to work independently and develop problem-solving skills which require higher levels of knowledge and understanding of English.

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

11. Pupils like school and are happy to join in the early morning activities as soon as they arrive in class. Their attitudes are good and they are willing to have a go when asked to work on their own. They want to please teachers and to earn rewards for trying hard with their work. At first, pupils depend on adults to encourage them to take an interest in learning through well-chosen tasks and stories. When pupils find that they enjoy work in different subjects, their own motivation to learn strengthens. They usually behave well in lessons, except when teaching lacks a sharp focus on specific gaps in individual knowledge or skill and one or two pupils lose concentration. A few pupils find it hard to listen, follow instructions and work constructively with other people, in spite of the good example set by staff and other children. Their inability to settle and listen well rarely spoils lessons or the positive atmosphere in school, but means that they do not make best use of ideas presented. Behaviour outside lessons is good because pupils of all ages respond well to the school's simple rules and expectation of courtesy, particularly in remembering to hold open doors for people and to say please and thank you at appropriate times. Pupils work and play together in harmony, so bullying is unusual. The school has not needed to exclude any pupils.
12. Relationships are good, in response to the positive example set by staff, who foster a real sense of community and trust amongst pupils of different ethnic origins. Pupils play together well, with help from adults, who are happy to teach them different playground games. On arrival in the school, children lack the range of everyday and wider experiences common at their age. As a result, their personal and social skills are not well developed and their early responses to school life are immature. The school helps children to develop self-confidence and basic respect for others. As a result, in time, pupils reach satisfactory levels of personal development, as their understanding of other people's feelings and rights grows. A few pupils are not as good as their classmates at

hearing what others have to say in a quiet and supportive way. For example, individual boys, in particular, talk when someone else is speaking and take little interest in the ideas expressed. They have not yet learned to value different viewpoints and to recognise that they can learn from other pupils' contributions in lessons. Otherwise, with help, most pupils show increasing interest in ideas different from their own. Their skills in using initiative with their work and taking responsibility are improving. Older pupils help younger ones with reading and sometimes with playground games, which they all enjoy greatly.

13. Attendance is well below average. Although most pupils are rarely absent or late without good reason and so make good progress, too many pupils are absent abroad for more than ten days during the term instead of in school holidays. As a result, these pupils miss a significant number of lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy and cannot keep up with their classmates. In spite of the school's great efforts to help them, it is impossible to make up for so much time lost within a particular school year and, in several cases, for all the time missed during their primary school careers. This means that a few children fail to achieve the standards of which they are capable. The school's level of unauthorised absence is lower than usual. To date, the school has accepted and authorised parents' requests for long absences overseas, but recognises that this is not always appropriate.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

14. The teaching in the foundation stage was never less than satisfactory and there were strengths in the well-established routines which help children to feel secure, understand what is expected of them and become more independent. In the best sessions, good questioning challenged children and deepened their understanding. Teachers and other adults encourage children to work and play well together which helps to develop their social skills. Where the teaching was less effective, adults and children were not always clear enough about the purpose of activities. Adults sometimes missed opportunities to extend children's knowledge and understanding through discussion, or give them guidance on what they should be doing or the choices available so that children were not always able to make best use of the opportunities available. Bilingual staff are good role models for pupils and provide good levels of support through using pupils' home languages. The main weakness in the teaching was that the classrooms did not provide a rich and stimulating enough environment to help children improve their knowledge, understanding and use of language in general and English in particular.
15. In Years 1 to 6 the teaching is good overall, with more strengths than weaknesses. The best teaching was seen in Years 3 to 6 where there was a high proportion of very good and some excellent teaching. As a result the learning is improving and this should, over time, lead to higher standards. The teaching is also good, but not quite as good in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of English and mathematics is good and the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are securely in place. Most ICT teaching is now good, as teachers have become more confident in their own knowledge and skills and are able to exploit the improved resources to improve the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils are learning ICT skills which they use to support work in other subjects, for example in mathematics, science, history, geography and music.
16. The main strengths in the good and very good teaching are good planning of a step-by-step approach which supports the pupils and helps less experienced teachers. This was evident in most subjects, but particularly in mathematics. Teachers make good links between different parts of the lesson so that written work enables pupils to build on oral work. In a Year 2 literacy lesson very clear learning objectives explained at the start of the lesson, meant that pupils were making very good progress in developing simple note taking skills. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils practised reading

dialogue aloud and then progressed to writing it with speech marks correctly placed. Teachers have high expectations and questioning helps pupils to learn to think and to extend their first answers. Teachers use assessment well to help them plan to meet pupils' specific needs. The teaching of music is very good in Years 3 to 6 where a skilled specialist teacher brings enthusiasm and high expectations to lessons and generates a very good response from pupils.

17. Where teaching was satisfactory rather than good there were missed opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects or to develop pupils' vocabulary. There is some lack of consistency in ensuring pupils, particularly boys, learn through listening carefully to the teacher and each other. Handwriting is not well taught across the school and does not make it easy for pupils to develop accurate spelling and punctuation or present their work neatly. The best marking gives pupils good guidance on how to improve their work, but this is not consistent enough across the school.
18. Teachers value the culture and experiences which children bring with them and treat these with due respect. They make particularly good use of pupils' religious understanding and their knowledge of Islam in religious education (RE). However, as in the Foundation Stage, with the notable exception of Year 1, teachers are not using the classrooms as a resource to provide a rich environment which stimulates learning and develops pupils' knowledge of English, or to show that all language and culture is valued.
19. The teaching of English as an additional language has maintained its good quality since the last inspection. All teachers take responsibility for supporting pupils' language development within their classroom and this meets most needs. There is generally good emphasis on specialist staff working alongside teachers in the classroom and providing support through group activities. This gives a good adult-child ratio and pupils have more individual attention. They benefit from the additional support provided during the literacy and numeracy lessons, although this could be made more effective through more focused and individually targeted support for pupils at the earliest stages. Some pupils of average and below average attainment would also benefit from work which helped develop their understanding of phonics. There were a few instances where best use was not made of specialist time during lessons, particularly when a specialist teacher was supporting whole class sessions led by the class teacher. Pupils learn particularly well in lessons where work is based on practical activities, and resources are used to good effect in developing a good understanding of ideas involved. This was evident in a number of mathematics lessons observed during the inspection.
20. The overall quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, both in classes and in small groups. Teachers make sure that the work matches the needs of these pupils and work effectively with the special needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants who teach small groups and individuals. These sessions are well taught and make a good contribution to raising the standards of academic achievement for these pupils. Weekly planning sheets record new work or new words to be introduced and assess achievement towards learning them. A feature of the lessons seen during the inspection was the way in which support teachers help pupils practise an answer so that their views are included in discussions.

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

21. In the Foundation Stage the curriculum is planned to ensure that children gain a broad range of experiences. It covers all the areas of learning required, with a suitable emphasis on communication, language and literacy. The planning makes appropriate use of the indoor and outdoor facilities. However the balance between activities that are initiated by adults and children

is sound, but too little emphasis is placed on children systematically planning and recording when they are invited to choose activities. Systems for assessing children's attainment and progress are good. The information gathered is sometimes used well to identify where individual children need support or extra challenge. Being a new system, it is not yet used effectively to identify overall strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum being provided.

22. In Years 1 to 6, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum to which all pupils have satisfactory access. All subjects of the National Curriculum meet statutory requirements. Curriculum time is used well and little time is wasted. The additional time allocated to literacy is appropriate because almost all pupils have English as an additional language and there is suitable emphasis on the teaching of numeracy. The overall planning of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, the schemes of work are somewhat narrow in scope, particularly in Years 3 to 6 where the emphasis has been on ensuring that the core curriculum in English and mathematics is secure. The nationally recommended outlines for each subject need to be further developed to take account of the specific needs of the school. Another area for further development is to extend pupils' experiences at all stages by providing a language rich environment and a culturally broader range of activities. The provision in music is significantly better for older pupils because the expertise of a specialist teacher is being used effectively in Years 3 to 6.
23. In Years 1 and 2 the planning for the development of literacy skills and numeracy skills is good and the study of Cogges Manor Farm and the work on the visit to Hambleden extend pupils' knowledge of geography, history and science. Developing these skills is also planned as part of work for older pupils in making notes and writing up interviews in religious education and geography and in measurement and displaying results in science but the planning for this is not yet as systematic as it is in Years 1 and 2.
24. The school has a clear policy for equal opportunities, with aims firmly linked to creating a fully inclusive learning environment. The school's climate of building pupils' self-esteem and confidence underpins the equality of opportunity for all. The school pays adequate attention to ensuring that the curriculum is accessible to every pupil, and pupils with special educational needs receive generally good support to assist their access. Most of the school's pupils have English as an additional language and the support is generally effective in giving them access to the curriculum, though a few pupils who are at a very early stage of learning English would benefit from more focused support. The school works hard to counter stereotypes and there was good evidence of this in a Year 5 lesson, where boys, who were very happy to let girls take over the writing and recording of work while they did the more practical tasks, were very well challenged by the teacher. The school, however, does not yet carry out a detailed analysis of standards to ensure that boys and girls are making the same rates of progress.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers draw up individual education plans in collaboration with the special needs co-ordinator and teaching assistants. They include parental and pupils' views, as well as a named person to liaise between school and home, for example, an older brother or sister. They set clear targets and specify help that is designed to support language acquisition if pupils are learning English as an additional language. Teachers have running record books that assess progress towards targets. There is good support for pupils in classes and small groups withdrawn from mainstream lessons for additional literacy support. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are well supported by effective teaching assistants. There are good systems to support statement reviews which take place as required.
26. Pupils' learning is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities in Years 3 to 6 that are well supported by both boys and girls. These include clubs for chess, ICT, food technology and

country dancing. Sports' clubs include rugby, cricket, netball, badminton and athletics. The Tag Rugby team took part in a local schools' tournament for the first time last year, and won. A weakness is that there are no activities for pupils in Years 1 and 2, however, younger pupils are involved in the celebration of a wide range of events and festivals during the year. Children have performed at the Swan Centre as part of a local initiative, 'Energize', and entertain the elderly at a local nursing home. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school support work in geography, history, science and religious education. The school has yet to establish contacts with secondary schools for the first full year of transfer in 2003.

27. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It makes particularly good use of the pupils' own religious and cultural backgrounds to support the religious education curriculum and their spiritual awareness and provision for spiritual development is good overall. RE lessons promote spiritual development well and introduce pupils to the beliefs and practices of the main world faiths. They help to develop pupils understanding of why religious belief is considered important by many people. Assemblies such as those where awards are given and children present their own work make a good contribution to personal development, particularly when there is a real sense of occasion and pride in achievement. Good examples of awe-inspiring moments, carefully planned by teachers, include the chance for Year 1 children to look closely at fascinating pieces of sculpture from around the world. However in some lessons some more attention could be given to sharing different experiences, developing critical thinking skills and reflecting on remarkable times in people's lives. Displays do not consistently reflect the extent to which teachers actually do value children's ideas, feelings and own stories, artwork and self-expression.
28. Moral development is nurtured well in a positive climate that encourages pupils to try to do what is right, even if they are not always successful in their efforts. The school works hard to foster honesty, fairness and tolerance, with staff setting a good example of how to treat others with consideration. They work hard to help pupils to understand the "golden rules" displayed round the school and to follow these in and out of lessons. Pupils sometimes struggle with codes of conduct that apply in classrooms, where everyone is equally valued whatever their background and gender, so adults have to keep reminding them about respect for others' rights. Teachers try to use stories to help children distinguish between good and bad behaviour and to think about moral values.
29. The school encourages pupils to get on well together at work and play. Adults provide good role models of how to relate to others constructively. They give pupils chances to work with a partner, or within groups but these are not always planned carefully enough to develop co-operation and a sense of responsibility towards others. The best group work develops subject knowledge and social skills well, as in a very productive Year 3 science lesson where pupils had to co-operate in investigating how different materials conduct electricity. Teachers are not always firm enough about pupils taking turns to speak, to listen and to share ideas and resources. The school knows this and wants to extend the chances pupils have to contribute to the life of the school. It has set up some paired reading where a few older pupils hear younger children read at break. Older pupils help new children settle in to school. Plans are well in hand for the development of an active school council. In general, the school fosters social development reasonably well, but with scope for further emphasis on pupils learning to take responsibility for their action and in the life of the school community
30. Although the school makes acceptable provision for pupils' cultural development, it is not as active as might be expected in promoting local and wider cultural traditions, given its concern about the limited social experiences of many of its pupils. It makes good use of visits to places such as Hambleden and Hampton Court to help pupils to learn more about Britain's cultural heritage.

Lunchtime and after school clubs extend pupils' range of skills and experience, as well as their enjoyment of activities such as cooking and tag rugby. Subjects do not always contribute as strongly to cultural development as might be expected because work in art, literature, drama, poetry and other areas is not displayed prominently to highlight its value. Local artists, writers, musicians and storytellers do not visit frequently to inspire and enrich pupils' learning. The children's own cultural traditions are valued and are celebrated at the appropriate times of year.

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

31. The school has good welfare procedures that provide a firm foundation for what happens in the classroom because pupils feel safe, secure and ready to learn. Child protection arrangements are in place and used well when appropriate. Careful attention is paid to issues of health, safety and well being. The head teacher knows pupils and their families very well, is quick to spot changes in behaviour and progress and to discuss these constructively with teachers, children and parents. Teachers know individual pupils well and keep good records that allow them to recognise when children need some help or deserve an award. They respond well to pupils' needs in a warm, positive way that encourages trust and respect at all levels and between different ethnic groups.
32. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting behaviour and personal development. It monitors attendance vigilantly, but some parents do not respond as well as hoped to the school's efforts to reduce absence. There is scope for telling these parents exactly how many literacy and numeracy sessions children miss year after year and for the school to consider not authorising absences that seem avoidable. These include extended holidays during the term and when the school has any doubt that an absence is for good reason, for instance, illness of an excessive number of grandparents.
33. The school has implemented a suitable system of new assessment procedures since September 2001. Procedures are supported by a very clear timetable for assessment in all subjects, throughout the course of the year. Appropriate emphasis has been placed on literacy and numeracy, and there are manageable procedures for all other subjects. The information is being successfully used to track pupils' progress over time, influence curriculum planning and set targets for improvements, and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
34. Initial assessments of pupils' language skills are carried out in the Foundation Stage and records are passed on to teachers in Year 1, which is useful in tracking pupils' progress at the end of the year. Procedures for assessing pupils' English language needs, feeding information into planning and tracking progress over time are well established across the school, but still need refining for the benefit of those pupils who need more support. The lack of detailed records means that it is difficult to see where exactly the gaps are, for example, identifying those pupils whose understanding of phonics is not strong enough, and where the additional support should be targeted. The school has recently started using the latest national guidance on using common criteria for assessing the needs of pupils who have English as an additional language and the effectiveness of this approach will be reviewed later in the summer term.
35. When assessing pupils' needs the school is careful to distinguish between special educational needs and the support needed because a pupil is at an early stage of learning English. This helps to ensure that the support provided meets the needs of the pupils. Bilingual assistants at the school act as translators for parents when the school wishes to discuss their children's progress or needs with them. Individual education plans are written and reviewed regularly and the systems to ensure

that annual reviews take place at the appropriate times are sound. The co-ordinator measures progress towards appropriate learning and behaviour targets and where relevant, assesses the effect of prolonged absence when pupils return from overseas visits. Tracking for pupils in Key Stage 2 is more focused than for Key Stage 1 and identifies pupils whose progress might be delayed by their additional language needs. Assessment and record keeping for pupils with statements of special educational need is of good quality.

36. All pupils have individual assessment folders containing samples of moderated work in English, mathematics and science. The samples give clear evidence of progress in pupils' learning and are carefully moderated against National Curriculum levels. The school's assessment policy outlines procedures for involving pupils in evaluation of their own work. Assessment folders contain good evidence that pupils are now reviewing their own work to make improvements. The school has a very good marking policy. At the present time, not all teachers apply the recommendations of the policy consistently, and therefore, some marked work cannot be used effectively to track progress in relation to learning objectives for a particular lesson, or to track progress overtime.
37. The deputy head teacher, as assessment co-ordinator, brought clear skills in analysing data that have benefited the school's use of assessment information. There is a shared commitment to improve further the school's pupil tracking system to ensure a greater impact on the standards they attain. New tracking sheets are to include a clear target for attainment in each subject, so that pupils and teachers know exactly what skills and knowledge they are aiming to achieve.

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

38. Parents think very well of the school. They believe that it is helping their children to behave well and enjoy learning because of its high expectations. They appreciate the way that the school has managed to keep its family feel and sense of community in spite of the change from First to Primary school. The welcome given to parents at the beginning and end of the school day and on occasions such as class assemblies is warm and positive. All these factors help to build good relationships between home and school. As yet, these are not strong enough in all cases for links to be more than satisfactory overall, in spite of considerable efforts by the school to encourage parents to become involved with its work.
39. The school provides a wide range of information for parents and makes good use of face-to-face contact to keep families up to date about what is happening. Written reports give good information about pupils' progress, but not always in language easy for parents to understand. Pupils have good opportunities to write about their own progress. Their best comments show an impressive grasp of personal strengths and weaknesses. The school recognises that parents would find it easier to understand what is written about progress if the useful summary information and key targets were highlighted more clearly. Other documents, such as the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents, are dull. They lack examples of children's work and photographs typical of better information for parents, including newsletters, provided by other schools and made possible by new technology. Overall, the quality of information for parents is satisfactory.
40. The school works hard to involve parents with their children's work and its everyday life, but is not always as successful as it would like to be in encouraging parents to give a high priority to education. There is good dialogue with bilingual parents on a day-to-day basis. Links with parents, however, are not sufficiently strong in relation to pupils' learning or in building on pupils' experiences from home. The school remains concerned about absence levels, the related lack of progress of individual children and the difficulties they have in settling into school and making friends again after missing so many days and lessons. Parents' meetings and events organised by

the Parents' Association are well attended. Parents and children's brothers and sisters help with reading where they can. As a result, the overall impact of parents' involvement with the school is satisfactory.

41. Annual reports to parents include a report on progress for pupils who receive additional support in small groups. Bi-lingual leaflets about work of the outside agencies are sent home. However, other printed information is not readily available for parents in other languages, and the statement in the school brochure does not reflect the changes that have taken place to make special education a feature of whole school provision. The special educational needs co-ordinator is working hard to involve parents more closely with school. She meets with them at the end of the school day to encourage them to come in, and is present at parents meetings to discuss their children's progress.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

42. The school continues to be well led by the head teacher. She is very knowledgeable about the school community and the families that attend the school. She enjoys good relationships with the parents and is very clear about priorities for school development. Her vision is shared by a hardworking team of staff and an experienced and supportive governing body. It is clear that the school is working towards its stated aim of developing each child to his or her full potential. It has been successful in creating the purposeful but supportive working environment that is a major part of its goals.
43. The head teacher, deputy head, senior staff team, subject co-ordinators and governors all work well together to provide good management. The governing body is committed, experienced and involved well in monitoring the school's work and planning its future. The school has been expanding from a first school to a primary school over the last few years, extending its age range to 11. Planning for this and implementing the necessary changes has been an overriding priority. The changes to the school mean that the head teacher has had to give considerable time to the development of the buildings. She has also made the recruiting of the best quality teachers available a high priority.
44. The senior management team together with a working party of governors, construct the framework for the school improvement plan with subject co-ordinators having responsibility for their individual sections. There has been appropriate focus on improving the quality of teaching and standards in core subjects are improving as a result. The whole staff team are hard working and very committed. The school has set challenging targets for test results and is focusing on appropriate strategies to achieve these.
45. The head teacher and deputy have divided responsibilities so that the deputy has an overview of curriculum while the head teacher has the lead role in monitoring teaching and learning. Co-ordinators generally manage their subjects well and are good at identifying subject weaknesses and prioritising these though they are less clear about whole school priorities and timescales.
46. Governors are knowledgeable about the school, being kept well informed by the head teacher. Governors visit regularly and report back to the full governing body meetings on their visits, for example, governors have recently observed literacy and numeracy sessions. Governors also take opportunities for training and development. The governing body is effective in monitoring the school's provision for children with special educational needs and the representative has attended a forum to highlight changes in the Code of Practice. Senior managers report to the governing body and the representative governor visits school regularly. The special needs co-ordinator

provides good leadership and plans the work for the very effective support assistants who help pupils in classes and small groups.

47. The aspect of the school improvement plan which deals with providing support for pupils with English as an additional language allocates responsibilities for various aspects to different members of staff, including the literacy co-ordinator and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. All teaching staff understand that they have a responsibility for providing suitable work for pupils at different stages of learning English. Pupils benefit from the additional support that is provided through the learning support assistants, the literacy co-ordinator, and the teacher and staff funded through the 'Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant' (EMAG). However the role of the EMAG teacher is not clear in terms of identifying needs and supporting pupils at the early stages of English acquisition or in reviewing how pupils' needs are being met. The EMAG teacher does not have a clear role in whole school planning or development. Support does not always focus as sharply on meeting individual needs to ensure gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding are identified more precisely, and pupils are given the best possible support. There is need to strike a better balance between meeting the needs of the pupils as a whole, and meeting the specific language related needs of some individual children, particularly those at the earliest stages of learning English.
48. The quality of teaching is well monitored. The head teacher has a clear and useful lesson observation schedule and the co-ordinators have recently watched all teachers teaching literacy and numeracy. All subject areas have been monitored and work from all subjects is sampled. Findings are fed back to the teachers concerned and are passed onto the Head and Deputy using special forms. This ensures that standards both across the age ranges and across the curriculum subjects can be properly assessed.
49. The school has a large proportion of new staff who have been generally well supported using the mentor system. Staff are well matched to their areas of responsibility and performance management has been well implemented by the head teacher. The teachers are appropriately supported by well-trained classroom assistants and conscientious administrative and premises staff. A useful training programme is available to everyone. The school is very good at seeking advice from advisers and consultants or bringing in outside trainers to support their work.
50. The budget is well managed by the governors, head teacher and bursar. It is clearly linked to the identified school priorities. Funds are directed mainly at the new buildings and at keeping class sizes small and the school is applying the principles of best value satisfactorily. The school has used EMAG funding to provide additional staffing which helps to provide pupils with more individual attention. Grants have also been utilized to install a new computer suite. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects, but there are not enough bilingual books and books to extend the older readers in the school. Resources for ICT have been considerably expanded and this is having a positive effect on pupils' knowledge, skills and ability to use ICT in a variety of circumstances. The relatively high balance carried forward from the last financial year has been planned to support with the additional expenditure associated with the expansion of the school and to maintain for as long as possible the favourable adult-child ratios.
51. The school building is bright and well maintained. The library has moved to the entrance hall to make room for the new computer suite and there are plans to redesign this area and the dining hall. There is a well-planned outdoor area for younger pupils, a good playground space and a newly landscaped school field.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

As part of their planning designed to raise standards, the governors, head teacher and staff should take steps to:

- 1) Improve the quality of writing through
  - more specific planning to use and develop writing skills in all subjects;
  - a uniform approach to the teaching of handwriting.

*Paragraphs 16,23,69,70,71,79,88,106,121*
  
- 2) Develop schemes of work and planning which focuses more on extending the curriculum and provide a broader and richer range of experiences, at all stages, but particularly in Years 3 to 6.

*Paragraphs 22,30*
  
- 3) Develop the use of display in classrooms at all stages in the school, but particularly in the Foundation Stage, to provide a more visually stimulating and language rich environment which both draws on and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of languages and cultures.

*Paragraphs 14,18,22,27,55,59,*
  
- 4) Improve the co-ordination of EAL provision, particularly for those pupils at the very earliest stage of learning to
  - maximise the effectiveness of the support given in class by identifying and targeting individual needs;
  - strengthen their understanding of the structure of English and phonics in particular;
  - extend pupils' vocabulary so that they can cope with more complex tasks in the different subjects.

*Paragraphs 17,19,34,47,67,76*

In addition the governors should include in their action plan

- 1) Reviewing procedures for authorising absence and for keeping parents informed of the effect of absence on their children's education.

*Paragraph 13*
  
- 2) Improve the provision of music in Years 1 and 2, and art in Years 3 to 6

*Paragraphs 92,115*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

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

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	7	27	22		1	
Percentage	7	12	45	37		2	

*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 two percentage points.*

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	N – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	265
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	89

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	N – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	240

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	35
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	8.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the academic year 2000 - 2001.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for	2001	21	19	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	14	16	18
	Total	28	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (85)	78 (95)	85 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	16	15
	Girls	15	16	15
	Total	30	32	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (95)	80 (97)	75 (79)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2000

There is no table of results of End of Key Stage 2 tests because the first year group to take the tests will not do so until 2003.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	
Indian	6
Pakistani	151
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	27
Any other minority ethnic group	7

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: N-Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	22

#### **Education support staff: R-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	117

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	425968
Total expenditure	395370
Expenditure per pupil	1595
Balance brought forward from previous year	50237
Balance carried forward to next year	80835

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	265
Number of questionnaires returned	140

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48	6	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	36	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	42	10	3	4
The teaching is good.	61	35	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	61	32	6	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	24	4	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	24	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	55	37	4	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	25	3	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	32	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	24	5	1	5

## **CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

52. Overall in the Foundation Stage children achieve well. Many children enter the Nursery with levels of attainment that are very low overall. The majority speak very little English and many have quite a low level of skills in their first language. In many cases, their personal, social and emotional development is well below that which is usually seen in children of this age.. They make good progress in the six areas of learning for this age group, achieving well in relation to their starting points. By the time they move onto the Reception classes, their overall attainment has risen from very low to well below average. Development in communication, language and literacy remains the weakest area, while their physical development is broadly average. Depending upon their birth date, children spend either three or two terms in Reception. They achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment in the Nursery and make sound progress over time. By the end of Reception, standards remain well below national expectations in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, and in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment is below expectations in mathematical and creative development. In physical development, most children are meeting the early learning goals and attainment is in line with national expectations.
53. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Children learn at a good pace when they initially enter the Nursery because the experiences and opportunities are new to many of them. This helps them to gain quickly in confidence to play and communicate with others. The pace slows somewhat in the Nursery as the children become more used to what is being offered, but remains satisfactory overall and is good in some lessons and areas of learning. In the lessons seen in both the Nursery and Reception classes, the most effective learning took place when the quality of teaching was best. The pace was most rapid when the positive features included good questioning that challenged children and deepened their understanding; encouragement to children to work collaboratively; good teamwork amongst the staff. Well established routines and high expectations, such as for children to clear up quickly and co-operatively after working and children having a clear idea of what they were expected to do and learn, also contributed strongly to the best sessions. Children with special educational needs are well-supported.
54. In most of the lessons seen, teaching was judged to be satisfactory and included some of these strong features, but there were also some weaknesses that included lesson planning not identifying what was to be learned in the activities that children undertook independently of adults and not enough prompts for children in these activities to make their play more purposeful. In addition adults sometimes focused so much on one activity that they missed opportunities to extend learning in others.
55. The main weakness in the teaching is that classroom displays are not stimulating enough and do not make learning relevant through representing the range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children. They do not give as much support as it might to the work being done to develop children's language skills. At the time of the inspection, for example, few displays included books, artefacts or three-dimensional art, or text in languages other than English. Many opportunities are missed to use text in displays and labels, both to model and value language.
56. The curriculum is planned to ensure that children gain a broad range of experiences. The balance between activities that are initiated by adults and children is sound, but too little emphasis is placed on children systematically planning and recording when they are invited to chose activities. Systems for assessing children's attainment and progress are good. The information gathered is

sometimes used well to identify where individual children need support or extra challenge. Being a new system, it is not yet used effectively to identify overall strengths and weaknesses in educational provision.

57. The new co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage has a clear vision for improving provision and standards and has planned appropriate targets for action. These include a more active approach to encouraging and enabling parental involvement, and introducing a programme of home visits before children start school. This is an especially good target because, although parental involvement is welcomed, the classroom environment does not immediately make this clear. The resources and accommodation have improved considerably since the last inspection. The new outside play area is well designed, its use is planned well and it greatly enhances the quality of learning.

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

58. Many children enter the Nursery with a low level of personal and social skills, but they are emotionally secure in the main. By the time they leave Reception, their skills have improved well, but remain well below national expectations. In the sessions seen, children were encouraged to play together and this was generally successful. Adults often led co-operative play, for instance in the home corner and with construction apparatus. Their example and good questioning helped children to get on well, share resources and to exchange ideas. When adults are not leading the play, children tend to play on their own and not to talk to each other. Children in the Nursery know the expected routines well, for example, for tidying away. They do this at speed and together. One child, for instance, held a box to make it easier for another to put away the resources. In Reception classes, children are less good at clearing up, but are generally very quick to respond to adults' expectations. When given a free choice of activities, children are not encouraged to plan their time or to review what they have done. This limits the extent to which they learn personal and social skills through independent play.

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

59. Few children speak fluent English when they enter the Nursery and many speak none at all. By the time they leave Reception, most children write their own names and a few make good attempts to write the names of familiar objects. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They turn pages in the correct direction and some of them attempt to read simple words, using the initial letter as a clue to the word. Many children achieve well in extending their English vocabulary and skills. Children's overall language development, such as the structure of language and ability to reason in language, is less successfully fostered. A key factor in this is the children's perception of what is expected in school, created through parental expectations and the lack of multi-lingual text and cultural images in classroom displays. When talking with each other, they almost invariably do so in English. For most of them this is an additional language, and so it reduces the complexity of their conversations, use of imagination and mutual understanding. Some poor grammatical structures are reinforced during free-play. Adults are good at correcting and modelling English, with the bi-lingual teaching assistants effectively reflecting guidance in Punjabi and English.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Children's mathematical development is fostered successfully. Children achieve well in relation to their starting points in the Nursery. In one session, children learned to count back on a number line. The teacher's very good questioning helped them to understand what they were doing and to

master the technique. When children went wrong, the teacher encouraged them to spot the mistake and correct it themselves, which was very effective in building their confidence. Opportunities were missed, however, to reinforce and extend what had been learned, for example, through focused play activities. Some children in another session were quick to spot mathematical shapes, such as triangles, when playing with construction apparatus. This practical play with shapes helped deepen their knowledge and understanding.

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

61. Children are offered many opportunities to learn about the world around them, but are held back by the level of their communication skills. In one session, children helped to plant seeds and learned that they would need to water them carefully. In another class, the children were excited by their seedling sunflowers. Children learn about where they live, about famous people and events, and think about their own lives. Several children talked excitedly about a wedding and the clothes they would be wearing. They recognised the difference between this event being in the future and a previous wedding being in the past. Children use computers less frequently than they could and therefore miss opportunities to use them for a wide range of purposes.

### **Physical development**

62. Many children are good at manipulating small objects and tools, such as scissors and paint brushes. They pour water and sand accurately and handle small construction apparatus with skill. Some young children screwed together various struts and wheels quickly to make model wheeled vehicles. Children's physical skills for larger movements are in line with national expectations. Some Reception children, for instance, were able to find a space and control a ribbon at the same time as moving around the room without bumping into others. Most children have a sound understanding of the need for hygiene. For example, they wash their hands after using paints or handling soil.

### **Creative development**

63. In creative development, children make satisfactory progress. They are given sufficient opportunities to experiment with colour and to model in three dimensions. Some children made very good attempts to paint daffodils. Children often sing nursery rhymes and counting songs, but the adults leading the singing usually do so out of tune and the children copy. On their own, some children sing well. Role play is planned appropriately to encourage children to use their imaginations and develop a range of skills. Some role-play areas are poorly set out and lack guidance, such as posters or signs, to spark ideas.

## **ENGLISH**

64. Results in the 2001 assessments for pupils at age seven were well below the national average, and below average when compared with similar schools. These results were affected by the late arrival of a group of pupils who joined Year 2. Results in 2001 of pupils who had been at school since the Nursery were close to the national average. Key Stage 1 results show considerable fluctuation from year to year, but generally boys do slightly better than girls, and results in writing are better than in reading.
65. Currently, overall attainment in English is below national average. Many pupils enter school able to say few words in English. They are unfamiliar with the conventions of print and books, as well as the letters and symbols of English. They achieve well and make good progress because, by the

age of seven, more than half reach the expected level 2 in reading and writing. The achievement of pupils currently working towards assessment at the age of eleven is satisfactory overall. The standards of higher attaining pupils are close to those found nationally. However, average and lower attaining pupils have not developed enough control of written language required to reach the standards expected at age eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting point.

66. Overall standards in speaking and listening are below those found nationally. Pupils are keen to contribute orally even though there is a wide variation in their ability to articulate ideas fluently. Teachers are good role models and speak clearly. They set high standards and most expect pupils to speak audibly. Good use is made of paired work to enable all pupils to improve understanding and contribute in lessons and assemblies. In Year 1 paired work helps pupils who are learning English to practise different ways of asking questions about each other. Year 5/6 pupils worked in mixed ability pairs to plan and rehearse sections of W.H Auden's poem, 'Night Mail', for a class recording. They evaluated the clarity and accuracy of the performance and discussed how it could be improved. Many teachers use effective questioning strategies to engage the interest and extend the thinking skills of pupils. Classroom assistants discreetly help pupils with special educational needs, or who are new to English, so teachers can reinforce their sense of achievement by calling on them to answer.
67. Although standards in reading are below national expectations, pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy listening to stories and enthusiastic teacher modelling motivates them to read well together. Average and higher attaining pupils can read simple texts independently and accurately, and comment on events or ideas in the story. By the end of Year 5, standards in reading are below average overall though the group of highest attaining pupils are in line with the national average. They read more demanding texts fluently, with good intonation, are able to explain the plot and predict what might happen. However, the phonics programme is not well-enough structured to help many average and below average pupils, almost all of whom have English as an additional language, to read unfamiliar words.
68. The texts used in the literacy hour through the school are introducing pupils to an appropriate range of literature. In response to their teacher's questioning, pupils explore how authors create atmosphere and characters' feelings. Guided reading sessions do not build enough on this good practice to develop pupils' use of pictures and other clues to make sense of longer pieces of text. Pupils enjoy paired reading sessions during break when older pupils act as mentors for younger, less fluent readers. They do not have many opportunities to read to adults. Some read at home and use local public libraries and the Internet for information. Most pupils can explain how to use the contents page and index in non-fiction books and regularly use the school library, even though its size has been reduced to accommodate the computer suite. The quality and range of books is adequate for current need, but opportunities for pupils to use higher reading skills are more limited for those who do not visit local libraries. Very few books celebrate the range of cultural backgrounds in the school and few books are written in dual or home languages.
69. The quality of handwriting is a weakness throughout the school which does not make it easy for pupils to ensure that they are writing accurately. Teachers do not model a consistent or appropriate style to help pupils develop joined and fluent handwriting. Pupils' spelling, grammar and use of punctuation develop well as they follow the Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 1. There is good support for pupils' learning of key vocabulary in other subjects. All pupils have written letters, parts of stories, science books about plants and re-count a visit to Cogges Manor Farm Museum. Much of their writing is supported by the use of writing frames or worksheets, so the higher attaining pupils have fewer opportunities to develop their ability to write independently

confidently and in a range of forms. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are satisfactory for average and higher-attaining groups of pupils. Lower-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs are well supported in lessons, but reach standards that are below average. This is however good achievement for the majority of pupils.

70. Progress is more variable for pupils in Years 3 to 5 because of the more formal style and wider range of writing required in national tests at age eleven. The content of written work seen during the inspection, and in books, did not always match the higher quality of pupils' discussions at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils achieved well in lessons where their writing is based on first hand experience created through other areas of the curriculum. For example, in history Year 4 described a visit from an evacuee and in geography, Year 5 used a variety of resources, including interviews, to write reports about traffic calming in the area. Writing is also successful when pupils practise what they have been taught in the part of the lesson where they learn about the use of words and sentences. For example, lower attaining pupils in Year 3 wrote their own stories modelled on Dahl's character 'Matilda'. A weakness in the independent work of all but the highest attaining pupils who are learning English is that often the text reads as speech rather than writing. Standards in writing for the majority of pupils are below average.
71. The quality of teaching is good overall, and this is helping to raise standards. Pupils are taught in sets for the literacy hour. In good lessons teachers have high expectations of behaviour and work, lessons are well planned and pupils are fully involved throughout. In a Year 2 lesson very clear learning objectives meant that pupils were making very good progress in developing simple note taking skills. Very good pace in a Year 3 lesson meant that pupils practised reading dialogue aloud using speech bubbles and then progressed to writing it with speech marks correctly placed. In the satisfactory lessons work was not as clearly differentiated as planning suggests, and often, pupils' writing was based on exercises and worksheets that repeat rather than extend learning. An area for further development is to share the good practice where independent work follows on from whole class work. Classroom assistants effectively support groups of pupils and individuals in lessons, and there is valuable additional literacy support.
72. Pupils' standards are regularly assessed in all aspects of English. Teachers mark written work carefully, and the best give points for improvement. Some classes display pupils' writing, but the school does not create a stimulating enough literary environment, with attractive book corners or high quality displays, that could be used to raise expectations of standards. The improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. English is conscientiously led and well managed. The recent very effective monitoring of teaching and planning has enabled the co-ordinator to identify areas for development that should have a positive impact on raising standards as pupils progress through Years 3 to 6.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards were well below the national average. Results were also well below average when compared to similar schools. Results were slightly better in two previous years. Taking account of the last five years' test results, performance in mathematics was generally below the national averages. Girls have tended to do marginally better than boys, although there is no significant difference in performance between the two.
74. Standards have risen this year throughout the school, particularly in Year 5/6, where performance closely matches expected standards for pupils' age. Achievement and progress are good throughout the school. When pupils enter Year 1, standards are below average. Pupils currently in Year 5 are on course to achieving average standards by the time they are eleven years of age.

The national numeracy strategy implementation is sound and contributing well to raising pupils' achievement. By Year 2, most pupils have a secure grasp of the size and order of numbers up to 100. They are generally secure in their knowledge and understanding of addition and subtraction facts involving two-digit numbers, although there are differences in pupils' capacity to apply their knowledge to solve simple problems. More able pupils are not yet using three-digit numbers to solve problems. Pupils use money in practical shopping and the majority knows the value of coins up to one pound, giving appropriate amounts of change. They are aware of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and can sort them correctly, although they have difficulty in naming some and describing some of the properties. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of how to use a graph to handle data when showing which flavour ice cream they like most.

75. By the time pupils are in the Year 5/6 class most pupils have a well-developed understanding of place value in three and four-digit numbers, and good knowledge of multiplication tables. Pupils applied their knowledge of the four rules in simple problems mostly accurately. They learnt about equivalent fractions and decimals, and the higher-attaining pupils ordered them correctly. Work in decimals and fractions tends to be at a low level. Pupils had begun to make use of co-ordinates and learnt to measure accurately the angles of a triangle. They calculated the area and perimeter of shapes and presented their findings in a table form.
76. The work of class teachers and the specialist provision for English as an additional language helps to ensure that over time pupils make good progress in relation to their starting point. Although in general the pupils' needs are being met well, the lower attaining pupils, who do not have additional support through the special needs provision, and some who are at an early stage of learning English are making slower progress. Pupils at all stages have some difficulty with problem-solving activities which require a more sophisticated knowledge and understanding of English than many of them have.
77. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is largely due to the generous support they receive from the additional support staff during mathematics lessons. Pupils' individual education plans include targets which are appropriate for meeting their individual needs. Activities are modified to ensure pupils are able to access mathematics at their levels of need.
78. Standards in numeracy are sound throughout the school. Pupils are able to recall number facts at expected levels and make their calculations using mental methods and written methods. Older pupils are beginning to check if their answers are reasonable. Pupils' knowledge of tables is sound and they use tables increasingly in their day-to-day work. Numeracy is promoted well through other subjects, such as science. Some good use of data handling was observed in science lessons in Year 5/6, which included the use of tables, line graphs and bar charts. Pupils carry out a range of measuring activities linked to their work in science, for example, measuring parts of body, plants, and temperature of liquids; in parachute testing - measuring distance and height. Some use is made of information and communication technology in mathematics teaching particularly in Year 5/6, for example, to analyse and represent data that has been gathered, but this is an area requiring further development.
79. Mathematical language is used in a variety of ways, and this helps to develop pupils' understanding of English as well as their ability to use appropriate terms, and develop their knowledge and understanding of new mathematical ideas. However, in a few lessons, mathematical terms were not used accurately, for example, relating to the teaching of time to pupils in Year 2. This suggests that in some instances there is scope for improving teachers' subject knowledge, although on the whole, it is generally good. Teachers encourage pupils to think and explain their strategies, for example, during the initial mental and oral activities, although work

is generally pitched at a low level. There is some scope for improving pupils' oral skills, and their writing, through enhanced opportunities in mathematics. Pupils generally lack confidence and skills in talking about their work, even when they know their answers are right. Teachers tend to overcome pupils' language difficulties in a variety of ways, for example, by testing out rules and concluding lessons on their behalf. This is useful in the short term in developing confidence but in the longer term, pupils are inclined to become too dependent on their teachers, particularly in the older age groups.

80. The quality of teaching is good overall and this is an important factor in the good achievement. This is also an improvement from the previous inspection, when teaching was satisfactory overall. In best lessons, teachers' questions are well structured, to help extend pupils' thinking, to increase the pace of work and to assess pupils' knowledge and extent of learning. Planning is good overall; planning in Year 4 was particularly successful in taking a step-by-step approach to lessons, which equally helps teachers with different amount of teaching experience. Teachers set individual targets for their pupils. This helps them to be more involved in their learning and making greater efforts at achieving them. The school's setting arrangements work well and the shared planning ensures consistency of the content and teaching. Activities are suitably varied for the three broad ability groups.
81. Most teachers use time effectively in their three-part lessons, leaving sufficient time for the plenary. In a small number of lessons, however, teachers had not allowed enough time for whole-class discussions at the end of lessons. Consequently, some missed opportunities for developing pupils' oral skills and for clarifying thinking. Despite the good procedures overall for assessment in the school, the precise use of assessment information to match work for the highest and lowest attainers is less successful. Some very good teaching was also seen at the top end of the school, which was particularly successful in motivating pupils to learn, challenging them to think, and in increasing the speed of their mental recall. The good quality of teaching overall leads to positive attitudes towards the subject and good relationships throughout.
82. The mathematics curriculum is generally broad and balanced, giving due emphasis to developing knowledge of numbers and the number system. Teachers provide good opportunities for using and applying newly learnt facts, although, there is a narrow range of work on offer. The use of homework is satisfactory in consolidating newly learnt ideas from the classroom.
83. The co-ordination of the subject is effective, with a clear view of strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate plans for the future. Teachers are well supported in their lesson planning and in developing their teaching practice, including new and newly qualified teachers. The co-ordinator has an active role in monitoring teaching and learning through direct classroom observation and through promoting staff development through training and demonstration lessons. These are all helping to improve the quality of teaching. The numeracy governor is well informed about the policy and practice in the school through her regular visits and active involvement in sampling lessons.
84. Resources for mathematics are good and are easily accessed by pupils and well used by teachers during their demonstration. This is particularly effective in developing pupils' understanding of new mathematical ideas, for example, through measuring activities involving money, time and capacity. Pupils make good use of the resources, including money, number line, digit cards and the place value cards. Classroom displays show attractive printed charts with mathematical terms, graphs and useful labels.

## **SCIENCE**

85. Teachers assess pupils in science at the end of Year 2. Last year's results were well below average compared to national figures. External evaluation of the assessment suggested that the judgements were not accurate enough in that teachers had interpreted the criteria too strictly and had under-estimated what pupils had achieved. The inspection evidence would confirm this is still the case. Observation of lessons and work in pupils' books suggests that most pupils are in line to achieve the expected Level 2.
86. Pupils at the end of Year 6 take national tests in science. There are still only 5 pupils in Year 6 so judgments about work are based on books and lessons seen in Years 5 and 6. Here standards are below national expectations. Planning and books show that there has been good coverage of scientific knowledge. Much of the work has been copied, however, or written down in question/answer form. There is little experimental science. As a result pupils cannot recall many scientific facts in discussion and have problems, for example, in explaining a fair test.
87. Work seen indicates that because of good teaching most pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. The books contain a large amount of well-structured work and a good balance of scientific topics. The pupils enjoy a lot of practical work and because of this Year 2 pupils can talk confidently about experimental design. The work is well supported by attractive books and word mats, making good links with literacy and ensuring that key vocabulary is understood and retained. Year 2 classes were seen, for example, identifying seeds in exotic fruits and relating these to photographs and life cycle drawings. Similarly good teaching was seen in Year 1 as pupils studied animal movements. Little work is pitched at level 3 however. A discussion with higher attaining pupils in Year 2 suggested that they would be capable of higher standards if given more challenging work.
88. Pupils continue to learn well in Year 3, but progress is only satisfactory in Years 4, 5 and 6, mainly because pupils have not built up the necessary skills over a longer period of time. Year 3 work indicates continuing good teaching with some interesting experimental work. At the time of the inspection pupils were exploring the uses of magnets and really coming to understand scientific application. The books indicate that great thought has been given to making sure that work matched the ability of the pupil and more able pupils were well stretched. Work in Year 4 was more patchy, although there was some evidence of motivating and well-matched work, with pupils enjoying testing materials to see if they were able to conduct electricity for example. Years 5 and 6 were observed learning about planetary relationships. They enjoyed the oral input, which was of a very high standard, but opportunities to develop recording and thinking skills were lost as pupils copied down the facts they had learned.
89. Good opportunities are created to include mathematics work in science. There are frequent occasions when pupils measure or draw graphs or charts. Junior pupils had, for example, measured their pulses before and after exercise and drawn two line graphs showing their findings. The use of ICT in science has not been developed as much as it has in some subjects, but there is some use of the Internet for research and for presentation of work.
90. Teaching of science is good overall. In lessons seen the quality of teaching was good overall and never unsatisfactory. The work in pupils' books indicates that the quality of teaching has been consistently good in Years 1 and 2. The work in books of Years 3 to 6 indicated that teaching was satisfactory but was improving. This was supported by the inspection evidence where some very good lessons were seen in these classes. In particular the quality of the whole class oral sessions observed was very good. In a Year 5/6 lesson pupils were used to demonstrate the solar system. The teacher was dynamic and very interesting to listen to. Good questioning led to improved thinking skills as pupils were asked "Why do you think this happens?" Teachers make good use of interesting resources and are beginning to introduce lots of practical activities, leading to raised standards in experimental science. Pupils enjoy the lessons. Planning is detailed and clear and in the best lessons, such as one in Year 3, it was obvious that previous lessons have been carefully

evaluated to support future teaching. Pupils were generally grouped by ability but there was sometimes a mismatch between the work set and the ability of the pupils. Pace is generally good, but in these lessons, higher-attaining pupils could move on more rapidly.

91. Long term planning is based on the nationally recommended scheme. This has been sensibly adapted and added to by the school. Assessment procedures are good. There are skills lists which are annotated on an ongoing basis. These have been recently introduced and are not yet used consistently by teachers and so their current day to day knowledge of pupil progress is not as good as it could be.
92. Science is well managed. There is a clear policy and the coordinator works hard to monitor standards. She identifies good priorities and has brought in appropriate outside advice. She understands the need to develop experimental science in the junior classes and is already taking steps to work with staff on this area. Given the changing circumstances of the school there has been good improvement in the teaching of science. The indications are that standards will improve still further in the near future.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. Since the last inspection, standards in art by the end of Year 2 have been maintained at the nationally expected level and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 5/6 are below expectations, because pupils do not currently have enough opportunities to develop the full range of artistic skills necessary to attain at expected levels. Pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory, and they do not produce enough work.
94. In Year 2, pupils use a good range of materials and processes and learn skills to paint and draw with increasingly good results. They work with pastels for observational still life drawings and paint in the style of Van Gogh using viewfinders. In Year 1, pupils' work is often of good quality and they cover a wide range of skills. They paint water reflections and sea moods after looking at seascapes by Turner, and draw teapots in the style of Clarice Cliff. Pupils make candleholders and starfish from clay. In Key Stage 1 there are good links with other subjects in art. Pupils produced good art work related to their topics on electricity and the senses.
95. Pupils in Year 6 have sketchbooks containing a few examples of work where skills have been developed. These include work on silhouettes, colour blending and portrait drawing. Similar work is covered in Year 5, and pupils in Year 4 also work on silhouettes and portraits. Year 3 pupils' work, in response to Andy Goldsworthy's art in the environment, is good.
96. No art lessons were observed during the inspection and therefore no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator for the subject has a good influence on the quality of work in Key Stage 1 and is now prioritising necessary developments in Key Stage 2. A suitable start has been made to comparing work of different levels to establish consistent standards across the school and there is a satisfactory collection of photographic evidence. Resources for the subject are also satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Standards in design and technology are in line with national expectations at the end of each stage in the school. Pupils achieve well in relation to their starting points. They benefit from the practical nature of the subject and make good progress. Pupils have a clear understanding of the overall process of design and making, and good knowledge of a range of mechanisms and joints. The quality of finish sometimes reduces the overall standard of products. Effective leadership and

management have helped to raise standards and improve the school's provision for the subject well since the last inspection.

98. Teachers plan interesting projects based on the detailed scheme of work, which ensures that pupils develop their knowledge and skills systematically. The complexity of designs and products increases well with age. For example, Year 2 pupils designed models that included a simple winding mechanism to illustrate nursery rhymes such as 'Little Miss Muffet', in which the spider could be raised and lowered. Year 5 and 6 pupils made more complex models that included cams to change the direction of movement. In the two lessons seen, the teaching included some notable strengths. In one lesson, the teacher used previously completed products to inspire pupils and demonstrate how they could make their own designs. This helped pupils to create sensible designs and the think hard about how they would approach the making stage. In the other lesson, pupils were given a very clear design process, and the teacher's questions were very effective in encouraging pupils to think about their previous research and experience. They concentrated very well and made excellent use of their literacy and numeracy skills and scientific knowledge to design musical instruments.
99. Some pupils take advantage of the after-school cookery club, which, during the inspection, made some very tasty pizzas. Displayed work from the sewing club shows an interesting range of stitches and an eye for colour in the designs. Clubs, together with good displays of work, help to give the subject a high profile in the school and encourage positive attitudes. Pupils throughout the school enjoy design and technology and are proud of their achievements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

100. In geography, pupils attain the expected levels by Year 2 and Year 5/6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching in geography, and in some lessons, pupils make good progress because geographical skills are well developed and there are opportunities to carry out geographical enquiry related to local issues. Current planning from the revised curriculum for geography includes more attention to the continual development of skills and increased opportunities for fieldwork, and there is good capacity for further improvement in standards.
101. By the end of Year 2, pupils create detailed maps with very good keys. They include features of the local area in their maps and present their work accurately. There are good links with numeracy through the use of bar charts and tables to record geographical statistics about the weather. In a good lesson in Year 2, pupils' experiences from a class visit to Hambleton were successfully used to build geographical skills when making simple maps with keys and descriptions of land use. Although some pupils found it difficult to create a map from their own imagination, the majority of pupils created a map with very suitable symbols for the key. These activities build well on pupils' work in Year 1, where simple route maps are drawn showing shops, a school and other features. The highest attaining pupils in Year 1 drew very detailed routes showing junctions and traffic calming devices.
102. By the end of Year 5/6, pupils have studied topics such as water and sewage works, world climate and landforms. There are good curriculum links made with their work in history. In a good lesson in Year 5/6, pupils made very good use of their local studies to raise issues of concern regarding traffic and its control. Traffic calming solutions were considered and very literacy skills were used very well when pupils created traffic warnings for a radio broadcast. Pupils really enjoyed this work and made very good progress in their learning.

103. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory and in three out of four lessons, teaching was good. A strength of teaching is the good match of work to pupils' varying ability levels, enabling all pupils to make the same progress and ensuring that they concentrate well and enjoy their work. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to work was at least good in all lessons. Through geography lessons, pupils learn to work well with partners and as part of a group which is an important aspect of the personal and social development.
104. The co-ordinator for geography manages the subject well. There are clear development plans for the subject, including the further development of fieldwork to provide real life experiences for pupils. The co-ordinator is developing the Key Stage 2 curriculum well, developing her own and colleagues subject knowledge. Work in all year groups has been compared to establish consistent standards and there is a good collection of sample work with clear evidence about the context in which it was completed. The co-ordinator has provided feedback to staff in how they can improve the samples they keep, and monitors planning in each term. Resources for the subject are satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

105. Standards in history have improved slightly since the last inspection. Only two history lessons were observed so judgments are based on work seen and discussions with staff and pupils. By the end of Year 2 pupils' historical knowledge and skills are in line with average expectations. Pupils are taught in a variety of ways so as to capture interest and are introduced to a wide variety of recording methods. They are learning to retell historical facts in their own words. History is now regularly taught and younger pupils are familiar with words related to time. For example, Year 1 pupils were seen using teddy bears to decide which toys were older or newer. In this way they were developing a sense of the passing of time and also learning how to interpret evidence. Pupils are achieving well.
106. Standards are in line with average expectations in Year 3 and are below average in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers of older pupils are still compensating for previous gaps of knowledge in both history and English. There are still not enough opportunities, however, for older pupils to record in their own words and to develop thinking skills. Artefacts are less often used in the older classes. Year 3 teachers have followed a good programme that covers an Invaders topic thoroughly and have included opportunities for using evidence to learn how to make judgements and reach sensible conclusions. Pupils have, for example, written about reasons why people might move home and have compiled a "Sutton Hoo" police file to help in learning about evidence. Some of the better work in Year 4 made use of a portrait of Henry VIII to draw conclusions about that period in time and his personality. But there is not enough work of this type. The folders in the Year 5/6 class contain a larger proportion of photocopied worksheets, some of which are little more than colouring-in exercises. Good detailed planning is available for topics on the Victorians and the Aztecs but not all of the objectives planned have been covered and the work on the Victorians is limited both in quality and quantity. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall, though good in Year 3.
107. The history co-ordinator is very efficient and well organised. History has improved markedly in younger classes and improvements are beginning to work their way through the school. Teachers are well supported with resources and advice. A very useful history file is available and the co-ordinator has worked with the staff to compile a portfolio of moderated samples to assist in assessing pupils' history work. The scheme of work expects teachers to cover more than is normally required which may account for the lack of depth in topics in Years 3 to 6.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. ICT facilities have been expanded in recently with the creation of the ICT suite and an increase in the number of computers in classrooms. This has considerably increased access to computers and is encouraging the use of ICT across the curriculum. All aspects of ICT are now being taught. Teachers have had access to good training, which has increased their knowledge, skills and confidence. Pupils are learning knowledge and skills more quickly and also increasing their understanding of how ICT can be used in a variety of situations. The provision in ICT is good and an improvement on the position at the last inspection.
109. Attainment in ICT is average in all year groups, but standards are rising rapidly and pupils are achieving well. They are generally confident users of computers, loading the relevant programs and, with help, saving and printing their work. They are using the Internet constructively for research. During the inspection pupils in Year 3 were observed working well in pairs supporting each other as they experimented to create the musical effects they wanted through choosing different sequences, instruments and rhythms using the 'Compose' program. In Year 1, pupils were collating their information on how pupils travel to school and using it to create a pictogram. This was developing their data handling skills well in relation to both ICT and mathematics. In the Year 5/6 class, pupils were using ICT effectively in support of mathematics when learning to create spreadsheets. Classroom displays and pupils' books and folders showed that pupils in all classes were using ICT in word-processing and making some use of graphics.
110. The teaching of ICT is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers are planning the use of ICT much more systematically across the curriculum and for much more direct teaching using the computers and overhead projectors in classrooms. This was most effective in a Year 4 lesson on giving directions which controlled the movement of an object on the screen. Teachers are also not afraid to draw on the knowledge and skills of pupils.
111. The subject co-ordinator has put considerable work into ensuring that teachers have the confidence to use ICT to support learning in virtually all subjects. She is aware that there is scope to exploit ICT considerably more and has good plans for developing the range of hardware and software, and increasing the use of the Internet. The success of the work done so far is clear in the higher standards and more effective teaching. Resources are good in terms of the number of computers and adequate in terms of the software.

## **MUSIC**

112. Pupils' attainment in music is broadly in line with expectations by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Their overall achievement in relation to their previous standard of work is satisfactory. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, so it is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. However, in these few music lessons, pupils did not make consistent progress because the provision for music teaching varied greatly. The school has taken satisfactory steps to improve the quality of music provision since the last inspection, but action taken is currently having much better impact on the standards attained in the older classes.
113. In a lesson taken by the specialist music teacher in Year 5/6, the teaching was excellent and pupils made excellent progress. In this lesson pupils developed singing skills, skills in musical appreciation and made excellent progress in their reading and translation of simple musical scores for clapping rhythms. The teacher had excellent subject knowledge and extremely high expectations of how pupils would behave and perform. Her insistence that pupils should try again

when singing, resulted in superb progress on their first attempts, and one pupil was even confident to sing alone, unaccompanied, very tunefully. The pace of the lesson was brisk and purposeful. Pupils concentrated very well and thoroughly enjoyed the lesson. The lesson incorporated all elements of the programme of study for music, including time for pupils to evaluate their work. Unfortunately, this section of the lesson had to be rushed due to the fact that the teacher had had to stop on a few occasions to allow pupils and adults to walk through the hall. Valuable minutes were lost for this reason.

114. In other lessons, teaching was at least satisfactory and in one lesson teaching was good. Teachers planned to cover the appropriate curriculum at a suitable level and pupils made at least satisfactory rates of progress. However, teachers' were not very secure in teaching the subject and the teaching was not as confident as it could have been. In one lesson, the teacher did not use taped music to ensure that the song she was teaching the pupils was consistently in tune. In lessons in Year 3, good use was made of computers to develop composing skills with different instruments. In all lessons, pupils behave well and enjoy their work.
115. The co-ordinator for music has the necessary skills to support developments in the subject but the availability of time to do so, as result of other school responsibilities, is minimal. The school's involvement in "Energize", a local arts festival, made a positive contribution to older pupils' musical experiences and gave them the opportunity to perform live before an audience. The co-ordinator was very involved with this work and it also gave good opportunity to develop further relationships with parents. The school's decision to employ a specialist music teacher has had very good impact on standards attained in Years 3 to 6. However, skills are not as consistently developed lower down the school to ensure that standards are as high as they could be. The overall development of teachers' subject knowledge in music is too slow.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages and they are achieving well. Year 1 pupils successfully link movements into simple sequences in dance and show an increasing awareness of the space around them. They work enthusiastically in gymnastics, and co-operate with each other well. Pupils in Year 2 show increasing control of their actions for example in take off and landing with bent knees.
117. The achievement pupils in Years 3 to 5 is satisfactory, however their standards are below those expected for their ages because previous progress has been relatively slow. Currently they are being given increasingly demanding tasks that should help them develop skills rapidly. Pupils experience a wide range of activities including gymnastics, dance, field games and swimming. Outdoor activities have yet to be planned for Key Stage 2.
118. Pupils enjoy lessons and most work sensibly. Appropriate adult support enables pupils with special educational needs to be involved as fully as possible in lessons. Most teachers plan carefully to ensure pupils know how to move equipment safely. In the most successful lessons seen during the inspection, good teaching focused on building skills and allowing pupils time to practise and modify their performance. As a result pupils were challenged and worked hard within their existing capabilities. Where teaching is more concerned with pupils carrying out the task rather than the quality of what they do, pupils put less effort into improving their work and their concentration levels suffer.
119. The subject is led by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator who is also active in a programme to share sporting facilities within the community. He is a good role model. Posters in

the hall remind pupils and teachers how to warm up and prepare for a variety of activities. Resources have improved and the equipment is clearly labelled and stored in areas or containers that enable pupils to handle it safely. All pupils wear suitable clothing for physical education. A range of after school activities to extend the curriculum is open to boys and girls from Year 3 up. Pupils are beginning to take part in competitive sporting fixtures within the area and won the Tag Rugby Competition where points were awarded for sportsmanship and fair play as well as skill at rugby.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

120. The school places considerable importance on the promotion of pupils' spiritual development and the teaching of RE. It was not possible to see RE in all classes but it is clear from the lessons which could be observed, pupils' work, displays and assemblies, that attainment in all year groups is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils achieve well. They are taught in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and receive a good grounding in the principal beliefs and festivals of the main world faiths, including Christianity.
121. The lessons seen and the work in pupils' books shows that a good range of moral and social issues are discussed as well as matters of faith. Pupils are being encouraged to think about personal beliefs and about relationships at a level appropriate to their age and understanding. They are learning to understand, respect and value other people's views, though some do not always find it easy to listen to others. Year 2 pupils were able to talk with interest about what they had learnt from their visit to Hambleden Church and could describe significant features of the church. Year 5/6 pupils were interested in the beliefs of different world religions and they had remembered a great deal from the visit of a local minister. Such discussions in particular are making a good contribution to pupils understanding of the importance of beliefs and customs and also to literacy. Occasionally opportunities are missed for pupils to write in their own words and at greater length, though in general pupils are expected to record more of their work than was the case at the previous inspection.
122. The teaching of RE is generally good. It follows closely the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers prepare the work carefully. They are sensitive to pupils' backgrounds and beliefs and they make good use of pupils' own religious observance and knowledge to develop further understanding. Links with the local mosque and churches further enhance the teaching and learning.
123. The RE co-ordinator has a clear action plan for the subject and has worked well to develop the schemes of work and build up artefacts and other resources. She is strongly committed to ensuring that it plays a significant role in the life of the school and this is certainly the case.