

INSPECTION REPORT

CHESTERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cirencester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115575

Headteacher: Mr Howard Gray

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jean Harding
21378

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd May 2002

Inspection number: 194757

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant & Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Apsley Road Cirencester Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Marshall
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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21378	Mrs Jean Harding	Registered inspector	History	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further Special educational needs The work of the centre for specific learning difficulties
19693	Mrs Sally Hall	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
22352	Mrs Frankie Gaywood	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	Equal opportunities
20846	Mr Alan Wilson	Team inspector	English Physical education	The quality and range of curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
22841	Miss Pat Jackson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Music Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development English as an additional language
25771	Mr Peter Sandall	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chesterton Primary School is slightly bigger than the average primary school, with 295 pupils between the ages of 4 and 11 on roll; 157 boys and 138 girls. In the reception class and in Years 1 and 4 there are gender imbalances, although there are about equal numbers of boys and girls overall. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic origin, and no pupil speaks English as an additional language, is in public care, or comes from a vulnerable group. There is very little movement in and out of school during the school year. Class sizes are slightly above average. The school has faced staffing difficulties, especially the recruitment of supply teachers to cover absences of the usual teachers.

There are 24 per cent of pupils on the old-style register for special educational needs (for which there are comparisons available); this is about the national average. Most have learning difficulties, but few, except for the five pupils who have a statement of special educational needs, have major problems. All pupils undertake the National Curriculum and tests. Six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. The school is situated in an area of mixed private and social housing. The majority of pupils' families are at the middle of the socio-economic range. Most children have had some pre-school educational experience, and their attainment on entry to the reception class is generally as expected for their age.

A centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) is attached to the school, which is a local education authority resource. Fifteen pupils from 10 local schools, attend it part-time, including two from Chesterton Primary School. The centre teacher provides an 'outreach' service to other schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. Standards of attainment are generally in line with national averages and expectations and pupils make satisfactory progress in learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but, where standards are higher or lower than expected, this is often due to the planning of the curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for less able pupils is good, but for more able pupils it has deficiencies. The teaching is good in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good, and this is due to the ethos set by the school. The leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with strengths and weaknesses; the significant weakness is the inefficient use of senior staff; the strength is the supportive ethos set by the headteacher. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in information and communication technology are high.
- Standards in speaking, listening and reading are above expectations by the time pupils leave the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
- Due to the good provision for personal, social and health education, and for pupils' moral and social development, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The teaching is good in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2.
- There is very good provision for pupils with specific learning difficulties who attend the special class; they make at least good progress in their learning and their self-confidence is raised.

What could be improved

- The standards of attainment in writing across the school.
- The attainment of more able pupils.
- The standards of attainment and the consistency of pupils' progress in music, history and religious education at Key Stage 2¹, and in geography at Key Stage 1².
- The strategic use of some resources, including senior staff, funds and time.
- The management of the curriculum.
- The formal procedures to ensure pupils' welfare.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

¹ Key Stage 2 caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

² Key Stage 1 caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

The school was last inspected in April 1997, when it received a generally favourable report. In the last five years it has made a satisfactory, but variable, response to the key issues raised by the previous inspection team. Pupils' attainment in information technology was found to be below expectations in 1997; standards of attainment are now above those expected and so the improvement has been good. Standards in experimental and investigative science have been raised and are now as expected. Some progress in establishing effective procedures for accurately assessing pupils' progress in subjects has been made, but in non-core³ subjects and in religious education the procedures remain less than satisfactory. Subject co-ordinators have been given adequate materials to enhance the teaching in their subjects, but their rôle is still not sufficiently developed, and this is affecting standards in some subjects. School development planning has improved, but is insufficiently rigorous to ensure that priorities for improvement are addressed in the most efficient way. A number of other issues raised in the previous report have been addressed well, including: the improvement to pupils' individual education plans and to the provision, in the main school, for pupils with special educational needs; raising attainment in design and technology; and the construction of sound schemes of work, and provision of better resources, for science and information and communication technology. The provision in the centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties has improved. Other issues have not been well enough dealt with, these include: provision of appropriate work for more able pupils; ensuring consistency in the teaching of music; devising an appropriate scheme of work for history; and consistency in implementing policies, report writing, marking and assessment. The governors are aware of many issues that still need to be improved, but not all. The school leaders have satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools ⁴	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	D	D	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	C	D	C	E	
Science	C	D	D	E	

The standards attained by pupils in Year 6 in 2001 were more affected by the lower ability range than was the case a few years ago, but were also due to the inconsistency of the teaching that they had received during the year. The overall grading was also depressed by the lower than expected percentage of those achieving a higher grade. The 'similar schools' comparison for this school is not entirely an appropriate comparison, as the free school meals figure does not truly reflect the socio-economic grouping of its catchment area, and also the group of pupils in Year 6, last year, contained a higher than usual percentage with special educational needs. Standards of attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 are generally in line with national averages and expectations, although those of the more able pupils are not high enough. This is due to the inconsistency of the teaching over the last two years, and of the planning of the curriculum. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, art and design, and physical education are in line with national averages and expectations. Standards in writing are below average and this depresses the overall grading for English, but standards are above expectations in speaking, listening and reading. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is higher than expected, and their knowledge and understanding of the issues concerned with personal, social and health education are also high. Standards of attainment in music and history are below expectations and also, in religious education, standards are not up to those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

By the end of Year 2, pupils attain average standards in speaking, listening, reading, mathematics and science. Their attainment is below average in writing. Standards in design and technology, history and physical education are in line with national expectations, but in geography they are below those expected. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education is as expected. Standards in information and communication technology, art and design, and personal, social and health education are high. No judgement of standards in music can be made, as no lessons were observed, or work seen.

³ The non-core subjects are all subjects apart from English, mathematics and science.

⁴ 'Similar schools' are defined by the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment found in schools nationally.

Children in the reception class often achieve well, and most are on course to attain the goals expected, in all areas of early learning, by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress toward the targets set for them, and those who are less able make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils who are more able often do not make the progress that they should in all subjects. Pupils' use of their key skills of learning is generally satisfactory, but they write too little in all subjects, and this has affected attainment in English. They use their other communication skills well. Pupils' use of their numeracy and information technology skills is satisfactory. There is no significant difference, due to the school's provision, in the attainment of boys and girls or of those from different backgrounds. Pupils in the special class for those with specific learning difficulties often achieve very well and make at least good progress in the targets set for them. The trends in attainment in National Curriculum tests are rising, overall, in line with national trends over time. The overall targets set for pupils' attainment as they leave the school are appropriate.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in and out of the classrooms. There have been no exclusions recently and no bullying has been reported to inspectors.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show a mature approach to work, and the quality of the relationships has a good impact on pupils' learning.
Attendance	Good. Rates are above average and punctuality is generally good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Almost all the teaching observed was at least satisfactory; much of it was good, and a significant percentage was very good. The quality of teaching in the reception class has been consistently high over the last year. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. In Years 3 to 6, although about half of lessons observed were good, and occasionally very good, the quality of teaching in the recent past has not been as consistent. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching observed in all classes. The teaching in Years 3 to 6 has been affected by staffing difficulties, over time, and also by the inefficient planning of the curriculum for some subjects; this is especially the case in Year 6. Teachers' expectations of their pupils' capabilities are sometimes too low at in Years 3 to 6, particularly in Year 6. The specialist teaching of information and communication technology is very good, and accounts for pupils' high standards. The teaching of personal, social and health education is sensitively done, and this is of great benefit to pupils. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects is generally satisfactory. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall, mathematics is taught well in Years 1 and 2 and to a satisfactory standard in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in other subjects is satisfactory overall. The management of pupils by staff is good. Support staff make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2. The teaching in the centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties is of very high quality.

Pupils' learning is satisfactory overall; it is much better in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6, as the teaching has been more consistent and the quality of ongoing assessment and marking is higher. The pace of lessons is better and more demands are made lower down the school, and so pupils make more effort to learn. Children in the reception class, and pupils in Years 1 and 2, show great interest, concentration and independence. The productivity and pace of working for many pupils at in Years 3 to 6, especially those who are more able, is not good enough; this is affecting standards, and is the result of a less than rigorous approach to the use of time by staff at this key stage.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum for the reception class is good. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is broad and relevant, with a wide range of activities. It lacks balance and some subjects do not have enough emphasis. The 'taught time' for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is too short.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school devotes much time, money and staffing for this provision. Provision in the centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and for their moral and social development, it is very good. The new programme for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, is proving highly beneficial.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision for pupils' care is satisfactory, but the systems to ensure their welfare are insecure. There are very good procedures to monitor pupils' behaviour and personal development. Assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science, and of children in reception, is satisfactory, but in other subjects it is unsatisfactory, and sometimes poor. Assessment data is not always used well.

The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Pupils are generally provided with an appropriate curriculum, but this is not assured for more able pupils. There are valuable relationships with partner schools and other institutions. The school has effective links with parents, but the information provided for them could be better.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher sets clear educational direction and a supportive ethos, but does too much himself. Several key aspects of the school do not have named managers. The management of many subjects is unsatisfactory. The senior management team is not effective, as members do not have sufficient delegated responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors generally do that which they should, and statutory requirements are met, except for a policy on restraint and some information for parents. Some governors are very involved with school life and most play a full part in directing the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. Managers know what is done well, but weaknesses are not always known, as evaluation procedures are not secure. The success criteria in the current improvement plan are not good enough for informed evaluation to be assured.
The strategic use of resources	Equipment and materials are used efficiently, but the budgeting for consumables is inefficient. Some senior staff do not have adequate extra responsibilities, and this is also inefficient. Financial administration is good. The school's priorities for improvement are not planned well enough to measure success.

There is a good number of teachers and support staff, but they are not always used well. The accommodation is good. Resources are satisfactory overall, and very good for information and communication technology, but the library and its book stock are unsatisfactory. The governors are aware of the principles of best value and are starting to apply them to all aspects of decision-making. A strength of the leadership is its vision for an all-round education for pupils. Its weakness is the lack of consistency, conformity and team-working which is essential for a high-performing staff.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The high expectations set for their children.• The good teaching.• The approachable staff.• The good attitudes promoted by the school.• The good progress their children make.• The good behaviour.• Their children like school.• The work of the centre.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of extra-curricular activities.• The closeness with which the school works with them.• The homework set.

Parents generally think highly of the school. The inspection team agrees to some extent with many, but not all, of the parents' views. Behaviour is good. Pupils make satisfactory, not good progress, overall, due to the satisfactory teaching and expectations, rather than good teaching and high expectations. The school does work with parents, but staff know that this could be better, especially in relation to reporting to parents. Homework is satisfactory, but should be better organised for pupils in Year 6. However, the range of extra-curricular activities on offer is good, and the school provides more than many schools in this respect. The centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of children on entry to the reception classes varies, but is about as expected for most four year-olds. The progress of children in the reception class is at least satisfactory and often good, and, when they join Key Stage 1, almost all are already working at levels at least as expected for five-year-olds. As the children get used to the routines and the teaching, their progress in learning speeds up. Although children make similarly good progress through the reception class as they did in 1997, their attainment on entry to Year 1 is not as high as it was reported to be at the previous inspection, as their attainment when they start school is not as high in many areas of learning as it was in 1997.
2. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in most subjects through Key Stage 1, but not in geography, as they have not been taught enough. Pupils' progress in learning to write is also unsatisfactory, and this is known to staff and is being addressed. The results of the National Curriculum tests, for the last four years, show that standards of attainment in reading have been improving steadily, in writing they have fluctuated, but have been better for the last two years, and in mathematics they have also varied, but there has been a much better improvement since 1999.
3. The National Curriculum test results for Key Stage 1, in 2001, showed pupils' attainment to be above average in reading, average in writing, and well above average in mathematics. The pupils achieved average grades in science and above-average levels in speaking and listening, as assessed by the teachers. The percentages of pupils in Year 2 achieving higher grades was high in reading and science, and well above average in mathematics; in writing an average percentage of pupils attained the higher grade. When compared with similar schools, results are below average for reading and writing, and average for mathematics, but comparisons such as this are unfair for this school, due to its social context and the fact that children's attainment on entry is not as high as is usually seen in similar schools. Since the previous inspection in 1997, pupils' achievements at Key Stage 1 have been variable, due to the inconsistent quality of the teaching and curriculum provided, as well as the differences in attainment on entry to the school.
4. Evidence about Key Stage 1 gathered during the inspection, including observation of lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and interviews with pupils, shows that pupils attain levels in most subjects that are at least in line with national expectations and averages. Standards of speaking, listening and reading are average, and improving. Writing is not up to the expected standard at the moment, but is improving. Standards of attainment in mathematics and science are as expected. The standards pupils attain in information and communication technology, and in art and design, are above those expected. Pupils' attainment in geography is not as good as it should be. Standards and progress in religious education are generally in line with the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In all other subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning and achieve standards that are in line with national expectations. No judgement can be made about pupils' attainment in music, as no lessons or performance were seen, and there are no records of other work. Standards and achievements at Key Stage 1 are about the same as those found during the previous inspection, with higher standards in information and communication technology, and lower attainment in geography. The variation in the National Curriculum tests results, between years, reflects the varying abilities of the different year-groups.
5. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment in most subjects, for those pupils without marked special educational needs, are in line with national expectations and averages. In speaking, listening, reading, and information and communication technology, standards are higher than expected. However, pupils' progress in learning in writing, music, history and religious education has been unsatisfactory and so their attainment by the end of Year 6 is lower than it should be, as they have not had enough appropriate teaching in these subjects.
6. The National Curriculum test results at Key Stage 1 for 1998, the year after the previous inspection, showed that pupils attained grades that were well below average in reading, and below average in writing and mathematics. These pupils are now in Year 6 and are working at above-average levels

in reading, below-average levels in writing, and average levels in mathematics. Pupils' progress through the school in developing their writing has been unsatisfactory, due to the variable quality of the teaching, and too little practice. Pupils' progress through the school in reading has been very good, and in mathematics it has often been good. The results of the National Curriculum tests at Key Stage 2, for the last four years, show fluctuating grades, dependent on the ability of each group of pupils. Overall, the trend in pupils' attainment has been in line with the national trend, with declining standards in English, as measured by the writing in the tests, static standards in mathematics, and improving standards in science. In comparison with similar schools, locally, pupils at Chesterton attain average grades in English, and above-average levels in mathematics and science. Compared with schools nationally, these grades have improved, but most schools have made great improvements in science, and so the grades at Chesterton are still shown as below average, due to the low percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels. This is the crux of the problem; too few pupils attain the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests, and this affects the overall grading.

7. The National Curriculum test results for English, mathematics and science in 2001 showed that, overall, pupils attained below the national average level in English and science, and results were average for mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, results were well below average for English, mathematics and science. However, such comparisons are flawed, as the overall ability of the group taking the tests was lower than would usually be expected when compared with similar schools. The pupils in Year 6 last year made less progress since they were in Year 2, particularly in English, than pupils in similar schools made. The disappointing progress was mainly due to the inconsistencies of teaching, and was known to the school. The monitoring and actions about this unsatisfactory state of affairs is a management issue, which has been partly addressed, with appropriate further action planned.
8. Inspection evidence, including a detailed analysis of these statistics, as well as lesson observation and scrutiny of work, shows that standards of attainment in most subjects, for most pupils at Key Stage 2, are at least in line with national expectations and averages, and above in some important areas. Standards of attainment in speaking, listening, reading and information and communication technology are above expectations. Pupils' attainment is below average in writing. Standards are as expected in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography and physical education. Standards in art and design are generally as expected, but with pockets of high standards. Standards are below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 in music, history and religious education. Pupils' progress has often been satisfactory until they reach Year 6, but due to the unsatisfactory nature of the curriculum provided over the last year, pupils will leave the school with insufficient knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Much time has been spent on English, mathematics and science, to the detriment of other subjects, and this has affected standards.
9. Standards of attainment in mathematics have been maintained since the 1997 inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of investigative science have improved considerably, and this is helping their attainment in science overall. Standards in writing have declined, due to differences in the ability of each year group, the unsatisfactory nature of some teaching through the key stage, and the unsatisfactory coverage of the curriculum. The school is aware of these factors and has started to address those issues that it can change. Most parents feel that their children are making good progress.
10. Across the school, pupils make sound use of their learned communication and numeracy skills in other subjects. They make insufficient use of their skills in writing and information and communication technology. Pupils are able to work with others well, they are acquiring more skills in deciding how to improve their performance and to solve problems; this helps them in all subjects. Their thinking skills are improving due to the new personal and social education curriculum.
11. Pupils with special educational needs at the school make at least satisfactory progress, and often it is good, especially in relation to targets relating to behaviour and literacy. This is the result of good extra provision, including withdrawal from their classes for literacy and the teaching of the support assistants. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in their own classes, but the work is not always planned with their specific needs in mind, and so their achievements are not consistently as good as they could be. Mostly, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in subjects other than English and mathematics, but this could be better if

work was targeted more specifically, and information and communication technology was used more. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress because of high quality small-group work, or individual support from the learning support workers. Pupils in the specific learning difficulties centre make at least good progress, and often this is very good.

12. The school analyses all national tests for gender influences. No significant differences are apparent, apart from the usual differences for boys in English. Also, last year's English and science results were affected by under-performance of girls. There is no observable difference in the attainment or progress of boys and girls in any subject; most make appropriate progress. Pupils of higher attainment are not always sufficiently challenged, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics; a significant number are not working at high levels in the National Curriculum programmes of study. The school has not identified any pupil as gifted or talented. Teachers have a list of more able pupils within the class, but insufficient account is taken of their needs, and this leads to under-achievement within this group.
13. The school has set targets for overall improvement in pupils' attainment in English and mathematics for this year and next. The targets for next year are not as well defined as they should be. The school has the information to make reasonable predictions about pupils' attainment next year. From records, the pupils currently in Year 6 are on target to attain the percentages predicted to reach the expected level, but the school reports that these pupils were reluctant to practise for the tests, and so this might affect the grades attained in writing. This problem is known to the headteacher and is due to the changes in teaching staff in Year 6. The headteacher keeps a careful check on the improvements in pupils' performance from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2, so that he knows if any pupil is not doing as well as he or she could. He is mostly aware of the factors that have compromised the highest attainment of pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained high standards in this aspect of its work. Most parents say their children are very happy to come to school. Parents are also pleased with the way pupils behave in and out of school and how the school helps them to treat other people. Teachers and pupils have taken on board the attitudes and values promoted in the new personal, social and emotional development programme, which incorporates work on citizenship, and this has built on and extended pupils' good attitudes and personal development.
15. Pupils have good attitudes in lessons and are eager to learn, generally taking pride in their achievements. In whole-class sessions the majority are keen to answer questions and, when given the opportunity, are confident to ask their own questions. Even the youngest children have a well-developed sense of curiosity and inquiry, which was evident in their hunt for mini-beasts in the wildlife area. Pupils settle to individual tasks with the minimum of fuss, and work conscientiously on whatever is asked of them, even on the few occasions when the task is undemanding, such as when older pupils were expected to use a template to make an imaginary island shape.
16. Behaviour is good, and often very good, both in class and at social times. No anti-social or challenging behaviour was seen during the entire inspection. Pupils are polite and helpful, and treat each other and learning resources with care and respect. At lunchtimes pupils enjoy the good range of equipment and play sensibly, using ropes and balls for their intended purpose. They are quiet and sensible in class and willingly follow class and school routines. No pupils have been excluded since 1997, and the well-documented disciplinary procedures for unacceptable behaviour are only needed on very rare occasions. Through the very good work done in personal, social, health and citizenship lessons, pupils are increasingly aware of the impact of their actions on others, and many parents have recognised the improvement in behaviour at home as well as at school.
17. As they move through the school, pupils increasingly show respect for other people, their values and beliefs. Religious education lessons and assemblies generally have a good impact on these attitudes and help the pupils to learn about different faiths and values. For instance, pupils in Year 4 were fascinated and eager to learn about Jewish customs observed on 'Shabbat' and talked respectfully about them. During group discussions relating to rules for living on a desert island,

pupils in Year 6 showed good understanding of how people need to respect each other and the environment in order to live in peace.

18. Relationships between pupils are mostly very good. They co-operate extremely well, especially when working on small-group tasks. For example, in a very short space of time, pupils in Year 5 working in groups of four or five, very effectively added sound accompaniments to a story about 'The Blitz'. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the social life of the school and are treated with care and respect by the others. Again, this is apparent from a very early age, as was seen in the reception class when a group of able children invited another less able child to come and help them with their construction. Pupils learn from the good relationships they experience with the majority of adults who teach and support them. This is a notable feature in most classes, and only on rare occasions are pupils talked down to or spoken to in anything but a respectful manner. A significant number of pupils in Years 5 and 6 participate in the special shows and events put on each year, for example 'Alice' and 'Songs through the decades'. Through these they learn to be part of a large group, whether as soloists or in the choir, working together to produce high-quality performances.
19. Pupils' personal development is good. When given the opportunity, most pupils enjoy having responsibility and carry out tasks efficiently and competently, showing good initiative. This was very evident in a lesson in Year 4 in the information and communication technology suite, when pupils were showing a high level of independent working. Pupils also take out and put away playground equipment quickly and sensibly. In some lessons, though, older pupils are not given sufficient responsibility. In two lessons, music in Year 5 and religious education in Year 6, equipment was over-prepared by the teacher, denying pupils opportunities for independence and responsibility. In contrast children in the reception class are expected to get out and put away equipment, such as scissors and pencils, themselves.
20. Overall, the pupils are confident young people who enjoy school, take pride in their work and are well prepared for their next steps in life.
21. The pupils' attendance is good, but has declined since the last inspection when it was very good. The attendance rate of 94.7 per cent for 2000/01 was above the national average and the unauthorised absence rate of 0.1 per cent was below that found in similar schools. The vast majority of parents bring their children to school on time, and the school day starts promptly. The pupils' good attendance and punctuality has a positive impact on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. The teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage⁵ and also at Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The teaching in the centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties is very good. Judgements are made on the basis of the observations of lessons seen, and scrutiny of pupils' past work, as well as consideration of the outcomes of the teaching. The situation is about the same as was reported at the previous inspection but, at that time, teaching was stronger in Years 5 and 6 and there was more teaching that was judged as 'very good'. The main difference in the judgements lies in the expectations of the abilities of more able pupils at Key Stage 2.
23. Over the whole school, almost all lessons observed were at least satisfactory. The only lesson seen that was unsatisfactory was in music, where the teacher did not have the knowledge and understanding to carry off the lesson; this is known to the school. About 66 per cent of lessons seen were good or better, and 14 per cent, overall, were very good. When analysing the teaching in the school by excluding the specific learning difficulties centre, the percentages are slightly lower, as the teaching in the centre is consistently of high quality. The teaching in the English lessons seen was generally good, but the evidence of teaching over time shows that it is satisfactory. Pupils are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum, but too little written work is expected, and this is hindering the development of pupils' overall literacy skills. The very high quality teaching that would ensure the best progress for more able pupils is lacking, and

⁵ The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

this is a problem with the school's provision. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall, and pupils are encouraged to use their numeracy skills in other subjects.

24. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in the Foundation Stage, and nearly 90 per cent was good or better, with 11 per cent being very good. In the reception class, one full-time teacher and two part-time teachers have responsibility for teaching. There is also a full-time learning support worker who makes a very valuable contribution to the overall high quality of the teaching. The good teaching leads to good learning by children of all abilities. The key strengths of the teaching in the reception class are: the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum; high expectations of the children; good management of the children; and team-work between the adults. The classroom is well organised, with plenty of practical learning activities attractively laid out. Group activities are exciting and motivate the children, enabling them to concentrate well.
25. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is good because the staff plan for more challenging lessons and cater for the different needs of all pupils. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory; over 70 per cent were good or better, and over 23 per cent were very good. The evidence of planning and past work shows that this good-quality teaching has been going on for most of this year. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is more variable; it is satisfactory overall. In the main school almost all lessons seen were satisfactory, 53 per cent were good or better and six per cent were very good; these very good lessons were all given by the headteacher in the information and communication technology suite. There is very little difference in the teaching of subjects; it is the quality of planning, based on the long and medium-term plans for the curriculum which makes the most difference. There are deficiencies in the teaching of those subjects, which have not been so well planned over time, such as history at Key Stage 2. Those subjects, which have had thorough, planning, such as information and communication technology are much better taught. Pupils' learning at Key Stage 2 is not as secure as at Key Stage 1, as they are not encouraged to do their best work all the time. Although pupils show interest in most lessons, the pace of the lessons is often leisurely and so they do not apply the effort that they could. This is especially the case for more able pupils.
26. There are many strengths in the teaching. A major strength is the way that staff manage pupils well and insist on high standards of behaviour, and this is a great help to pupils' ability to concentrate and settle down to lessons. Teachers are technically competent to teach the basic skills. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum in reception and at Key Stage 1 ensure that pupils acquire new knowledge and skills that are secure and measurable. The work provided for pupils at Key Stage 2 in the information and communication technology suite is challenging, and pupils work hard with success here. Support staff are generally used well across the school. These skilled staff are used very well in reception and at Key Stage 1. Teachers employ a wide range of strategies in their teaching, and there is good use of rôle-play. One commendable aspect of teaching is the judicious use of worksheets; they are only employed when they are relevant to the learning. Plenary⁶ sessions are often good, and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The on-going assessment of pupils' work varies between teachers. It is good in Year 2, with constructive marking, which helps pupils to overcome any difficulties. Some good practice of involving pupils in their own assessments was seen in Year 4 and this is effective in helping pupils to be aware of how they can improve. Pupils' knowledge of how they can improve is better in reception and at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2. The marking at Key Stage 2 is too variable, and in Year 6 it does not ensure that pupils know what to do to improve.
27. Other weaknesses in the teaching often stem from inadequacies in the planning of lessons. There are not always clear objectives for the lesson; the objectives are often too broad, making it difficult to measure whether the lesson has been successful. A few staff do not possess sufficient skills in some subjects, such as music, and the school is aware that more training is needed. The pace of a significant number of lessons is too relaxed; this is partly due to the planning of the timetable, and work expanding to fill the time available. This means that many pupils do not work at a suitable pace and more able pupils are definitely limited by this time wasting. Although an appropriate range of resources and materials, including information and communication technology, is used, the use

⁶ The plenary session is the final part of the lesson when teachers and pupils reflect on how successfully the learning objectives have been met.

of computers is not built well into the planning of lessons, and this does not reinforce pupils' learned skills; the co-ordinator is aware of this.

28. A strength is the good quality of teaching given to pupils with special educational needs, and those of lower attainment, during times when these pupils are withdrawn from class to work in small groups. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the support staff have good skills to give additional help to pupils who have known difficulties, or who need a boost in a basic skill. Staff are thorough in overcoming potential barriers to learning, through their careful planning and through the care they give to pupils with marked special educational needs. However, although these pupils have usable individual education plans, these are not often used by the class teachers, and so valuable reinforcement and practice is lost when pupils work in other subjects. This situation is known to the special educational needs co-ordinator, who has active plans to address it.
29. There are weaknesses in the teaching of more able pupils, as they are not always provided with work that is appropriate to their needs. Sometimes this is based on a lack of knowledge of their capabilities, as assessment procedures in some subjects are unsatisfactory; at other times, it is based on a lack of differentiated planning of more challenging work. This is a weakness in the provision, especially at Key Stage 2, and was very clear from studying pupils' past work, which showed that often all pupils did the same, and there was little evidence of extension work for more able pupils. In English, mathematics and science, able pupils, for instance, are not made aware of how they can modify their work, through constructive feedback, and often, teachers' marking is vague and too insubstantial to be helpful, especially at Year 6. As a consequence, too few pupils achieve higher levels, for instance, in the National Curriculum tests at the end of both key stages. The learning of more able pupils, although satisfactory when they have targets to aim for, and they know what they are doing, is not secure in many subjects where they are insufficiently challenged.
30. Homework is of concern to some parents. In the reception class and at Key Stage 1 it is generally satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 there is inconsistency, and pupils at the top of the school could do more, if their parents request it. Few parents have signed the home/school agreement and this is hampering the school's policy on supplying homework.

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

31. The children in the Foundation Stage have a good curriculum. They are provided with a wide range of practical activities in all areas of learning for children of this age. Teachers plan activities carefully and generally use their knowledge of the children's achievements well in order to challenge and build on previous learning.
32. There is a satisfactory range of activities and learning opportunities for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. This is a similar position to that reported in the previous inspection. Since then there have been some good improvements, balanced by the emergence of new areas for development. Two key issues from the last inspection were related to the curriculum for information and communication technology and investigative science. The school has successfully addressed both of these. Governors have invested generously to provide a new computer suite, and the subject co-ordinator has worked hard to bring about a significant improvement in standards. Similarly, teaching has placed increased emphasis on the investigative aspect of science, and this has also had a positive impact on standards. The school has also worked hard to introduce and implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and this has raised standards in all aspects of mathematics and English, with the exception of writing. As a result, less time has been devoted to some other subjects in recent years. This has led to a decline in standards in music, religious education and history by the end of Year 6, and in geography in Key Stage 1. This is because teachers do not plan the full range of activities required to meet the demands of the National Curriculum for these subjects.
33. The quality of teachers' medium and long-term planning, although satisfactory, has therefore declined since the last inspection, when it was reported as good. Additionally, planning in many subjects provides too few opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing skills. The school day is shorter in Key Stage 2 than in most schools, and this places further constraints on planning and teaching. The school timetable is organised in such a way that some lessons go on longer than necessary and this also uses up time that could be devoted to teaching in other subjects. The

school has successfully introduced setting for mathematics at Key Stage 2, and this is having a good effect on pupils' learning. An experiment in setting for mathematics at Key Stage 1 has been abandoned, but the justification for starting and terminating this is unclear.

34. There is a very good programme in place for the development of pupils' personal, social, and health education. It is supported by an equally good scheme of work. Lessons provide very good opportunities for pupils to discuss a wide range of social, environmental and moral issues and play an important part in developing their sense of citizenship. To this extent, the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also has a considerable bearing on the good standards of speaking and listening achieved by the end of Year 6. Teaching also enables pupils to make informed decisions on subjects such as healthy eating and promotes their awareness of the dangers of drug misuse. Since the last inspection the school has provided improved opportunities for pupils to understand their own sexual development through well-planned and appropriately sensitive discussions with the school nurse.
35. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with good extra help outside their classrooms, by the special educational needs co-ordinator and by well-briefed support staff. The work supplied in the classrooms, however, does not always lead to improvements in the targets set for them. Opportunities are missed to use all the subjects of the curriculum to help pupils improve their basic skills.
36. There is a lack of understanding of the needs of the able pupils. Too little is done to plan, question, extend and check, regularly, that learning is assessed against precise targets for improvement. This leads to a lack of rigour in the challenges set for them and a failure to extend their abilities further. There are undoubtedly able pupils in this school, but the staff do not provide sufficient challenge, for example, for pupils who speak fluently, read and write with confidence, are mathematically competent, are physically or creatively able, or who have a wider than usual general knowledge. Grouping arrangements, expectations, optimism about what pupils can achieve, setting objectives that pupils understand, and assessments, are key ingredients in the raising of standards for the able pupils in particular, as well as for the school as a whole.
37. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for the pupils. The inspection team does not share the views of a significant minority of parents who feel that there are too few after-school clubs. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their sporting skills, for example, through the football, athletics and swimming clubs. The school makes good use of the nearby water activity centre and pupils participate in windsurfing, kayaking and sailing. Musical skills are successfully developed through the choir, recorder group and by productions such as 'Alice – the Musical'. There are few opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to stay for after school-clubs, but they are invited to join the beneficial reading club, where they share books with older pupils during the lunch break.
38. Overall, the school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school has not drawn up a policy for these aspects of pupils' development. There are no guidelines for staff, or details of the contributions from each subject to the overall provision. Therefore, opportunities are missed to enhance the spiritual and cultural development programmes to the same high quality as that of other aspects.
39. The school has maintained its satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual development found at the time of the last inspection. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and make an appropriate contribution to spiritual development. Some staff create a strong spiritual atmosphere when they lead assemblies. For example, in an assembly for Key Stage 1, the teacher told a story about caring for God's world. She paused at the point where everything had been destroyed and, with eyes closed, pupils reflected, whilst listening to Grieg's 'Peer Gynt'. They were invited to express their feelings about the destruction. The teacher then talked about new shoots '*growing like a smile across the earth*'. Through religious education, pupils gain a sound understanding of a range of other faiths. There is no coherent approach to spiritual development throughout the curriculum. Some good practice, however, was seen during the inspection, when, for example, the children in reception showed an atmosphere of surprise and amazement as they explored the environmental area.

40. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school teaches pupils to distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. For example, in the reception class, the children have made their own set of three class rules. When the teacher says '1,2,3,' they can recite the rules and understand the consequences of their actions. Through the very good personal and social educational programme, which includes citizenship, the school encourages pupils to explore issues such as rules, laws and human rights. The theme of looking after the environment is strongly promoted throughout the school. Members of staff set good examples by their consideration for pupils and other members of staff.
41. The school's provision for pupils' social development is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was good. The personal and social education programme is used effectively throughout the school, and issues ranging from dealing with criticism, to family customs, are explored. The school is very successful in promoting respectful relationships. For example, the older pupils prepared for and looked after a visitor. After reflecting on their experiences, they felt confident to be visitors to the younger pupils. The school encourages pupils to think of others in the wider community, and they enjoy raising money for charity and visiting residential homes and the nearby hospital. The pupils' social awareness is further developed through residential visits and a good range of extra-curricular activities. The pupils do not have formal opportunities to improve school life, for example through a school council, but this is being considered.
42. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but has declined since the last inspection when it was reported as good. The pupils' knowledge of their own culture is developed appropriately throughout the curriculum, for example in art, history and music. The school provides few opportunities for pupils to learn about Britain as a multi-cultural society, but there are some areas which give pupils beneficial insights into others' cultures. For example, pupils study a range of European artists, such as Klee and Monet, and write poetry in the Japanese Haiku style. The school has established a link with a school in Africa; an 'African Week' is to take place just after this inspection.
43. The school's partnership with the community is satisfactory. Visitors to school, such as the school nurse, and theatre groups, enrich the curriculum, and the school arranges a satisfactory range of visits, for instance, to a local art gallery. Members of the local community provide valuable support in classrooms and make a good contribution to the personal and social education programme. The school has developed links with a local residential home and the hospital, giving pupils good opportunities to develop their social skills. There are good links with local churches and the school encourages pupils to raise money for charities.
44. The school has developed good links with its partner institutions. The school works with other local primary schools and the pupils benefit from taking part in area sports, a swimming gala and a music festival. The school has established good links with a nearby secondary school and there are good transfer arrangements for the pupils in Year 6. The pupils also benefit from visits to the secondary school for lessons in music and information and communication technology. The school has good links with local colleges, and students on the pre-teaching course have good opportunities for work placements in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school's procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. The previous report stated that '*The school provides an orderly, calm environment in which all members of the school community are valued.*' This is still the case.
46. The school is a caring community. Some parents and the school nurse commented that the staff are particularly supportive when pupils and their families have difficulties. Pupils said that they felt able to talk to their teachers when they were worried. Other adults working in the school, including teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors, make valuable contributions to caring for the pupils. The parents of pupils who attend the specific learning difficulties Centre value the support their children receive; one parent commented that it was a 'haven'. The before and after school club, The Busy Bees, provides useful childcare facilities for parents and carers.

47. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Through the very good personal and social education programme the teachers develop pupils' social skills and monitor their progress. The school invites parents and pupils to comment on how they feel the pupils are getting on. The teachers write helpful comments in the pupils' annual reports.
48. The school has sound arrangements for child protection, although some aspects need to be improved. The child protection policy is satisfactory, but the school documentation does not specify the named person. The special needs co-ordinator is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and carries out her duties effectively. Most, but not all staff, are aware of the school's procedures. The arrangements for children in public care have not been formalised. The school has not formulated a policy for the control and restraint of pupils.
49. There are weaknesses in the management of first aid, as staff do not have clear rôles and responsibilities. A teacher is qualified in first aid and several members of staff, including one lunchtime supervisor, have had basic training. Some members of staff are not aware of the presence of an 'accident book', and no one has overall responsibility for maintaining the first aid boxes.
50. The school pays due attention to health and safety. There is a sound health and safety policy, and appropriate systems are in place for electrical testing, fire drills and risk assessment. Some health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection, and reported formally to governors. They include reviewing the lack of supervision in the playground before school, ensuring that records are kept of pupils who leave the school during the day, such as for medical appointments, and ensuring that registers are always accessible in the event of an emergency evacuation.
51. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. The teachers correctly register pupils who are present, but there are inconsistencies in the way they mark the register for pupils who are absent. This makes the job of analysing absences very difficult. Staff follow up concerns about attendance, and the school involves the educational welfare officer when necessary.
52. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The ethos of good behaviour is reinforced in lessons, assemblies and by the example of adults working in the school. The school has a detailed behaviour policy, which emphasises the rewarding of good behaviour. Rewards and sanctions are applied consistently throughout the school, and rewards are noted in the pupils' personal achievement record. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The school has a clear anti-bullying statement within the behaviour policy. Bullying is discussed within the personal and social education programme. Parents and the pupils say that the headteacher deals swiftly with any incidents of anti-social behaviour.
53. There has been satisfactory improvement overall in the assessment procedures, and their use, in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology since the previous inspection, but not in other subjects. Useful assessment systems are now in place throughout the school for each pupil for English, mathematics and science. Careful records of each pupil's test results are kept from when they start school, and these are passed on from year to year. In addition, the co-ordinators for these subjects now carry out regular sampling of work which enables them to judge pupils' progress accurately against nationally agreed attainment levels. These are promising strategies that provide a solid platform for future development.
54. Similarly, the school is beginning to analyse results in national and optional tests to organise pupils into appropriate teaching groups and to predict pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers in Key Stage 1 are now using this information to set more detailed individual targets, particularly for English. This practice is also being used in some classes in Key Stage 2, although in many cases, targets are not specific enough to inform planning or to guide pupils toward the next attainment level. More able pupils are particularly disadvantaged by the lack of definite targets for improvement. Assessment data is not always used well. Teachers often set the same work for all ability levels, which is insufficiently challenging for the more able pupils.

55. There are no systems in place for assessing pupils' attainment in subjects other than mathematics, English, science and information and communication technology. Consequently, co-ordinators and teachers have no accurate means of judging the effectiveness of planning or measuring pupils' progress against nationally agreed standards. This is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The parents expressed generally positive views about the school at the pre-inspection meeting and through the questionnaire and letters. The vast majority say that teaching is good and they value the way in which staff are willing to discuss parents' concerns. They feel that their children are expected to work hard and that they are making good progress. They are pleased that their children like school and say that the school helps the pupils to become mature and responsible. The parents of pupils with specific learning difficulties particularly value the work by the centre staff. Over a quarter of the parents who returned the questionnaires feel the school does not provide a good range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team does not share this view and judges that there is a good range of activities outside lessons.
57. The previous inspection reported that the school's links with parents were excellent. The headteacher acknowledges that this is no longer the case, as far fewer parents are actively involved in the school. The governors feel that they do all they can to promote partnership and would welcome more parental involvement. Currently, the school has good links with its parents. The parents value the 'open door' policy, and families who have particular difficulties feel well supported by the school. The school has developed a good website, which has useful information for parents. The school values the parents' opinions and responds to their suggestions. As a result of a recent questionnaire, the school is making various improvements to its communication with parents. For example, the headteacher now ensures that he is available to talk with parents each Friday afternoon, but this offer has not yet been taken up.
58. The information which the school provides for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus and governors' annual report give parents useful information, but do not contain all the information they should. Half-termly newsletters are of a good quality and inform parents of future events, as well as celebrating the school's successes. The school invites parents to valuable information evenings, for example, on sex education and computing. The school also sends parents useful information each term about the topics their children will be studying. The school recognises the need to improve the pupils' annual reports. Not all reports currently meet requirements, as some do not report on music or information and communication technology. They do not always give enough information about how the pupils are getting on, and what they need to do to improve their work. Termly consultations with teachers give parents good opportunities to discuss their children's progress.
59. The parents' involvement with the work of the school is satisfactory. Although the vast majority of parents support events such as musical productions, only ten per cent of parents have signed the home-school agreement. The parent governors are very supportive of the school and help to shape its future. The school's Friends Association organises social events and raises considerable funds to enhance the educational resources.
60. The parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. The school values the help offered by parents. They provide support in the classrooms and help with visits and after-school clubs. Parents are keen to support their children, and attendance at parents' consultation meetings is high. A significant minority of parents are unhappy about homework. The inspection team judges that homework makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. The lack of a formal homework diary limits parents' involvement in the work their children do at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. The leadership, management and efficiency of the school are satisfactory overall, which appears to be not as good a situation as was reported at the previous inspection. There are strengths in the leadership but a number of weaknesses in the management and administration that is holding back the development of the school and the raising of standards. Several reasons account for this, including staff changes, and a lack of systems and structures in place that would ensure consistency and conformity. Although the managers have made a satisfactory response to the key issues raised in the previous report, and a good response to the issues connected with information and communication technology and science, other important issues have not been addressed well enough, and, especially when compared with how well most schools have improved their management practices, Chesterton School has not developed as well as it should. There is no complacency, but some lack of knowledge about what is current best practice.
62. The headteacher has established clear educational direction for the school. He has been instrumental in the very successful raising of pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology, and in incorporating drama into the school. He is well on course to achieving his current performance management targets. He takes an appropriately wide view of the aims of primary schooling and has set an ethos of developing the whole child. This is good. However, his management, pastoral, administration and curriculum load is very heavy. Although the bursar is very efficient and gives very good support to the headteacher and governors, her load is also heavy. There is too little administrative support in the school office. The result is that the headteacher has too much to do. He undertakes tasks that should be delegated to others, including the administrative staff and the senior management team. The use of the senior staff is inefficient.
63. A weakness of the school, which runs through many aspects of its life, is the lack of conformity and consistency in the application of agreed procedures. Some deficiencies in safety procedures are due to this. Many sound arrangements have been set up, but, due to unsatisfactory checking, they are not followed through. The co-ordination of subjects is a typical example. Some subjects, such as information and communication technology, are managed well, and the results, in terms of the raising of standards, are clear to see. Other subjects are not managed properly and, as the teaching and pupils' work has not been effectively monitored and evaluated, standards are not as good as they should be; examples include history and religious education. Co-ordinators of many subjects do not, as a matter of course, scrutinise pupils' books and discuss the subject with pupils. They look at the planning, but anomalies that should have been discovered have not been addressed. A rolling programme of lesson observations is planned, but few subject managers have done anything like the amount of monitoring that they should be effective. A significant contributory factor in this lack of checking is the change of staff that has precipitated changes in co-ordination; another factor is that subject co-ordination is often shared between two people, which does not promote accountability. There is sound capacity for improvement now that subject managers are mostly in place, but only if co-ordinators are given the authority to lead their subjects, and are made accountable for standards.
64. The school benefits from having an active governing body. Led by an effective chair, governors are involved in shaping the direction of the school and, generally, ensure that statutory requirements are met. However, they have not formally adopted a policy for restraint of pupils, and there are a couple of omissions in their information to parents. A recent innovation is the attachment of named governors to subjects, and this is a positive move. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs provides very good support. Governors have a reasonable understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, but, due to weak evaluation procedures in some areas, and being less than knowledgeable about some curriculum issues, they are not aware of all of the weaknesses. There is a tendency to assume that things cannot be improved, because governors do not know how to improve them without sacrificing other aspects which they value. All staff and governors have a whole-day session to review all that has been achieved, and to plan for the future. This is good practice. But the review is based on weak evaluation procedures, and some arrangements, such as trying out the setting of pupils for mathematics at Key Stage 1, are not based on sound educational objectives.

65. The governing body is aware of the principles of best value when planning the school's development, and is starting to apply them. Efforts are made to compare performance, and consult interested parties, such as parents. The principle of challenge is used to some extent, but assumptions are sometimes made about how to address problems, which are not justified. For instance, the school is considering the appointment of a school counsellor, which is a policy of perfection given that behaviour is good and few pupils have such serious problems that their school work is affected; but improvements to the school library, which is accepted as unsatisfactory, do not appear on the current school improvement plan.
66. The principle of competition – 'Are we providing what we do at the best price?' – is not always applied. School development planning has improved since the previous inspection, when it was a key issue for action, but it is still not good enough. There are three over-riding priorities for development. Teaching and learning, the improvement of behaviour and the environment are long-term aims for improvement. There are 22 separate priorities for this year, and 13 other aspects to tackle. The school hopes to build a nursery and make changes to the entrance. These are big, expensive projects, which would have benefits for the school, but depend on planning permission and the co-operation of the local authority. Finance has been planned for these, and the prudent planning accounts for a large carry forward of funds into the current financial year.
67. Priorities for the current year, which could be tackled in the time-scale and with current resources, are unclear. Targets, such as raising the attainment of more able pupils, can only be considered hopes for the future unless staff, time and money are allocated towards addressing all the issues involved. The implementation of the school improvement plan cannot be effective without named staff to lead the projects; currently there is too much shared responsibility and too little real accountability that can be traced back to teachers' performance management targets. Time-scales are not well enough defined and success criteria are often vague, and so progress towards the targets cannot be monitored and achievement cannot be measured.
68. Two major successes for the school have been the good improvements in the resources and pupils' standards of attainment for information and communication technology, and the improvement in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. The problem is that these aspects have been led by the headteacher and a non class-based senior member of staff, and neither information and communication technology nor the individual education plans are well enough used by the class teachers. The rest of the teachers do not have ownership of these aspects. The new programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship, and the school's emphasis on drama and water-sports as extra-curricular activities are also managed by these two members of staff. It would appear that high-status projects are only managed by staff that are given extra time and plenty of resources, and that other subject co-ordinators, who are also class teachers, have not been given the time, money or authority to make effective checks on their areas of the curriculum.
69. There are no named members of staff to manage a number of crucial aspects of the school such as: the overall co-ordination of the curriculum, assessment, or target-setting; no co-ordinators for equal opportunities or social inclusion, or to cope with possible refugees, or any pupil who is in public care, or who is gifted or talented. There is no co-ordinator to monitor the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, or to record themes in acts of collective worship. The teacher who oversees child protection issues is not named in documents. There is no official co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage, and reference to this phase of education is lacking in many school documents. Although, currently, there are no pupils in school with English as an additional language, no provision has been made for possible needs. Should pupils with English as an additional language be admitted, there are no guidelines to help staff understand and deal with their curricular, personal or cultural needs and no guidance on assessment procedures. Proper delegation is lacking and this affects team working in the school and hence the quality of education provided for pupils. The rôles and responsibilities of members of the senior management team are not well defined. Some members of the senior management team have too light a load. Much time and many resources have been devoted to improving those things that are already at least satisfactory, such as behaviour, and not enough on those aspects that are weak, such as the management of the provision for more able pupils. There are too few effective systems and structures in place for senior staff to check on the effectiveness of many aspects of the school, such as procedures to ensure pupils' welfare.

70. There are satisfactory systems for staff's induction to the school, their training and performance management. The school has had a successful partnership with teacher-training institutions. The governing body puts great store on training staff and the school has held the 'Investors in People' status since 1998. Teachers' job descriptions are rather general and do not specify all that they do, and this limits analysis of their performance. The headteacher has provided good training on information and communication technology for all staff. Recently, however, less has been spent on training for other subjects than is spent in other schools, and this has affected standards of attainment in some subjects, such as music, and in the management of the curriculum. The need for training has not been picked up by the subject co-ordinators. Most subject co-ordinators have not observed teaching in their subjects, and so are unaware of weaknesses in the subject's delivery. The key stage co-ordinators have changed, and the co-ordination of the planning at Key Stage 2 has constrained the teaching and affected pupils' standards of attainment. The headteacher, and sometimes the deputy headteacher, have monitored teaching. The systems for this are improving, and the headteacher has a fair idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching. He has re-allocated teaching and subject management responsibilities to ensure a better provision for pupils, but is aware that training is needed for staff to do their jobs properly.
71. Levels of staffing are good. There is a generous number of well-qualified teachers, complemented by a good number of effective, appropriately trained support teachers and assistants. The latter work closely with the teachers, to support small-group work and individual pupils. The mixture of new, enthusiastic teachers and experienced members of staff, offers opportunities to share ideas and teaching methods. However, these opportunities are insufficiently exploited. Overall, the Key Stage 1 team works more closely, as a unit, than the teachers in Key Stage 2. This enables the pupils to develop their learning skills more appropriately.
72. The centre for pupils with specific learning difficulties is led well by the teacher, in conjunction with the headteacher and the officers of the local education authority. It is well staffed and resourced. However, the provision is very expensive, and, although staff and parents could justify the cost effectiveness for each pupil who attends, serious consideration needs to be given about the value for money provided overall. In the main school, the special educational needs co-ordinator has set up good provision for pupils of lower attainment and those who have special educational needs. The school is moving towards implementing the new Code of Practice for special educational needs.
73. The special educational needs co-ordinator also co-ordinates the new provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship. The school benefits greatly from an outside professional, who generously gives her time and expertise to develop the planning for this area of the curriculum. A lot of time and school resources have been devoted to these two important aspects, and there are positive results. However, the governors should consider whether this good provision has been provided at the cost of the provision for more able pupils in the subjects of the National Curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator only teaches a class for one day a week; there are plenty of skilled support staff who could deliver the teaching of the small groups, now that the systems have been devised and refined over two years. At present, the special educational needs provision is mostly given by staff outside the classroom, and this is inefficient. It is also inefficient for a senior member of staff to be allocated four days for this provision when there is a greater need for extra work and help being given to more able pupils. This teacher does not have responsibility for a class, and there is an extra classroom available; this means that the class sizes are rather big. The governors may consider that this is an effective way of working, but have not done a cost-benefit analysis of the current arrangements.
74. The accommodation is good. Many classrooms are quite generous in size; all are well lit and airy. There are plenty of extra rooms for small-group work. The accommodation contributes well to the teaching. On the whole, the school is tidy, but some parts are less clean and some classrooms in Key Stage 2 have carpeted areas that pose safety risks. The library is small and under-utilised as a resource, and it is in need of renovation and replenishment; at present, it is ineffective at providing study support, and there is little to interest higher level readers. The new suite for information and communication technology enhances learning in the subject. It is placed upstairs for security reasons, but disabled access to this upper level is unsatisfactory, because the stair-lift only reaches halfway up the stairs. This could compromise equal opportunities for pupils with restricted

mobility. There are good facilities for small-group work and withdrawal sessions, in quiet, designated rooms off main corridors, as well as a designated teaching room for pupils with special educational needs.

75. The classes for pupils in Years 1 and 2 are housed in an attractive, recent addition to the main building. They have spacious, useful group teaching areas outside the main classrooms, which enhance the pupils' learning and offer very good opportunities to display work sympathetically. A very good example of this was the work in science and art and design, which was sensitively combined, with growing plants and the pupils' careful, perceptive watercolours of woodland flowers, picked from the environmental area. This area is a real haven for wildlife and a wonderful resource for the school, used imaginatively and frequently by all classes. Trees are mature, meadow areas are left unspoilt and mown paths give access to 'dens', shady areas and rotting logs, which hide all manner of creatures waiting to be discovered. The evident joy and enthusiasm of the children and teachers in the reception class, was a very good example of its use and value to learning. However, the school has plans in place for a new entrance, which would jeopardise the existence of this well-established area, in favour of a smaller space. Generally, the accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is good but there is no designated area for outdoor play. Older pupils have plenty of space, with quiet areas and climbing equipment. Recently, the school has provided various toys and equipment for use, particularly at lunchtime. The pupils say they enjoy this and that playtimes are more orderly and fun.
76. The level of provision of resources is satisfactory, overall, and is very good for information and communication technology. The new suite is well supplied with up-to-date computers and teaching aids. Art and design, music, design and technology and the Foundation Stage all have good resources, which are appropriately accessible. The resources for other subjects are adequate. All areas of the curriculum have improved their resourcing adequately since the time of the last inspection, but information and communication technology has improved most dramatically, and the effects on pupils' attainment in this subject are very good. However, there are far too few books in the library, especially for more able pupils.
77. The school is currently carrying forward a very high percentage of its budget, but has clear plans for spending the money on appropriate major projects which will benefit the school in both the short and longer term. The school's finances are linked to the school improvement plan, but a lack of prioritising means that it is not always clear where the money is most needed. Purchasing decisions relating to expensive resources, such as the new computer suite, are carefully costed. The governors are fully involved in budget setting and benefit, as the school does, from the advice and experience of the bursar, who is a member of the school's senior management team. However, the practice of allocating £800 annually to each class to be spent on separate class resources does not target scarce resources in the areas where the school decides they are most needed, and is inefficient practice.
78. The governors are well aware of the principles of best value, and that these should be applied to educational decisions as well as the purchase of resources, and are also aware that there is a need to focus more rigorously on the efficient use of both staff and time. There is no complacency and governors know that further improvements are necessary. Given all that is achieved, with pupils' standards being generally in line with national averages and expectations due to the satisfactory quality of education provided, and the good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, and taking into account the fact that the school spends a little more per pupil than many schools, it gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- ❑ Raise pupils' standards of attainment in writing* by:
 - ensuring that pupils have sufficient time to practise writing at some length;
 - planning appropriate opportunities within lessons in other subjects to use writing;
 - making marking more analytical so that pupils know what to do to improve;
(Paragraphs 2 – 6, 8 –11, 33, 111 and 123)

- ❑ Raise the attainment of more able pupils* by:
 - ensuring better assessment of their achievements in all subjects, and using the data acquired in a more effective way;
 - ensuring that pupils know what they have to do to improve;
 - setting more appropriate work in lessons;
 - setting challenging targets and making sure that pupils know what they are;
 - allowing pupils more independence in their work;
 - delegating responsibility to a senior member of staff to oversee this provision.
(Paragraphs 4, 12, 23, 25, 27, 29, 36, 54, 67, 69, 76, 11, 127, 130, 136, 139, 159, 166 and 197)

- ❑ Raise pupils' standards of attainment in music*, history and religious education at Key Stage 2 and in geography at Key Stage 1 by:
 - continuing to improve the schemes of work to ensure that pupils have teaching which will build on their existing skills;
 - planning the timetable more effectively so that pupils have a continuous programme to develop their skills;
 - appointing appropriately qualified permanent staff to co-ordinate music;
 - providing further training for some staff to teach music;
 - ensuring that teaching is properly monitored so that subject managers know what is going on in their areas;
 - devising effective assessment procedures and ensuring that these are properly used.
(Paragraphs 2, 5, 6, 8, 27, 156, 163, 165, 179, 180, 183 and 197)

- ❑ Improve the strategic use of resources by:
 - delegating more responsibility to senior staff*;
 - using the time and skills of the senior staff who are not class-based, to help raise the attainment of more able pupils;
 - deploying skilled ancillary staff to support pupils who are more able;
 - changing the system of purchasing consumable resources so that there is a whole-school approach;
 - improving the use of the time allocated to teaching during the school day. A more consistent approach to the planning of the timetable is necessary;
 - ensuring that pupils make sufficient use of the library and the computers*;
 - devising clear success criteria to evaluate spending decisions.
(Paragraphs 10, 62, 63, 67, 69, 70, 73, 77 and 153)

- ❑ Improve the management of the curriculum* by:
 - establishing procedures so that there is an effective overview of the whole curriculum;
 - increasing the weekly teaching time for pupils at Key Stage 2;
 - ensuring that pupils receive the same curriculum appropriate for their age within each class catering for that year-group;
 - increasing the amount of teaching time for non-core subjects;
 - improving the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum so that co-ordinators have a clear idea about what is going on in their subjects;
 - giving all subject co-ordinators the authority to lead their subjects.
(Paragraphs 7, 67, 70, 134, 141, 153, 156, 160, 163, 167 and 183)

- Ensure that there are satisfactory procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety by:
 - devising and agreeing a policy for the restraint of pupils; (this was already in hand before the formal feedback to the governing body)
 - improving procedures to monitor attendance, including the consistent marking of registers;
 - ensuring that all staff are aware of the school's child protection procedures and that the named person is specified in all relevant documentation;
 - devising clear rôles and responsibilities for administering first-aid;
 - appointing staff to co-ordinate the education and care of vulnerable pupils.
(Paragraphs 29, 48 – 50, 55 and 69)

In addition to the issues above, the following less important matters should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Ensure that the library is improved without delay, including the purchase of books.
(Paragraphs 74, 76 and 122)
- Include the National Curriculum test results national averages for Key Stage 2 in the prospectus. (Paragraph 58)
- Include information on security and targets for Level 4 in the National Curriculum tests in the governors' annual report to parents. (Paragraph 58)

**The staff and governors are aware of these key issues and have already made plans to address them.*

THE CENTRE FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

80. There is very good provision for pupils who attend this centre, and pupils make at least good, and sometimes very good progress. Little reference was made to this provision in the previous inspection report, but a full inspection carried out by the local education authority in 1998 identified several key issues for action for the centre staff and Chesterton School, and also for the local education authority. Most of these points have been successfully addressed.
81. Two pupils from Chesterton School attend the centre, and 13 other pupils, from nine other different local primary schools, attend the centre part-time. These pupils are from Years 4, 5 and 6 and attend for up to three sessions a week. Five of them have a statement of special educational needs and the others have been identified as having marked specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). The range of difficulties that they face, including a reluctance to learn, due to failure in the past, has impeded their progress in learning in many subjects, especially in language. Pupils start at the centre having had a comprehensive assessment by officers of the local education authority, and with the agreement of their own schools and their parents. The local education authority controls admissions, and Chesterton School governors do not have any formal say in who is admitted, but, in reality, the school's concerns are taken into account.
82. Pupils make at least good progress in learning and their response to the lessons is good. They enjoy visiting the centre, and their self-esteem is raised due to the good management by the centre's staff and to the sound liaison with their own schools' teachers. Pupils with the most marked problems make the most progress, and this is acknowledged by their parents and by their own schools. The teaching is very well planned and lessons are fun, and so pupils want to learn. Pupils often have great difficulty with comprehension of their reading; appropriate work is given to help in this respect. However, many pupils read as well as other pupils of their age, and can read and define words such as 'extract', 'anecdote', and 'malignant'. The attainment in reading shows great improvement for most pupils. Many pupils can use reference material, with help, but also need a lot of help to access information from the computer; this lack of information and communication technology skills is also hindering their learning in other subjects. Spelling is a great problem for pupils attending the centre and they are given imaginative work to help them overcome these difficulties. A good range of teaching strategies is employed, especially to help pupils improve their control when writing. Given this varied work, pupils concentrate well and try hard.
83. The centre is a haven for pupils with great problems, but there is no 'spoon-feeding'. The atmosphere is relaxed, but purposeful. Pupils are taught coping strategies, which will be of use in their own schools. The very good relationships that the staff of the centre have built up with pupils means that the staff can challenge the pupils and yet ensure that pupils will try. This sensitive management of pupils is a very strong aspect of the teaching. The positive atmosphere is the key to success.
84. A significant number of pupils display much more self-confidence than was reported when they started at the centre. One parent states that staff have 'battled' with her child's problems, and that the centre staff treat pupils as individuals and are a great help to their parents. '*They deserve a medal*' is a sentence, used by a parent, which sums up many parents' views of the centre.
85. The curriculum provided is based purely on the need to raise pupils' achievements in reading and writing, although some do have problems with their mathematics and with co-ordination. The teaching is very good, and is based on thorough on-going assessment and a multi-sensory approach, which enables pupils not only to be successful in meeting their targets, but also to accept that the teaching is working. There are obvious drawbacks to the pupils' attendance at the centre, not least the problems of missing other subjects in their own schools; this could compromise their opportunities to a balanced curriculum. The centre's staff and the schools are aware of this.
86. The policy documents for the centre are sound, and the quality of pupils' individual education plans is good. Detailed files are kept on pupils, which record their progress in learning and in their attitudes to learning. An appropriate range of tests is used to measure progress, and the educational psychologist from the local education authority gives good support.

87. A recent initiative is the development of an 'outreach' provision for the pupils' own schools. The centre's teacher visits the other schools and liaises with the pupils' own teachers about how they can best help. This appears to be working and letters from these schools indicate that other staff from the local education authority are benefiting from this sharing of expertise and good practice.
88. The centre is staffed by a full-time teacher and a full-time support assistant. Both are well qualified and have appropriate extra training and good experience. They work hard for the benefit of pupils. Their salaries are paid by the local education authority, not by the school. The accommodation is satisfactory and well resourced. The room is welcoming and suitably set up for the needs of dyslexic pupils. There is appropriate information and communication technology equipment, but insufficient horizontal-screened laptop computers for those pupils who might benefit from them. The staff are currently looking into the suitability of voice-activated machines which might help pupils. The centre is fortunate in having regular voluntary help and this is beneficial for pupils.
89. The official line manager for the centre's teacher is Chesterton School's headteacher, although the money for the teacher comes from the local education authority. There are some inherent difficulties in this situation with regard to the teacher's monitoring, performance management and discussion about her future. The officers of the local education authority are appropriately involved in the management of the centre, but day-to-day issues are coped with by the centre and the school. Chesterton School staff make good use of the expertise afforded by the centre and pupils of all schools benefit.
90. This high quality provision is very expensive. Only four or five pupils attend in any one session and the costs of such well-trained staff, the accommodation, resources and the management by the school and by the local education authority are high. Chesterton Primary School and the Specific Learning Difficulties Centre are doing that which they are required to do by the local education authority when it was set up several years ago, and the development of the 'outreach' provision is a sensible extension of the work. However, fewer local schools are now using this facility for their pupils and, therefore, the cost per pupil, especially when added to the 'home-school' costs, is extremely high. The local education authority will need to consider whether such provision can be sustained in its present form.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

64

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

89

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	33	21	1	0	0
Percentage	0	14	51	33	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	295
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		71

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	22	21	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	22
	Girls	19	20	21
	Total	36	38	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	88 (90)	98 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	20
	Girls	18	19	20
	Total	35	39	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (84)	91 (98)	93 (96)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	24	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	19	24
	Girls	17	18	19
	Total	35	37	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (75)	76 (62)	88 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	21
	Girls	18	15	17
	Total	35	33	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (64)	67 (75)	78 (84)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	256
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.3*
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	159

* includes specific learning difficulties centre

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income*	715,581
Total expenditure*	615,106
Expenditure per pupil*	2,030
Balance brought forward from previous year	119,172
Balance carried forward to next year	100,475

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	295
Number of questionnaires returned	63
Percentage of questionnaires returned	21

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	43	5	3	2
My child is making good progress in school.	43	49	6	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	75	6	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	56	17	5	2
The teaching is good.	43	52	2	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	59	8	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	44	2	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	54	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	49	14	5	0
The school is well led and managed.	37	48	11	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	62	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	48	19	8	2

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

91. Since the previous inspection the school has worked hard to ensure that appropriate changes to the curriculum for children in the reception class have been implemented. The provision for children in the reception class is good and clearly follows the national guidance to provide activities to allow children to reach the Early Learning Goals⁷ before they join Year 1. The good quality education reported upon at the previous inspection has been developed further.
92. The environment is attractive and welcoming, and all children are admitted at the start of the school year in which they are five. Initially they are helped to settle in by attending on a part-time basis for four weeks. This ensures that numbers in each session are small and staff can assess and get to know individuals. At the time of the inspection there were 32 children in the reception class, all attending full-time, with the equivalent of two full-time teachers and one learning support worker. This good staffing ratio is significant in helping the children make good progress during their time in the reception class.
93. Children enter the reception class with about the usual levels of attainment, although there is a wide spread of ability. A significant number do not have the reading, speaking and listening skills expected, and their knowledge and understanding of the world is below that of many children of their age. Some of their physical skills, such as running and climbing, are good, but many are unable to use scissors and handle other small equipment. By the time they reach the end of the reception year, all have made at least satisfactory progress in learning, and some have made good progress, so that most reach all of the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Year 1. Children who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well. Children arrive at school on time, and parents are confident that their children are happy and cared for well.
94. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides for all six areas of learning in a well-planned and balanced way. Day-to-day planning is specific, and group activities for mathematical development, language and literacy are carefully graded to match the needs of children's differing abilities. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. They include an early assessment of children soon after they start school, using a national profile, but this does not cover all the six areas of learning, especially those aspects which some children find hard. Each half term, following the school's policy, some areas of learning related to communication, language, literacy, mathematical and scientific development are specifically assessed, and progress is carefully monitored. This is good.
95. The leadership of the Foundation Stage by the full-time teacher is good, although she is not specifically designated as 'co-ordinator'. Links with Key Stage 1 are satisfactory, but the importance of the Foundation Stage in the children's education is not sufficiently recognised in all school documentation. The reception class teacher, although new to the age group this year, is very enthusiastic and has sought expert support and information from an outside source. This is reflected in the good provision.
96. The quality of teaching in all areas of learning is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers and support staff talk with children during their activities, developing their speaking and listening skills well. Occasionally, in whole-class sessions, questioning is not sufficiently open-ended, or focused on individual children, to ensure that all are challenged and involved. Relationships are very good in the reception class, which is reflected in the good progress children make in their personal, social and emotional development. Children are given plenty of opportunities to explore, use their imagination and try new experiences in a stimulating, enquiring and structured way. For example, more able children were helped to use books and magazines to find answers to their own questions such as '*Do ants live in trees?*'

⁷ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

97. Very good use is made of the exciting outdoor facilities, including the school's wildlife area. Although the play area is not fenced-off, and poses a potential risk for the very young, children are always very closely supervised, and they are frequently reminded of safety routines. When a group was working in the wildlife area quite near to the pond, one child expertly described the safety procedures. Resources in the reception class are plentiful and of a good quality and make a significant contribution to the children's learning.
98. The learning support assistant is well qualified and provides very valuable support. Both she and the part-time teachers are involved at all stages of planning and in the assessment of children, adding to the overall positive working ethos within the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

99. Many of the children enter the reception class having had playgroup experiences, but few have been through nursery education. Their personal and social skills are wide ranging, but, overall, are broadly as expected for their age. All make sound, and many good, progress, so that by the time they move into Year 1 they will have achieved the Early Learning Goals. Children feel safe and secure, showing a high level of trust in the staff, and they follow well-established routines confidently. This is evident in the way in which they clear away activities quickly and sensibly and line up for moving around the school. A special fun routine of '*serpentina*', that is following each other in a line which twists and turns round the yard like a snake, has taught the children to walk in this safe and orderly way. Children behave well, even when really excited, and are clear about what is expected of them throughout the sessions. They are eager to respond to the adults, and most behave in a mature manner when working independently. When working in small groups, all show good levels of concentration, particularly when the activities are especially interesting. Even a group of lower ability children are able to sort and match pairs of cards for at least 10 minutes, without the direct supervision of an adult. In large, whole-class sessions, a number of the children find it more difficult to sustain concentration and occasionally get restless and silly. This was seen a few times, such when children were outside looking at what lived in a tree, during a counting activity on the carpet, and during a music session. These few moments of silliness and lack of concentration occurred mainly when one teacher was managing a very large group of young children with a wide range of ability.

Communication, language and literacy

100. Children make good progress in the development of speaking and listening skills, a significant number from a level below that expected when they started school. By the time they leave the reception class most achieve the Early Learning Goals. Staff are skilled at using well-phrased questions to help the children to listen carefully and respond with more than 'yes' or 'no' answers. They encourage the children to explain what they have been doing and to describe what they see. Exciting activities, particularly linked to animals and the natural world, frequently stimulate the children to speak enthusiastically, such as '*I've found a spider!*' and '*It's hard*' were typical of the spontaneous remarks from the children when looking for what was living in and around a large tree. Back in the classroom, ideas and vocabulary are extended. For example, the children were asked what was hard and the word '*trunk*' was reinforced. They were also introduced to the word '*bark*', which only one child appeared to understand in this context. Children enjoy listening to stories, rhymes and music, which are used well to stimulate conversation and help children to talk about what they feel. Teachers make satisfactory use of rôle-play activities, and the use of puppets to stimulate language is another good feature.
101. Quite a lot of children start school with below average reading skills, but most make good progress and leave the reception class having achieved the Early Learning Goals. This is achieved through providing lots of opportunities for children to share and enjoy books with adults and to sit and 'read' on their own, such as after snack. The children take books home on a regular basis, and parents are encouraged to share the book with their child and write comments about the interest shown. Each child also has a book of letter sounds, which they take home to practise. Most children have a good grasp of initial sounds and recognise a few familiar words. More able children understand what a title is, recall stories they have read and talk about favourite books. A good range of books, both fiction and for information, is available, and children are taught to use these well.

102. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for the development of children's writing. They have access to writing and drawing materials and are encouraged to write for a purpose and when appropriate. For example, when a group of more able children were working with the teacher, researching about things that live in trees, the teacher wrote their questions and, when they had found the answers, the children were helped to write their own answers. During the following whole-class session one boy read out 'Do frogs live in trees?', to which the rest of the class unanimously replied 'No!', and he proudly read from his own writing 'Yes they do' and showed the book where he had found it. He also explained that tree frogs didn't live in this country. This was a very good example of how aspects of different areas of the curriculum are carefully interwoven through good planning by the staff.

Mathematical development

103. Most children start in reception with a level of understanding that is expected for most four year-olds. By the time children move to Year 1, most will have achieved the expected goals in this area. They make good progress during the year, due to the good teaching. More able children have already exceeded some of the goals and are working on aspects of the National Curriculum for pupils in Year 1. For example, one child was given the task to decide 'How many more ladybirds are needed on the leaf to make 20?', the starting number having been written on the leaf in figures. This he did easily and very quickly. He was then further challenged with numbers to 30, which he really enjoyed. Both he and many other children are familiar with, and understand, mathematical language such as 'more', 'less', 'bigger', 'smaller', whilst some of the least able children are still struggling to recognise and count to five, as well as learning everyday phrases such as 'in front of'. Opportunities to count, look for and describe numbers and shapes are used well by staff during other activities, as well as those specifically planned for mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

104. Many of the children start school with limited experiences of the wider world around them, but are very aware of their own immediate environment. A few have good general knowledge and understanding. During their time in reception, all make at least satisfactory progress, and good progress is made in understanding and learning about the natural world. Most children reach the expected levels of learning by the time they leave the reception class, and a few have knowledge and understanding above the expected level.
105. Activities during the inspection were based on 'Who lives here' and children discovered that a great many small creatures also live in trees, as well as birds and squirrels. They also excitedly and carefully explored what lives under stones in the wildlife area. The children learnt to record each discovery by the simple placing of a small stone, thus creating a three-dimensional block graph. This skilful teaching not only maintained motivation and interest, but also further developed the children's mathematical understanding. The children quickly and easily understood that many snails and wood lice live under stones.
106. Children explore different materials, making things from clay, cardboard and plastic. Staff extend children's vocabulary by using terms such as 'rough' and 'smooth', which links well to the activities, and children are well prepared for their work in science in Year 1. Construction toys are purposefully used to re-enact experiences, such as the visit to a farm. The children are skilled at using the mouse to operate the computer. Only a little evidence was seen to support the development of children's awareness of different cultures and beliefs, and this is an area for development.

Physical development

107. Although many of the children come into the reception class with good physical skills, especially in their ability to run, jump and climb, their progress is good and they move into Year 1 having reached or exceeded the Early Learning Goals, due to skilled teaching. They throw small objects with appropriate skill and accuracy for their age, and many are able to skip with a rope, which is above expectations. All show good awareness of space, and know that it is good to exercise and get your heart 'wibbling', as wonderfully described by one child. Staff have high expectations that children

undress and dress themselves with very little help from adults. Children are taught to use scissors safely and hold pencils correctly; they clear away toys and equipment quickly and sensibly.

Creative development

108. The children make at least satisfactory progress in this aspect of the curriculum, and in the use of paint and other materials, their achievements are good. The teaching of the art and design aspects are good. By the end of the reception year, most of the children reach the expected goals. They explore and use crayons, paints and a variety of materials, such as tissue paper and tin foil, to create pictures and experiment with colour. In dance, although they try hard and use their imagination enthusiastically to re-create parts of a story, they struggle to respond to the beat of the music. Good opportunities are provided for them to hear and respond to music, and they are encouraged to talk and move to contrasting pieces of music. All enjoy listening to and joining in with rhymes and songs. Very good opportunities are provided for the children to enjoy and respond to touching, feeling, hearing and smelling, with moments of excitement and wonder skilfully created. In addition to the opportunities provided outside, within the classroom the children are encouraged to care for and talk to their beautiful large rabbit. They were fascinated by the dead Japanese fish and encouraged to touch, feel and smell as well as talk about it. This imaginative teaching has a great effect on children's learning and the development of their imaginations.
109. Children in the reception class are receiving a well-balanced education, which gives them a good start in their school life and prepares them well for the National Curriculum in Year 1.
110. There are two main areas for development:
- to evaluate the use of whole-class sessions in order to maximise learning for all children and cater more effectively for the wide range of ability;
 - to extend the good assessment of individual children's progress against the Early Learning Goals expected at the end of the reception year.

ENGLISH

111. The results of the National Curriculum tests, in 2001, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, were below the national average and inspection findings indicate that standards in writing remain below national expectations. There are two main reasons for this. First, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop these skills, both in English lessons and in other subjects across the curriculum. Second, the work provided for more able pupils does not challenge them sufficiently to achieve the higher level in the national tests. This reflects a decline in standards since the last inspection, when writing was reported to be above national expectations. Standards in reading, speaking and listening, on the other hand, are above national expectations, as was found during the previous inspection. The school has successfully maintained these standards because teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, particularly through personal, social and health education lessons. Also, the co-ordinator has continued the school's well-established reading programme and has also developed guided reading throughout the school.
112. The results of the National Curriculum tests, in 2001, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2, were above average in reading, and average in writing. Inspection findings indicate that standards meet national expectations in reading and in speaking and listening, but, although many pupils are working at the required standard in writing, few attain the higher level and so test grades are likely to be below average. Similar standards were reported in the last inspection. However, the work seen in the current Year 1 classes suggests that standards are improving and that these pupils are on track to achieve standards which at least meet the national average by the end of Year 2. This is because teachers are providing more opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills across the curriculum, and developing strategies in the use of assessment to provide more suitable work for all pupils.
113. Pupils achieve satisfactorily overall. They make good progress in reading, speaking and listening, but do not achieve as well as they could in writing. This is particularly true of the more able pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school because of the generous levels of support that they receive.

Speaking and listening

114. Standards in speaking and listening meet national expectations by the end of Year 2 and are above expectations by the end of Year 6. From Year 1 onwards, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills, both in English lessons and in other subjects, either through question-and-answer sessions, or discussions in pairs or small groups. Some lessons are specifically planned to develop certain aspects of speaking. In a good lesson in Year 2, for example, the teacher asked her class to think up questions to ask their friends, such as, *'What sort of bean is that? And they quickly improved.* By the end of Year 2, most pupils listen carefully and with understanding, and many use whole sentences when giving answers, which is in line with expectations for their age. Some express ideas through the use of short phrases, at this stage, and a few restrict their answers to single words, which is below expectations.
115. Through Key Stage 2, teaching continues to provide opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills, particularly through personal, social and health education and citizenship. Most pupils achieve well in these lessons, because teachers make sure that each member of the class takes responsibility for leading a group in discussions, which always have a clear focus. By the end of Year 6, teachers expect all of their class to listen intently and respond accurately. The vast majority try very hard to supply complete answers, and the spoken English of many is clear, articulate and above the average standard for their age. In a personal, social and health education lesson in Year 6, for example, where the teacher organised good opportunities for discussion, and the pupils listened carefully to their classmates' ideas, one more able pupil suggested, *'Working in groups gives a bigger variation of opportunities for everyone to offer an opinion.'* A small minority of less confident pupils in Year 6, although actively involved, offer shorter and less detailed contributions to discussions.

Reading

116. Standards in reading are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. The teaching of basic skills through guided reading, combined with the contribution of support staff and volunteer helpers, has a positive effect on learning. Younger pupils in Year 1 recognise letter sounds and individual words. They hold their books correctly and follow the text when reading in groups with their teacher or classroom assistant. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils read simple texts with some accuracy. The higher-attaining pupils clearly enjoy reading stories, demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read, and say what they think may happen next. A minority have difficulty in reading independently at this stage and rely on adult support. By the end of Year 6, standards are above national expectations. Pupils with average and higher attainment read independently, fluently, and with good expression from a range of texts. When asked, they explain clearly what their book is about. One more able pupil, for example, had a very clear understanding of the style of writing used by J. K. Rowling in the 'Harry Potter' stories and discussed their similarities with Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings' with some authority. Most pupils skim text accurately and use reference books or computers competently to find information, although the absence of a properly equipped and accessible library limits the development of skills. All pupils in Year 6 read books at their appropriate level of difficulty without help from an adult.

Writing

117. Standards in writing are below expectations by the end of both key stages, and the school recognises that this is an area for future development. The improvement of writing has been targeted as an issue for the whole school to address. From Year 1 onwards, teachers make pupils aware that writing conveys meaning to themselves and to other readers. They provide activities which help them to build sentences and, for instance, to retell favourite stories such as 'Pirate Pete'. By the end of Key Stage 1 more able pupils are beginning to develop more adventurous ways of expressing and connecting ideas, as in, *'Mr Fox has long, pointed ears that he uses for listening carefully.'* Less able pupils at this stage need help from adults to build simple sentences. They are gaining better control of a pencil, although the quality of handwriting is uneven. Throughout the key stage teachers increasingly plan opportunities to develop writing skills through teaching in other subjects, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. For example, more able pupils in Year 2 wrote at length about the life of Florence Nightingale in their

history books. This good practice is not firmly embedded in the school's management of the curriculum as a whole and is in the early stages of development.

118. Teachers throughout Key Stage 2 make appropriate use of literacy lessons to develop pupils' awareness of how the English language is structured, and this has a positive impact on the development of writing skills. For example, the curriculum successfully improves techniques for spelling and for building new words. In a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, sharply focused questions from the teacher encouraged her class to build words such as 'anti-bacterial', which they used in their writing. In Years 4 and 5, teachers introduce story plans as a framework for story building and provide opportunities for their classes to explore the conventions of poetry or writing for a particular audience. By the end of Year 6 most pupils divide longer pieces of work into paragraphs, use punctuation accurately and usually look for ways of making their writing interesting for the reader. A small number of the more able pupils successfully introduce atmosphere and tension into their writing, reflecting standards above national expectations for their age, as in, *'I was curious, so I prized the floorboard up and peered through the gap. There was a ladder leading down. I began to climb, not knowing what to expect.'*
119. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. It is consistently good in lessons at Key Stage 1 and it was good in about 60 per cent of lessons observed at Key Stage 2. A higher proportion of very good teaching was reported in the last inspection. The teaching, over time, as pupils have moved through the school, has been constrained by the curriculum, especially the lack of time for practising writing. The teaching has been more consistent this year and this explains pupils' current better progress in learning. The main strengths of teaching are: the high expectations that teachers have of most pupils that they should work hard and behave well, which results in good attitudes to the subject; the organisation and quality of support provided for less able pupils and those with special educational needs; and the good opportunities provided in lessons for pupils to develop speaking, listening and reading skills. In the good lessons that reflect many of these strengths, particularly in Years 1 and 2, teaching is lively and energetic. The pupils work hard, improve rapidly, and their quality of learning is also good. They sustain concentration, try their best and have a keen awareness of how well they are doing.
120. The less successful teaching is characterised by teachers setting similar work for pupils of all abilities, which is often insufficiently challenging for more able pupils; teachers missing opportunities to use day-to-day marking, both as a means of showing pupils what they should do to improve and to plan the next day's work; and lessons which are sometimes too long, resulting in some loss of concentration and effort. The scrutiny of pupils' work, which makes a significant contribution to inspectors' judgements about the quality of teaching, supports these findings. Pupils produce too few examples of extended writing, and their progress over time, particularly for the more able, is slower than it could be.
121. Teachers throughout the school mark work conscientiously and sometimes at great length. This is a similar situation to that reported in the last inspection and has a positive influence on pupils' attitudes to their work. However, marking is insufficiently used as a device for setting short-term targets for improvement. Teachers make satisfactory use of information and communication technology overall, to develop literacy skills. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 use listening-centres regularly, although insufficient use is made of computers in classrooms to develop word-processing skills, as pupils grow older. Teachers throughout the school make good use of drama and poetry, and this makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
122. The school has recently appointed a library co-ordinator who has begun to plan improvements. This is a positive step, since the library has not been in proper use for some time. The area, which currently serves as a library, is unsuitable in a school with otherwise generous and attractive accommodation. It does not provide, as it should, a well-equipped resource where pupils can borrow books, carry out independent research, read quietly by themselves, or share a book with an adult or friend.
123. The subject co-ordinator has been responsible for a number of innovations since her appointment, which are providing a good platform for further improvement. The management of the subject is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' performance. The co-ordinator has introduced useful

strategies for assessing pupils' progress, and setting individual targets for improvement, and these are beginning to have a positive impact on the standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2. These strategies are less successful in Key Stage 2 because the targets set by teachers are not specific enough. The impact of these innovations is further restricted by the organisation of the curriculum, which provides too few opportunities to develop extended writing skills.

124. In order to raise standards further, particularly in writing, the main areas for future development are to:
- enable the co-ordinator to work alongside colleagues in order to promote, share and develop good practice in the use of assessment and day-to-day marking to plan work for individuals and groups of pupils of different abilities;
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills in English lessons and in subjects across the curriculum;
 - provide and make appropriate use of a school library.

MATHEMATICS

125. Current standards of attainment in mathematics are broadly in line with the national average by the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1, this is similar to the level found at the previous inspection; however, in the National Curriculum tests following that inspection, results were below national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. There has been an apparent drop in standards at Key Stage 2, where attainment was judged to be above national averages at the previous inspection. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 they were in line with averages in 1997. The results of the national tests in 2001, showed pupils to be well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1, and in line with the national average at Key Stage 2. These apparent anomalies are largely due to the relative abilities of different year-groups.
126. Pupils throughout the school generally make sound progress in relation to their abilities, although there are exceptions. Pupils with special educational needs, and those whose mathematical skills are weaker, make good progress. There are several reasons for this. At Key Stage 1 the work they are asked to do is carefully matched to their ability and they are well supported by classroom assistants who know what they are trying to achieve. A significant number of pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are set into three ability groups for mathematics. The demands on lower-attaining pupils are appropriate, stretching them without being too challenging, and they, too, receive useful help and guidance from classroom assistants.
127. Conversely, many pupils whose mathematical understanding is above average do not make the progress that might be expected. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2, where few pupils achieve the higher level in national tests. Average and more able pupils are taught in ability groups, and the mathematics is at a suitably challenging level, as teachers' planning follows the National Numeracy Strategy. However, these lessons often lack pace, and some teachers are too easily satisfied by the quantity and quality of the written work produced by able pupils. Teachers do not always focus clearly enough on exactly what they want pupils to know, understand or be able to do by the end of the lesson. The innate skills of the most able pupils enable them to make progress in spite of this, but others do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.
128. Many younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing their mathematical skills and understanding well. They have a good grasp of numbers, confidently sequencing them to a 100. They know the names and properties of two-dimensional shapes, and the more able identify where there are lines of symmetry, which is very good attainment for this age. Their discussion indicates good understanding, and they are encouraged to use mathematical vocabulary, such as 'digit' and 'symmetrical'. Lessons in Year 2 build on pupils' previous knowledge and challenge them to apply this. There are plenty of meaningful practical activities to encourage understanding, and good use is made of information and communication technology, for example to draw graphs or investigate turns and angles. The marking of pupils' work in Year 2 is of a high standard, clearly identifying the strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils.
129. The work in pupils' books in Year 2 covers all aspects of mathematics, and offers a suitable challenge to pupils of all abilities. Discussions with these pupils suggest that teaching over time has not always been to such a high standard. While confident in some areas of number, such as

counting in threes, or recognising and naming quite large numbers, they are often confused by questions that ask them to apply their knowledge, such as putting a missing sign into an equation, or working out the answer when given only half the sum. They are better with solid shapes, identifying how many faces and corners there are on a cube, although they find edges more difficult.

130. Lessons in Key Stage 2 are more variable in quality, although most teachers encourage pupils to think mathematically, rather than just learn and practise number skills. Sometimes opportunities are missed to link pupils' learning with other subjects, as when a pupil in Year 4 studying co-ordinates says, *'You use brackets with words as well'*. There is little emphasis on pace and productivity and, as a result, pupils often achieve less than they might. The objectives of the lesson are sometimes vague, which makes it difficult for teachers to assess how well pupils have achieved. Pupils of average ability in upper Key Stage 2 draw graphs that are not relevant to the planned learning, and are encouraged to colour them in, which means some have little time to undertake the calculations that are the purpose of the lesson. In another lesson with the most able pupils, which had many good qualities, the planned task was too vague, and while some pupils made interesting discoveries, for many the lesson had limited benefits.
131. Good use is made of pupils working together, and they are encouraged to share ideas and discuss their methods. This works well, as the pupils are very interested in mathematics, enjoying the subject and using their initiative. This is true of pupils of all abilities, and the fact that less able pupils in Years 5 and 6 remain enthusiastic about the subject ensures that they make at least sound progress in learning. Teachers throughout the school have good relationships with their pupils, which means there is an appropriate focus on teaching and learning.
132. The setting of pupils by ability throughout Key Stage 2 helps work to be more closely targeted at pupils' understanding and has a positive effect on learning. It works particularly well when the headteacher takes half of each set on a fortnightly basis for information and communication technology, as this benefits both subjects. Most of the time, however, the groups are very large, particularly for less able pupils who need more individual attention. The size of these groups has a detrimental effect on teaching and learning.
133. The quality of teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 1, and sometimes very good; pupils made good or very good progress in the lessons seen. Pupils' progress has improved and is due to the more consistent teaching they receive now than they did in the past. Teaching is at least sound in Key Stage 2, but lacks some of the 'spark' that ignites learning lower down the school. Support staff are used well, often to help pupils with difficulties but also, at times, to develop the understanding of more able pupils. While teachers have good knowledge of their pupils' understanding, they do not always use this consistently to plan the next step in their learning, particularly at Key Stage 2.
134. There is presently no co-ordinator for mathematics; the deputy headteacher is acting as 'caretaker' for the subject, alongside a newly qualified teacher who will take full responsibility in the coming September. However, the subject has been soundly led since the previous inspection. The National Numeracy Strategy is established and working consistently through the school. There is an action plan for mathematics with appropriate targets. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and already has some ideas to improve standards in the subject. He is aware that both the setting of targets and the tracking of progress for individual pupils are not focused sharply enough, so that both teachers and pupils are aware of the next step and how to achieve it. There has been insufficient checking of pupils' work and monitoring of teaching, so that senior staff know what needs to improve. Although there are examples of mathematics being used in other subjects, these are not carefully planned to ensure that pupils apply their skills in a realistic and meaningful context. Opportunities are missed to use the subject more to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some mathematics lessons, lasting 70 minutes, are too long, being fitted into the timetable rather than the timetable being adapted to the pupils' needs.
135. In order for the standards of attainment in mathematics to improve, the school needs to:
 - consider the size of the mathematics groups at Key Stage 2;

- improve the leadership of the subject, which should include lesson observations, and the checking of pupils' work.

SCIENCE

136. In the National Curriculum tests, in 2001, taken by pupils at the end of Year 6, results were below the national average. Although 88 per cent of pupils attained the expected grade, most significantly, too few pupils achieved a higher grade, and this depressed the overall result. The standards seen during the inspection were about average for pupils at the end of Year 6. These differences in attainment are generally explained by a comparison of the abilities of pupils last year, with this year. The school's prediction is that a slightly larger proportion of pupils will achieve the higher than expected level in this year's tests, and this is reflected in the work seen. The school's performance in science tests is improving. However, standards for more able pupils are not high enough. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above at the end of Year 2, as assessed by their teachers, was average in 2001; the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level was above average. Standards seen during the inspection indicate similar results this year.
137. The teaching is satisfactory overall. By far the best improvement in the teaching and learning of science has been in the investigative work by the pupils. At the time of previous inspection pupils were not planning and carrying out their own experiments, and the work was too teacher-directed. Now, pupils throughout the school are able to plan, design, test and record their own investigations. From youngest to oldest, pupils understand the concept of a fair test. For example, when interviewed during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 spoke animatedly and convincingly about testing the amounts of water and light needed by the plants they were growing. Because the teachers question and discuss well, these pupils understand that they should only change one thing at a time, in order to measure accurately. They record their results in a variety of ways, depending on the work they are doing. When carrying out studies about the body and healthy eating, for instance, they make graphs of pulse rates before and after exercise, they then make a comparison and draw conclusions. They make predictions and notice changes in state when pastry and jam are heated. Here again, they plan good investigations, predicting what will happen, for example, when two bulbs are placed in a circuit; or how push and pull forces will be affected by drag. Good use is made of information and communication technology to record their thoughts and findings, making graphs and pie charts and interpreting their results. A very good investigation was planned into animal life and mini-beasts, found in the environmental wildlife area, to test their hypotheses. Pupils made correctly labelled drawings, constructed tables of results and noted plant-life cycles. The teachers facilitated this good learning by good discussion, helpful, constructive marking of work, and the provision of some useful worksheets and writing frames. Pupils obviously enjoyed the work because the lesson was lively and they presented their work well in their books. This emphasis on practical work and investigative activities at Key Stage 1 is likely to continue the trend of improving standards, because it leads to deeper thinking and understanding, and better hypotheses.
138. At Key Stage 2 pupils build well on their scientific knowledge. They continue to study how the body works, and the school buys in the services of the local educational authority 'Life Caravan'. During the inspection all classes visited the Caravan and took part in the discussions and activities provided. Teachers build positively on these experiences back in the classroom, directly and indirectly. In Years 3 and 4 pupils were considering food chains during the week of the inspection. In a good lesson the teacher used accurate, scientific terminology to describe how a food chain works. Pupils picked up this language quickly and used it appropriately in their discussions and written work. Judicious use was made of a writing frame to aid thinking, and this enabled pupils of all abilities to be included in the successful learning. Older pupils were considering the earth, moon and space. The teacher skilfully brainstormed ideas and facts that pupils had been researching in the previous reading session. He demonstrated well the technique of making a concept map to record their ideas quickly. From a scrutiny of their work it was possible to see that pupils are used to this approach. Later, pupils went on to make notes and diagrams about their research, following a very effective, short session to investigate and reinforce knowledge about the phases of the moon. Pupils learned well from this session on the whole, and the teacher set a lively and challenging pace.
139. By the time pupils come to the end of Year 6, they have covered a reasonable amount of work, in appropriate depth, over a wide range of subject matter. Progress in learning for most pupils is

satisfactory but the achievement of more able pupils is not as good as it could be. All ability groups have covered the same work, and less able pupils have produced some good experiments, well motivated by their success. However, more able pupils have not been extended sufficiently in their thinking, because the work set for them has not been challenging enough. So, whilst the scrutiny of their books shows work presented neatly, accurately, indicating a good grasp of concepts, overall, insufficient demands have been placed upon them to enable more of them to reach a higher standard, especially in the national tests. Marking is sparse and is generally concerned with tidiness or the colouring in of diagrams. The pupils have not been given adequate, appropriate advice on how to improve their scientific ability. Whilst assessment does take place at the end of each topic, insufficient guidance is given to pupils on how to make their work better. This is the case in many other classes too.

140. The school has a sound policy for science, which includes cross-curricular themes, and how science can fit in with other subjects. Good links were seen, for instance, with art and design, especially when using the environmental wildlife area and with physical education, through measuring and comparing pulse rates, during work on a healthy body. Good use is made of information and communication technology to prepare and consider results. Investigative work has now become well embedded in pupils' thinking, and teachers and pupils are good at carrying it out. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
141. While some marking is lacking in focus, very good examples were found in the books of pupils in Key Stage 1, where teaching is generally stronger in the subject. The subject co-ordinator for science understands that this is an area the school must address. However, although he monitors teachers' planning, he does not regularly check pupils' books for such inconsistencies. The co-ordinator is interested in science, but the subject lacks the dynamism and vigour needed to move it forward at an appropriate pace. Resources have improved since the time of last inspection, and are stored centrally for easy access. Nevertheless, the subject co-ordinator's role is generally under-developed and does not lead to the best progress for pupils. Whilst good support is given by the colleague in Key Stage 1, energies are often dissipated because neither person knows well enough what is happening in the opposite key stage.
142. In order for the standards of attainment in science to improve the school needs to instigate:
 - more focused analysis of pupils' work;
 - consistently high-quality marking so that pupils have a better understanding of their own learning and how they might improve;
 - a more hands-on approach to the leadership of the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

143. Standards in art and design are above those expected at Key Stage 1, and in line with those expected nationally at Key Stage 2. The school has broadly maintained standards since the time of the previous inspection, through a time of change and new initiatives. Generally, work is less well developed towards the top of the school, because teachers feel that they have needed to give more time to the core subjects of English mathematics and science. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, produce sensitive, and often mature work, when the opportunities are given.
144. From their earliest time in school, pupils experience a good range of media and techniques. Pupils at Key Stage 2 study different textures and use colour and monochrome well for effect, for example in their 'viewpoint' pictures of fruit and brambles. Their work is sensitive and very well observed, with excellent use of pencil techniques for texture and shading. Similar studies in colour show very mature extrapolation, for instance, of an orange and its leaves. Their sketchbooks indicate well how they have practised their techniques and developed ideas. This was also the case in their figurative work, with portraits. They had mixed skin tone, hair colour and texture so they would know how to use these in their finished work. Thus, lively, detailed, very sensitive portraits were painted, with excellent skin tone and hair texture. Careful consideration and detail of character showed through the finished work. Pupils also draw half-and-half faces, cut from magazines. Half the face is the printed image and the other half is their pencil-drawn interpretation, again very perceptive, well observed and full of character.

145. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is good, and pupils are given a good range of imaginative work. Pupils carry out precise and detailed observational drawing of mini-beasts, found in the environmental area, and still-life drawings, using natural objects from forest and seashore. In a very good lesson in Years 1 and 2, the teacher enabled the pupils to be successful in their drawings, by reminding them about the texture, form, line and shading that they had practised. Pupils used soft pencils and knew how to hold them in different ways for different effects. They also demonstrated very good use of space on their large sheets of paper, as well as a growing sense of composition. This is because the teacher has built up pupils' skills, and found many ways for pupils to practise the techniques. A highlight of pupils' artistic achievement in this area is a set of still life, watercolour paintings of pot plants and wild flowers, such as bluebells. During the inspection, pupils were to be found matching the delicate colours and forms of the plants they were studying. Without exception, they had captured their subject, mixing paint expertly, and using fine brushes appropriately.
146. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their skills, due to the satisfactory teaching. Whilst pupils maintain their study of line, form and figurative work, generally work is not so detailed as in Key Stage 1. This lack of emphasis is mainly why standards are not so high. Sketchbooks continue to be used, but decreasingly, so there is little evidence of their use by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 work on line and form, and colour techniques, carried out in studies of camouflage. They make appropriate use of different media, adding three-dimensional attributes with the addition of a pop-up animal or insect, for instance. This stands out from the picture physically, but is well hidden by the camouflage added to it by the pupils. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also draw scenes from favourite books and make posters. In a good lesson seen during the inspection, pupils considered commercially produced posters and made a list of desirable attributes; then they were asked to produce their own poster for use in the library, to help younger pupils choose books. Good use had been made of sketchbooks, previously, to practise lettering and layout. A good set of posters was produced, in the allotted time, using a variety of techniques to ensure clear, bold outcomes. Pupils of all abilities were encouraged and given guidance, in order for them to produce successful work.
147. Older pupils use a good combination of images and link their work, for example, to produce calendars. Delicate three-dimensional work is produced by pressing into metal foil, and marbling techniques form the background for a greetings card. In Year 5, pupils' sketchbooks contain ideas for lettering and for pictures, using the environmental wildlife area. Pupils also practise pencil techniques and types of shading, but there is little evidence of how, or if this was used subsequently. Pupils draw well from memory, and practise colour mixing, but again this was not linked directly to any work seen. This colour work did not show the same sophistication as that found in Key Stage 1. This is because the work is not carried out in such detail or followed up so closely by a major piece of work. In Year 6 pupils make very good pencil drawings of buildings, paths and gardens, from observations in the courtyard of the grounds. The work is detailed and well positioned on the page, generally framed centrally with a good eye for the composition. Several pupils have attempted perspective drawing and succeeded well in conveying depth to their work. Figurative work has included portraits and character studies from ancient Egypt. Paintings include mountainous regions, interpreted from pictures. Many of these indicate sensitivity and talent. However, although many pupils make good progress through Key Stage 2, standards are insufficiently high by the end of Year 6, because the work is not focused enough and is not broadly based enough to develop pupils' artistic and aesthetic learning. There has been too little work in studying other artists and designers and this is due to the curriculum planning in the past.
148. At present the co-ordinator for art and design is not in school. The portfolio, planned at the time of the last inspection, has not materialised. Thus, there is little assessment or moderation of pupils' work. This is another reason why standards are not as high as they could be, as suitably challenging work has not been given to older pupils and those who show talent; there are talented pupils in school, capable of high-quality work. The policy and schemes of work are clear and generally helpful to non-specialists. Information and communication technology is used appropriately, but could be used more. However, with no one delegated to drive standards forward, the subject is ticking along at present. Given the existing good practice, teachers' imaginative ideas, and the pupils' undoubted abilities and talent, effective leadership with an overview of the work could have a positive impact on the raising of standards throughout the school.
149. To improve the standards in art and design the school needs to:
- develop appropriate methods of assessment and recording, including a moderated portfolio;

- ensure that older pupils have a coherent programme of study;
- improve the leadership and management of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

150. Pupils attain standards in design and technology that are the same as those expected nationally, by the end of both key stages. No lessons were observed in design and technology during the inspection, since the school's curriculum plan did not include them on the timetable for that week. Nevertheless, evidence was gained by talking to the pupils, looking at their work, discussion with the subject coordinator, and studying teachers' planning. The standards currently attained represent a small improvement from the time of the last inspection, when standards were judged to be 'approaching national expectations'. The deficiencies highlighted in the previous report concerned a lack of balance in the designing and making elements of the subject, and too narrow a range of resources and equipment available to the pupils. On the whole, this imbalance has now been addressed, resulting in a much broader experience for the pupils. The range and accessibility of resources have improved, but work planned allows for little individuality or excitement.
151. The sound quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 enables pupils to design vehicles, for instance, with an eye to the materials and tools they will need. They consider how best to attach the wheels, decorate the vehicle, then test it to see how it moves. They have also considered what they might change if they made it again. This evaluation process was sound, but lacked focus, because it was insufficiently detailed. Pupils have designed hygiene rules for cutting and making a fruit salad; made hand puppets, using sticking and sewing techniques to join and decorate; and made jam tarts, following instructions. They have designed and made a coat of many colours for Joseph, thinking carefully about its use and purpose; this design task was interesting and lively. These relevant projects enable pupils to reach standards of attainment that are in line with national expectations.
152. At Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is more variable, but is satisfactory overall. In Year 4 pupils have built up a very good folder of well-presented work, with an appropriately decorated front cover. This attention to detail ensures that design and technology is properly taken into account and given its full respect as a subject. The work includes ideas for pop-up cards, the methods and tools required, as well as two finished cards. Work is very well executed from full design guidelines, using helpful writing frames with instructions, and a meaningful evaluation from the pupils. This whole process is very important in the teaching and learning of the skills involved. The folders also contain a good, clear design brief, with helpful research sheets, concept mapping ideas for materials, colours and textures for a project about Tudor clothes.
153. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 have designed and made slippers, using plan and side views to show the decoration planned. The designs are well labelled, but there was no evidence, in the sample, of any evaluation of the work. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 revealed a project to construct structures and shelters from newspaper and sticky tape. They had evidently enjoyed this work, and had understood the concept of adding strength to the paper by rolling it tightly, and had discovered the need for cross members and braces, for adding strength to the structure. The competition had been to make a shelter suitable to put at least three or four people inside. They had made designs, talked about it, and discussed, amongst themselves, how best to follow the design directions. They had noted the types of structure that worked best, and how the successful ones were properly braced, leading to greater understanding of the concept. This work had obviously fired their imaginations, and allowed all ability groups to join in the process, successfully. However, most of the other work that they could remember doing, such as making bread and biscuits, or starting the work on slippers, had been done in a previous year. This lack of breadth, and failure to offer more varied opportunities to design and make things, holds back pupils' thinking and ability to solve problems.
154. The subject co-ordinator is quite new and has just completed a policy, and outline scheme of work. She is aware that management has been unsatisfactory, and assessment in the subject is rudimentary, at best. The budget for the subject is small because, at present, all teachers have money to spend on their own classes, and are expected to provide their materials for design and technology projects from this money. This is inefficient, as often materials are duplicated, or teachers do not realise what they need to order for a particular project. The rôle of the subject co-

ordinator is under-developed, and whilst the co-ordinator is interested and keen, the subject lacks drive and impetus at present. Insufficient information and communication technology is used in the subject, and this might have been detected had the subject been monitored more over the years. The school has had other priorities, but its pupils are capable of rising to a challenge with good ideas. There are missed opportunities for pupils to develop higher-order thinking skills and abilities to solve problems, which would benefit all pupils and particularly those who are more able.

155. To improve the standards in design and technology the school needs to:

- develop appropriate methods of assessment and recording;
- improve the efficiency in purchasing materials;
- provide more challenging work for more able pupils;
- improve the leadership and management of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

156. Standards in geography are not as good as at the time of the previous inspection, when they were judged to be *'satisfactory and often better at both key stages.'* While attainment is broadly in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding at the end of Key Stage 1 are not as sound as expected. The school changed the geography curriculum in September 2000, moving from one devised by the school to another using government guidelines. Although it was felt the previous curriculum was working well, it took too much time, with a geography session every week. The current scheme is taught in blocked units, alternating with history, although there are also some continuous units, such as 'What's in the news?'

157. It is too simplistic to blame the apparent lowering of standards on the changes to the curriculum, although these may well have had an effect. It was not possible to see any lessons being taught in Key Stage 1, so judgements are based on scrutinising pupils' work and talking to pupils in Year 2. The evidence suggests that pupils in this key stage gain only superficial knowledge and understanding of the areas they study. The work in pupils' books is not consistent between classes in Year 2, with one class producing much less written work. Pupils in Year 1 appear to have covered the Year 2 curriculum. There is little evidence of the continuous units of study, and pupils in Year 2 have no recollection of 'What's in the news?' All pupils are given the same tasks, which less able pupils do not always finish, although they sometimes spend a considerable time colouring maps. The suggested minimum time given to the two units of study in Year 2 is 12 hours, which works out at a bit less than twenty minutes a week over the school year. Given this, teaching needs to be more carefully planned and focused than the evidence in pupils' books suggests. Currently, pupils make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 due to the planning of the curriculum.

158. The quality and quantity of work produced by pupils in Key Stage 2 varies, but standards of attainment are in line with national expectations overall. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, studying India generally show sound understanding through the use of maps and information. They make valid comparisons with their own country and lifestyle. Their work on the environment is based on their own locality, and pupils in different year groups carry out similar investigations. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of this area of geography. Information and communication technology skills are brought into play when pupils produce bar graphs and pie charts to show the amount of litter they find round school, or design a garden, using both a plan and a three-dimensional illustration. The use of information and communication technology in geography is satisfactory.

159. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 cover the same two study units, although in Year 6 pupils have only tackled one unit so far due to the time spent preparing for the national tests. In Year 5 pupils' work on mountainous regions involves factual research, as well as opinions on other aspects, such as tourism. It is much better than that produced about environmental issues, focusing on Cirencester's traffic problems and possible solutions. There is little in pupils' books to show any real understanding or original thought, other than a plan of proposed improvements to the market place. There are also considerable differences between the output of different classes. In Year 6 pupils' written work on mountains is so far limited to putting information on to two maps of the world, one containing mainly rivers which the pupil identifies on a key, while the other requires the pupil to add 15 different mountain ranges, both well known and relatively obscure. One pupil has

failed to finish the latter map, but has coloured it very carefully. Better marking would have identified this.

160. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1 it is unsatisfactory, overall, due to the constraints of the curriculum. Pupils are given suitable tasks to extend their knowledge and understanding. Less able pupils receive good support, but there is limited challenge, especially for more able pupils. As they are developing their own ideas about the effects of tourism, or researching about mountains from a variety of sources, the opportunity is there to set demanding targets, but there is no expectation that the work they produce should be of a high standard, and the only extension offered is to draw a picture. Pupils settle to their tasks, but there is no sense of urgency in their response. Some are content to copy information without putting it into their own words, and show limited understanding when questioned. However, discussions with pupils in Year 6 show that, over time at least, they have covered sufficient geography to have a sound understanding of their own locality and places further afield, and can draw sensible comparisons between them. Their basic geographical skills are in place, although they know about co-ordinates through mathematics rather than through studying maps.
161. The co-ordinator has drawn up an appropriate policy and planned curriculum, but is not fully aware of how well or thoroughly it is being taught, although she is right to feel that the continuous units tend to be the poor relations. She has ensured that there are sufficient suitable resources, and uses display in the school effectively in an effort to raise the profile of geography. The management of the subject has been unsatisfactory, as the co-ordinator has not had the time or authority to make satisfactory checks on the teaching and on pupils' work. Apart from improving the content and continuity of teaching and learning, other areas for development include some form of assessment, including a skills checklist, and planned opportunities for pupils to practise their geographical skills in other contexts, such as map work in history.
162. To improve the standards in geography the school needs to:
- develop appropriate methods of assessment and recording;
 - improve the curriculum for Key Stage 1;
 - provide more work for pupils at the top of Key Stage 2, especially for those who are more able.

HISTORY

163. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with expectations at Key Stage 1 and below expectations at Key Stage 2. The standards at Key Stage 2 have declined since the previous inspection. This is because pupils have not been taught enough through the key stage and the curriculum has not been well enough organised.
164. The previous inspection stated that the scheme of work was not as good as it should be, and this is still the case at Key Stage 2. The new co-ordinator is a specialist in the subject and has put in place a new policy. The schemes of work are based on a government recommended scheme, which has been on trial for the last two years. The class teachers are responsible for preparing lessons, but other subjects, such as information and communication technology and literacy are not built in. As the content of the curriculum is still not sorted, the methods of assessment have not been put in place. No records of coverage or attainment are kept. A planned portfolio of levelled work is not yet in place and there are insufficient resources for staff to teach all of the study units in the best way. All this means that pupils have not been taught in such a way as to guarantee a progressive development of their historical skills and gain a continuous input to their knowledge and understanding. The teaching at Key Stage 2 has been constrained by the unsatisfactory curriculum.
165. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have a good programme provided, and so make at least satisfactory progress through the key stage. In some respects, such as their understanding of change over time, their progress in learning is good. They cover a good range of work, and some good writing about famous people in history has been done, with the more able pupils encouraged to write at length. Work is constructively marked and pupils have, clearly, responded well to this. Currently, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning about how different modern schools are from those of 1900. Due to the lively presentation, pupils have a sound understanding of life for children in those times. The teaching is good at Key Stage 1. Lessons are planned well. A good feature is that on-the-spot

assessment is built into the planning and so staff know what pupils have learned. The lesson seen in Years 1 and 2 was well conducted, with staff and pupils dressed up in rôle. The teacher acted the rôle well and pupils played up to her in a most mature way. The planning of this term's lessons has ensured that pupils have a sound grasp of the differences between past and present and know about many practices in Victorian schools. Through Key Stage 1, pupils of all abilities make at least satisfactory and often good progress; the more able pupils are challenged well. Pupils in Year 1 are working at above the expected level.

166. Pupils at Key Stage 2 have not been taught enough. For instance, pupils currently in Year 6 have studied the ancient Egyptians for two terms from September until March. The work in their books is scrappy and much of it is the same for all pupils, whatever their ability. Due to the planning of the curriculum, they will not study any more history this year. This is unsatisfactory. Pupils have not learned enough through Key Stage 2, as they have not been taught it. Discussion with a number of able, articulate pupils in Year 6, selected by their teacher, showed a lack of knowledge that is of concern. The pupils currently in Year 6 say that they had a different programme of study, when they were in Year 5, depending on which class they were in. They remember few facts about the Ancient Greeks, the Tudors or the Victorian periods. The understanding by these pupils of chronology is not secure, as they have not received a coherent programme of study. They know about some major changes over time, but not how historical events have shaped this country. They can discuss a range of historical sources and show great interest in history. They are aware of their own lack of understanding, and would like to know more. The provision for all pupils at Key Stage 2 is, therefore, unsatisfactory and few opportunities are taken to use the subject to allow pupils to write at length. Opportunities are missed to use the subject to harness more able pupils' imaginations and to enable them to produce an extended piece of writing about a historical event.
167. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had different work this year, depending on which class they are in; this is unsatisfactory. Their work on the Tudors is basic and does not ensure a satisfactory development of their skills of enquiry. Pupils do mostly the same level of work, with almost no different work for more able pupils. Through the key stage too little is taught that would develop pupils' multi-cultural understanding, and not enough is planned that would enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
168. The picture looks brighter for the future. The co-ordinator is a specialist who is keen on the subject and has sound plans to ensure its better teaching. She is acquiring more resources so that history can be taught in a meaningful way. She is booked on a co-ordinators' course and has time to check the planning of lessons this term. No observation of teaching has yet taken place. The lack of monitoring is one reason why the school is not aware of the lack of progress made by pupils through Key Stage 2.
169. To improve the standards in history the school needs to:
- develop appropriate methods of assessment and recording;
 - improve the curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 2;
 - make more use of pupils' information and communication technology, and literacy skills in history;
 - enable the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching more effectively.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

170. Standards in information and communication technology have moved a long way since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations by the time pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2. This was mainly because pupils did not experience all aspects of the National Curriculum and, as a result, lacked confidence when operating hardware and software. Standards are now above expectations by the end of both key stages. The organisation of information and communication technology has been thoroughly overhauled and very good improvement made, largely because of the knowledge and determination of the headteacher, who co-ordinates the subject, and the support offered by the governors.
171. Considerable investment has been made in resources, and the school now possesses a 'state of the art' computer suite of which both pupils and staff are justifiably proud. All classes are timetabled to use this facility. In Key Stage 1, pupils visit the suite with their class teacher. In Key Stage 2 the headteacher takes small groups, while the other pupils work in sets for mathematics. As well as reducing the numbers involved and, therefore, giving more opportunity for individual teaching, this also means that the range of ability is less, allowing teaching to be more closely targeted to pupils' needs.
172. The teaching in the suite is focused on learning new skills and applying them to typical problems. It is very successful, not least because of the high quality of the specialist teaching. Lessons are very well planned; it is clear what pupils are expected to learn, and resources are thoughtfully organised to support these intentions. The headteacher not only has very good subject knowledge, but is also able to use this in a way that encourages pupils to discover for themselves, rather than be taught a series of instructions to follow. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including the less able and those with special educational needs, make good progress in their knowledge and understanding.
173. While it was not possible to see pupils from Key Stage 1 being taught information and communication technology during the course of the inspection, scrutinising the work they produce, as well as talking to pupils of differing abilities in Year 2, indicates good achievement and progress. Pupils use an art program to produce pictures, sometimes adding text. When word-processing they know how to edit their work using a 'spell-check' and improve it by adding 'clip-art' and borders, as well as how to save and print it. They draw a graph from data they have collected, and write about using a CD-ROM to find information. They program a 'screen turtle' to draw a square, using commands such as 'r', 'l' and '90 degrees'. They talk about their work with enthusiasm and understanding.
174. Pupils at Key Stage 2 also learn very well in the computer suite. Pupils of all abilities make at least good progress in their learning. The pace of lessons is very good and pupils are constantly involved; if they finish a task before other pupils, they are encouraged to practise other skills, such as highlighting the text in different colours. Previous learning is revisited effectively, and good use is made of questioning to encourage thoughtful answers and build on existing knowledge. Pupils are managed very well, with much encouragement and praise for their achievements. Their response is equally good, with all pupils participating fully, showing lots of interest and pleasure in their success. They use the equipment sensibly and compare and discuss their results with some insight. Appropriate use is also made of information and communication technology in the specific learning difficulties centre.
175. During the inspection there were various examples of pupils applying their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology in the classroom. These included the use of calculators in mathematics, as well as producing computer-generated graphs, and using CD-ROMs and the Internet to research information in history and geography. However, in some classes, the 'stand-alone' computers received little use during the inspection. The school is aware that the next step is to plan the extension of pupils' skills through practical application in the classroom, so that pupils have the opportunity to consolidate their new learning through meaningful and relevant tasks, thereby enhancing both subjects at once. Each pupil has an individual

assessment sheet that records their experience and skills in different aspects of the subject and at various levels. It ensures that gaps in coverage are easily identified and rectified.

176. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The headteacher leads through example and infectious enthusiasm; he is also an accredited trainer and has been instrumental in raising staff's expertise and confidence to the point where he feels his own rôle will hopefully diminish. There is a high level of subject expertise. The school is trying out 'teaching pads', which it is hoped the pupils will be able to use in class, and has devised and published a cross-curricular investigation program, going on sale nationally. The extra-curricular computer club is very popular and gives pupils the opportunity to investigate real-life applications of information and communication technology, such as building and programming their own robot. The school is in a strong position to make further progress.
177. In order to make even more improvements the school should now plan for more use of information and communication technology in other subjects, and ensure that it is used consistently in all classes.

MUSIC

178. Standards in music are below expectations at the end of Year 6. It was not possible to make secure judgements about standards at the end of Year 2, as no lessons were seen and there was no written evidence of pupils' work. At the previous inspection, standards overall were in line with national expectations at both key stages, so there has been a decline, at least at Key Stage 2.
179. Planning documents show that music is taught regularly in Years 1 and 2, and the co-ordinator provides good support in this key stage. Although there was no recorded evidence of pupils' work in music, in their science work pupils have made labelled diagrams of musical instruments sorted by the sounds produced. Music is used sensitively in assemblies in Key Stage 1 to create atmosphere and evoke feelings. Two extracts from '*Peer Gynt*', by Grieg, supported the story-telling very effectively, and the second one, '*Morning*', helped pupils imagine the earth reawakening, shoots beginning to grow and birds singing, bringing a few moments of real spirituality. In Year 2, pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, which is good.
180. Two lessons were seen in Key Stage 2 and discussions were held with pupils in Year 6. As was found during the previous inspection, teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory; the unsatisfactory lesson was due to the teacher's lack of subject knowledge and understanding. No judgment can be given about the teaching at Key Stage 1, as no lessons were seen, but a satisfactory curriculum is provided. Teaching is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 as it is restricted by the curriculum and, for some staff, by lack of training. Although the school has recently adopted a scheme of work which progressively builds up pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, teachers need help and support to implement it effectively, and this is not yet happening consistently in Key Stage 2. Information and communication technology is used appropriately. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given very good opportunities to perform, whether in the choir or as soloists, and also to respond to music through dance. However, this is mostly through after-school activities, and a sizeable proportion of pupils do not take part, so get very little music teaching. From discussions with pupils in Year 6 it is evident that other elements of the National Curriculum, such as composing, musical appreciation, knowledge of composers and musical terminology are not given sufficient emphasis, and standards in these areas are at best below expectations.
181. From the lessons seen in Key Stage 2 it is evident that pupils have the capability to achieve well in music. There is no assessment of the pupils' existing knowledge, understanding and skills, and so teachers are unaware that pupils are failing to make good progress. In a lesson in Year 3, pupils listened well and showed they were able to maintain a two and three-beat rhythm by tapping to a range of songs. The songs, with which the pupils were clearly familiar, came from many different cultural backgrounds, including India. The lack of assessment and the teacher's lack of confidence in the subject meant that the individual activities did not make sufficient demands on the pupils or extend their musical understanding.
182. In a very short space of time pupils in Year 5 worked very co-operatively using a good range of percussion instruments, to produce effective sound accompaniments to a text about '*The Blitz*'.

Although the lesson was carefully planned, and the time used well, little help was given to improve the quality of performance, except for remarks about what the teacher and other pupils liked. There was no use of technical terminology such as '*crescendo*', '*diminuendo*', '*timbre*', which is expected for this age group. Pupils were told that in the next lesson they would learn about graphic notation, which is the drawing of symbols rather than notes, in order to record and replay their compositions; by the end of Year 5 it is expected that most pupils will be familiar with graphic notation and be moving on to learning about standard music writing.

183. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have good opportunities to extend their recorder-playing skills in groups for Years 3 and 4, and an advanced group for Years 5 and 6. Sadly, interest by the older pupils has currently waned and only seven or eight pupils now play regularly, occasionally performing in assemblies and end-of-term concerts. Currently, no pupils have any other instrumental tuition in school.
184. The management of the subject has been in limbo and has, therefore, been unsatisfactory in the recent past. The current co-ordinator is a temporary member of staff; she is relatively new and inexperienced, but enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and has started to make appropriate changes. She has been responsible for the recent setting-up of an appropriate scheme of work, which aims to ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and skills systematically; there are good resources to support this. As yet, however, little monitoring or evaluation of the quality of teaching, especially at Key Stage 2, has been done. Teachers have insufficient detailed guidance on how to convert the scheme of work into specific lesson plans that will build on their pupils' existing knowledge and skills. It is also evident that more staff training will be required to provide teachers with confidence and expertise to do this effectively and so raise standards.
185. To improve the standards in music the school needs to:
- develop appropriate methods of assessment and recording;
 - give some teachers more training in the subject;
 - improve the leadership and management of the subject;
 - improve the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 2.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

186. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and are in line with expectations, overall, at the end of Years 2 and Year 6. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. The school provides opportunities for all pupils to take part in the full range of activities required by the National Curriculum, and all pupils receive swimming tuition. During the inspection, games lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, and games and orienteering were seen in Key Stage 2.
187. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to use the space around them safely, perform simple sequences of movement and respond to music through dance. They develop simple games skills and, by the end of Year 2, the majority control a ball adequately with hands or feet. When working alone, most pupils demonstrate sufficient co-ordination and confidence to meet national expectations. A small number manipulate a ball easily and quickly in confined spaces, reflecting standards above expectations for their age. At this stage, most pupils co-operate successfully with one or more classmates and are beginning to appreciate and enjoy working as a member of a team or group.
188. From Year 3 onwards, pupils continue to develop their understanding of team games and the need for rules and fair play. The majority successfully apply this new knowledge to playing racquet sports. Most pupils develop sufficient control and technique to strike a ball accurately and to throw and catch with increasing success, as they grow older. Whilst, by the end of Year 5, a minority of pupils lack some consistency and direction, which is below national expectations, a similar number are fluent throwers, catchers, and strikers of a ball, which is above expectations for their age. By the end of Year 6 many pupils demonstrate good levels of initiative and co-operation with other members of a group and are becoming increasingly appreciative of the impact of good teamwork. Most pupils can swim at least 25 metres by the end of Year 6.
189. The quality of both teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. In the lessons seen, half of which were good, the quality of teaching was

directly related to the teacher's subject knowledge and confidence. Where it was good, the teacher had clear objectives reflected in high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. In a lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher had planned a series of lessons to develop pupils' abilities to find their way around a given environment and solve problems as members of a cohesive team. He had ensured that they had acquired the necessary skills and confidence over a period of weeks so that, by the end of the programme, they co-operated successfully in a variety of situations, effectively using orienteering techniques such as *'handrailing'* to find clues and locations. The class responded in a mature fashion, readily accepting responsibility when asked and were willing to help and encourage less confident classmates. Where the teaching, although satisfactory, is less successful, it is because teachers are not sure about the standards they expect their pupils to achieve for their age. Consequently, lesson objectives are not sharply focused and opportunities are missed to use good performers to exemplify what can be achieved in order to raise standards and expectations.

190. The co-ordinator is in the process of adopting a new scheme of work provided by the local education authority. In the meantime, teachers are using a nationally recognised scheme to guide their planning of lessons. Whilst this is a satisfactory measure overall, it is leading to some gaps in the school's ability to assess how successfully pupils are developing the required skills as they get older.
191. To improve the standards in physical education the school needs to:
- implement the new scheme of work to guide teachers' future planning;
 - provide in-service training to develop teachers' subject knowledge and appreciation of the standards that pupils can achieve;
 - introduce a suitable system of assessment to measure pupils' progress.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

192. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made steady progress and achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus, as was found at the time of the previous inspection. Although progress is good in Years 3 and 4, by the end of Year 6, standards are below those expected for their age, because insufficient religious education has been taught to the oldest pupils during this school year. Progress through Key Stage 2 has been unsatisfactory, due to the unsatisfactory nature of the curriculum provided at the top of the school. This shows a decline since the previous inspection.
193. In order to prevent pupils in mixed-age classes repeating the same topics, the school sensibly follows a two-year topic cycle, based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the aspects required by the syllabus. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop an understanding about places of worship and why they are special. They learn about churches and why these are special to Christians. They also hear versions of the creation story based on the biblical account, and link this with caring for the environment and personal responsibility. As they move through Years 3 and 4, their knowledge and understanding of places of worship is extended to the Jewish and Islamic faiths and they learn about synagogues and mosques. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 move on to study sacred texts such as the Bible, Torah and Qur'an, and to look at 'Codes of Conduct' that affect how people live their lives. Many pupils at the top of the school are unclear about the facts of these different religions.
194. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. A study of the work that pupils have carried out since September shows that they have made steady progress in their learning, such as being able to correctly label artefacts and furniture inside a church. In a lesson seen it was evident that most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a good understanding of the biblical version of how God created the world. However, some teachers do not make it specifically clear that this is only one version of creation, but rather teach it as a fact. Teachers reinforce pupils' literary skills well in religious education. In a particularly good lesson in Year 2 the teacher's skilled questioning combined religious education with work done in literacy. She made the pupils really think hard and apply what they had learnt previously by asking, *'Why is the language in the Bible different from the story version we have just heard?'* Through the year pupils have recorded their work in a variety of ways, for example, by written descriptive reports of their visit to a church, using labels, making lists, and 'ordering' the Easter story. Careful attention is paid to handwriting and

spellings. In Year 2 especially teachers write useful comments on pupils' work to help them understand how well they are doing. Occasionally, all pupils copy text, such as a short piece about Mother Theresa, which denies them the opportunity of applying their own knowledge and understanding.

195. As the pupils move through Key Stage 2 their knowledge and understanding of different faiths is extended systematically, but pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to make comparisons and talk about their own experiences and beliefs. For instance, good lessons were seen in Years 3 and 4 where pupils were extremely interested and eager to learn about how a Jewish family celebrates Shabbat, (the Sabbath). The teachers made good use of a video to extend the pupils' knowledge, and this knowledge was reinforced through the sensitive use of artefacts in the re-enactment of the main events and customs which Jewish families observe. However, in both lessons, insufficient time was given to helping the pupils relate this to previous learning and to their own experiences.
196. For much of Key Stage 2 the teaching is satisfactory; it is satisfactory overall, but not in Year 6. Since September, pupils in Year 5 have made sound progress, and satisfactory standards have been reached. Their knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Islam has been extended through work on the sacred texts of these faiths. More recent work has centred round rules by which people live, such as the Ten Commandments God gave to Moses, the commands of Jesus to love God and other people, and to consider rules by which people live today. Although no lessons were seen, it is clear from the volume of work in pupils' books that the teachers' knowledge and understanding is secure, good attention is paid to developing pupils' literacy skills, such as spelling and punctuation, and that a variety of recording methods are used. In one class the teacher's helpful comments reinforce pupils' knowledge of their performance.
197. There has not been enough regular, informed teaching in Year 6, and this is unsatisfactory. Recorded work by pupils in Year 6 is far less than in Year 5, mainly because religious education has not been taught on a regular basis throughout the year. Discussions with pupils show their knowledge and understanding are below expectations, and there is considerable confusion and misunderstanding about what they have been taught. For example, they know a range of facts about Christianity, Judaism and Islam, but these are fragmented and they are unaware of the links between these major faiths. Although pupils have visited the local church '*loads of times*' and accurately described the font and baptisms, only one boy confidently talked about the altar and how it is used, whilst another thought it was '*where the vicar tells stories*'. The pupils spoke enthusiastically about the time their teacher showed them a Muslim prayer mat, and were eager to share the knowledge that all Muslims face Mecca when they pray, but they had little recollection about a mosque or significant facts about the Islamic faith. The pupils also confused Moses and Mohammed, knowing that both had been given instructions by God, but were not sure who received the Ten Commandments and whether he was the Jew or the Muslim.
198. Most teachers use the Locally Agreed Syllabus well to plan their lessons and this ensures there is adequate progress and continuity from year to year, except in Year 6. Some teachers, but not all, plan their lessons carefully and are clear about what they want the pupils to learn. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Most activities stimulate and interest the pupils, and they respond positively by working hard and behaving well. As yet, no whole-school systems are in place to assess the progress made by pupils and, therefore, planning is not sufficiently linked to previous learning. This significantly contributes to the confusion and fragmented knowledge of pupils in Year 6. More able pupils, certainly, need to be challenged more.
199. The use of information and communication technology in religious education is under-developed. Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not use CD-ROMs, the Internet, or the library, for personal research and little evidence was seen of word-processing. In a few classes teachers reinforce pupils' geography skills by the use of maps to show the location of places of worship in Cirencester. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. Although the co-ordinator is knowledgeable and experienced, her expertise has not sufficiently impacted on raising standards, particularly in Year 6, where they are not as good as they were at the last inspection.

200. To improve the standards in religious education the school needs to:
- develop appropriate methods of assessment and recording;
 - ensure that pupils in Year 6 have sufficient teaching in the subject;
 - improve the leadership and management of the subject.