

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST MARY'S CE (AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Chipping Norton

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123227

Headteacher: Mrs J. Thornton

Reporting inspector: Mrs P. Martin  
2904

Dates of inspection: 15th – 18th October 2001

Inspection number: 196058

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Green  
Chipping Norton  
Oxfordshire  
Postcode: OX7 5DH

Telephone number: 01608 642673

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J. M. Overbury

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2904	Mrs P. Martin	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Information and communication technology Geography History	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
16492	Mrs C. Stormonth	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2905	Mr D. Shepherd	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Mathematics Physical education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
22820	Mrs H. Clements	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17188	Mrs K. Reed	Team inspector	Science Design and technology	
19838	Mr D. China	Team inspector	Art and design	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

11047	Mr M. Kitson	Team inspector	Music	
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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School serves the market town of Chipping Norton in Oxfordshire. The local community reflects a broadly average mixture of families from different socio-economic circumstances. The school currently has 321 pupils on roll, which is larger than average although just below its capacity. Most pupils come from the local community, which is predominately white. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. There are ten pupils for whom the home language is not English, which is only slightly higher than the national average. Of this group, the main languages spoken are Bengali, Punjabi, Cantonese and Chinese. There are 88 pupils (27.4%) on the school's register of special educational needs, five of whom have statements of need. This is in line with that found nationally. There are 15 traveller children, most of whom live at a permanent local site. Thirty-eight pupils (11.8 per cent) are entitled to free school meals; this is in line with the national average. Children's attainment on entry is average and most have attended the local nursery. Children are admitted into the school's reception class as 'rising-fives'. There are nineteen children in the Foundation Stage. Children attend part-time, mornings only until the term after their fifth birthday. The school is involved in a major initiative, the implementation of a Family Links Programme. Since the last inspection a permanent headteacher has been appointed. She has been in post four years. During the last inspection an acting headteacher was in post. There have been other staff changes and almost half of the teaching staff were new to the school in September 2001. As a result of a teacher shortage the deputy headteacher had to assume a class responsibility at very short notice.

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

St Mary's CE (Aided) Primary School is a caring and supportive community in which standards are improving. Teaching is good overall and interesting contexts are provided for pupils' learning. The school's commitment to promoting education in values through its Family Links Programme is an example of very good practice. As a result of the headteacher's effective leadership there is a shared understanding of the school's priorities for improvement. The school offers sound value for money.

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

- In a very positive ethos, all pupils develop enthusiastic, positive attitudes to their work.
- The provision for children who are five years old in the Foundation Stage is good.
- The school provides for very good spiritual, moral and social development, which promotes very good relationships and respect for the values and feelings of others.
- Procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' behaviour are very good.
- All groups of pupils are well integrated into the school.
- Good progress is being made in establishing effective assessment strategies.
- Staff are very well supported and inducted into their roles.
- The school's senior management team is strong and their systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are good.
- The school's very good links with parents result in parents making a very good contribution to their children's learning and the quality of school life.

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

- Standards of reading in Key Stage 2.
- Standards of mathematics in Key Stage 2 particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- The rate of progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
- Levels of pupils' attendance.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress to address the key issues of the last inspection in 1997. The improvements have been implemented well. Standards of attainment have improved in information and communication technology (ICT). The quality of education has improved particularly for children under five and pupils' personal development. The leadership and management of the school have improved. Good work has been done to involve subject co-ordinators and the governing body in the management of the school. Standards are rising. The quality of education is good overall. The quality of teaching has improved in relation to curriculum planning and the assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. The literacy and numeracy strategies are now well in place. As a result, there is an increasing trend of rising standards across the curriculum.

### STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by 7-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	C	B	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	C	A	A	A	
Mathematics	C	B	C	C	

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	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	D	C	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	D	C	C	D	
Science	C	C	B	B	

Over the last two years the results of the national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds have shown an improving trend. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are continuing to improve. Children's attainment on entry is average. They make good progress in the reception class partly due to the good organisation and teamwork between teaching and support staff. Nearly all children will achieve the nationally defined early learning goals by the time they leave the reception class and some will achieve higher standards. The national test results for 2001 are still to be validated nationally for each key stage. However, they indicate that seven-year-olds attain standards that are above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Compared to pupils in similar schools standards are above average in reading, well above average in writing and average in mathematics. Teachers' statutory assessments show that standards in science are above average. The results of the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds indicate that overall, standards are average. Standards in science have improved significantly in recent years. Standards in science are now above average when compared with all schools as well as with similar schools. In English, standards remain average and, though there has been a steady increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected level in reading, standards are still lower than those in similar schools and, therefore, not high enough. In mathematics standards are average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison to similar schools.



Whilst the standards have improved overall, standards for higher attaining pupils in mathematics are too low. Overall, taking into account the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2, progress in Key Stage 2 is too slow. Standards in ICT are above average in Years 2 and 6. The school has made good progress and improvement since the last inspection. In the other subjects of the curriculum - art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education - standards are, on balance, average. However, there is evidence of improvements in each subject. The school is well placed as a result of increased staff expertise to raise standards further. Higher attaining pupils are benefiting from the improved strategies to meet their needs. However, more needs to be done for them in mathematics and reading in Key Stage 2. In English all groups of pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1; however, progress slows in Key Stage 2 in reading. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) benefit from the support they receive but the limited range of the school's own resources for SEN means that progress is at times too slow. Pupils who speak English as a second language and Travellers achieve satisfactory standards and make sound progress as a result of the combined work of the school with other support agencies.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes. They have an interested and purposeful approach to schoolwork and concentrate effectively on their learning activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall in lessons and around the school. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of the choices of behaviour available to them and their capacity to make a positive contribution to the quality of school life. Pupils are confident, friendly and courteous to each other and to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils show respect for the values and beliefs of others. They willingly take on responsibilities, although the range of opportunities to do so is limited. Pupils' personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory and is affected by the frequency with which pupils are absent for holidays. Pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
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.*

The teaching in the school is satisfactory overall with many good features. There are significant improvements to teaching since the school's last inspection. These are characterised by good planning, well structured lessons, interesting and motivating contexts, effective teacher pupil interaction using questions skilfully, good support from learning assistants and improved assessment procedures. Though there is room for improvement in the teaching of reading and mathematics, especially in the upper part of the school, overall the skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. The teaching meets the needs of all the pupils well including Travellers and pupils with English as an additional language. Good improvements have been made for the teaching of higher attaining pupils although more needs to be done in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational need benefit from the support they receive but there is more to be done to improve their rate of progress.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The broad and balanced curriculum is enhanced by an interesting range of activities and visits relevant to the interests of pupils.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is unsatisfactory overall although there are good features. There are good day-to-day links between the adults working with pupils with special educational needs and learning support assistants help pupils to do well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is effective. Pupils enjoy the full range of activities, make good progress and contribute valuably to school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good and as a result pupils are friendly, courteous, helpful, and welcoming to visitors. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school. Provision for social development has many good features balanced by the limited range of extra curricular activities. Cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strength of the school. The care and support that the school provides are strong and notable features and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum. The school's partnership with parents is good.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is an effective leader. The senior staff team is strong. School improvements are well planned, carefully monitored and evaluated. A systematic process has been introduced to enable subject co-ordinators to monitor and evaluate provision. External advice and support are well used.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide valuable support. Their partnership with the school has been strengthened effectively. Governors understand well their role as critical friends, but have had little involvement in evaluating the impact of the school's actions on pupils' standards of achievement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established effective procedures for monitoring and evaluation. The next phase of development has been identified appropriately and good preparations made.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its well qualified staff. The accommodation is very good and maintained to a high standard. Resources for learning are good overall. The school makes effective use of the principles of best value.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approachability of the headteacher.</li> <li>• The welcoming and caring environment in the school.</li> <li>• The quality of the overall education provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents want more homework set.</li> <li>• The information they get on their children's progress.</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

The inspection team found the school's arrangements for homework to be good and information provided to parents to be very good. However, the team agrees with parents that the range of extra-curricular activities is currently unsatisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. At the time of the last inspection standards at seven and eleven were average in English, mathematics and science. Over the period 1998-2001 standards in the national tests for pupils aged eleven have improved. The test results for 2001 indicate that standards have improved in English because of better standards in writing. Standards are now in line with those of all maintained schools as well as similar schools. However, they are still not as good as they could be because of low standards in reading. In mathematics, standards remain average in comparison to all other schools. In comparison with similar schools standards are below average. This is because whilst standards of work seen indicate that attainment is now improving at a faster rate than before, teaching does not sufficiently ensure enough challenge for higher attaining and lower attaining pupils. In science standards have improved and are now above the national average for similar schools as a result of improved teaching. This is good progress and achievement by the school.

2. The results of the national tests for seven-year-olds for the past two years show an improving trend. Most recently there has been significant improvements in standards of writing and mathematics. In writing pupils have achieved standards well above the national average for similar schools and above average in mathematics. In these aspects too, the school has been achieving at a rate of improvement above the national trend line. Reading remains average although it shows steady improvement in line with the national trend. In comparison with similar schools pupils' attainment in reading is average. In science, teacher assessments are well above the national average. Overall the school has done well for higher attaining pupils in writing, mathematics, science and in reading, however, in some aspects it has done less well for these pupils in reading. Good teaching accounts for the rise in standards but in reading a lack of resources and sustained rigorous intervention for special educational needs hinders even faster progress.

3. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average in Years 2 and 6. The school has made good progress and improvement since the last inspection. Much of this improvement is due to the development of an ICT suite of computers, the provision of a clear scheme of work, a generous time allocation and the positive efforts of the curriculum co-ordinator. Pupils are now making good progress.

4. In the other subjects of the curriculum - art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education - standards are, on balance, average. However, there is evidence of improvements in each subject. For example in art and design there is evidence of work of a higher quality being produced as a result of the Art Week programme established in recent years. In history, teaching uses well chosen artefacts and local studies to raise pupils' achievement. Recent teaching appointments and reallocation of subject responsibilities have increased subject expertise into the school. This will be beneficial for raising standards for example in music, geography and history.

5. The progress made by pupils of different prior attainment still shows too much variation between English, mathematics and science and between the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Higher attaining pupils are benefiting from the improved strategies to meet their needs. However, more needs to be done for higher attainers in mathematics in Key Stage 2. In English all groups of pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1; however,

progress slows in Key Stage 2 in reading. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but too variable at present in Key Stage 2, too many make progress that is slow. Although a satisfactory register of special educational needs (SEN) is maintained in line with the requirements of the Code of Practice, and each pupil's progress is reviewed annually, movement between the stages of the register is slow. Sensible steps have been taken to group the improvement targets for individual children so that they can be taught more efficiently in small groups. However, teaching does not always take account of the different approaches to best meet pupils' needs. As a result, whilst there is often additional adult support for pupils in lessons the teaching approaches used do not always identify or provide the structure necessary to support the small steps needed to bring about improvement. The progress of Travellers and pupils with EAL is satisfactory. They are well integrated into the school community to mutual benefit. This is as a result of the effective support and collaboration between the school and the Local Education Authority through its Minority Ethnic Travellers Achievement Support Service (METAS).

6. Attainment on entry to the reception class is in line with the level expected for children of their age. Good teaching enables children to make good progress in all aspects of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Children have been in school six weeks and show an increasing confidence in what they know and can do. The vast majority of children will have achieved the standards expected of them in all areas of learning before they enter Year 1 and many will have achieved higher standards.

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

7. Good attitudes and behaviour were strengths of the school at the time of the last inspection and remain so. Pupils' personal development is good and as a result, pupils develop greater independence in their learning, are able to take on responsibility, and form good relationships with their teachers and other pupils. These good traits make an important contribution to the pupils' learning and the quality of school life.

8. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They show good responses to challenge, they are keen to learn, have good concentration levels and answer questions eagerly. Very often the teacher's question results in a sea of raised hands. In the lessons where the pace of questioning was often fast, pupils really enjoyed listing the characteristics of heroes and villains in Year 5 literacy classes, or recognising three-dimensional shapes in Year 3 numeracy classes. There was excitement in good quality learning. Pupils follow lesson routines well, show a willingness to observe others to improve and make some sensible deductions based on good evidence. When lessons involve humour pupils are very responsive. Pupils enjoy practical activities: they are motivated by involvement and opportunity to respond individually as seen in art and physical education.

9. Pupils behave very well in assemblies and show reverence during reflection and prayer time. Behaviour in the school building and in most lessons is good. When behaviour in the classroom was not up to the normally high standards, it could be traced back to weaknesses in teaching and behaviour management, in particular for pupils with special educational needs.

10. Pupils quickly settle to work when they arrive in school. They get on quietly and diligently with work set on the blackboard and show high levels of self-discipline. In the dining room behaviour is very good and lunchtimes are happy sociable times. Behaviour in the playground for younger pupils is very good and they amuse themselves well. Behaviour in the playground for older pupils was generally good too. Some of the ball sports and play fighting were occasionally a little boisterous, but pupils for the most part

were having fun in a good-natured way and hardly any aggression was observed during the inspection week. Pupils confirmed that bullying seldom occurs.

11. There were two exclusions in the past year and despite valiant efforts by staff to help and support the pupils, it became necessary to exclude them when other pupils and staff safety were at risk.

12. Pupils' personal development is good and they are friendly, courteous, helpful, and welcoming to visitors. They naturally allow adults to go first. Relationships between pupils of different ethnic groups are good. They support each other thoughtfully and are aware of each other's feelings and values. As pupils move up through the school, they become more responsible, more independent and develop greater maturity and growing confidence. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is effectively focusing on a programme of values. During the inspection week many circle times featured pupils recognising that they have "personal powers" to make choices and take responsibility for their own actions. Child initiated play was seen in reception and Key Stage 1 classes, where pupils are taught to become more independent in their learning and work co-operatively. A good example of this was seen when pupils organised and managed the Rowan class's café, largely unaided, using role-play.

13. Pupils are keen and eager to be actively involved in their daily routines and they carry out their duties very well. Other year groups have their own range of responsibilities. For example, Year 4 pupils provide the music, light the candles, put the chairs out and run the overhead projector for assemblies and Year 6 pupils recycle paper, have gate duty in the car park, are library monitors and also help in the dining hall with the clearing up. Pupils enjoyed making their class rules and when pupils misbehave there is peer pressure to stop it, as pupils have high expectations of themselves.

14. The rewards system helps to boost pupils' confidence and encourage pupils to try harder both academically and socially. The school's charity week enables pupils to use their initiative well and raise large sums for a local and national charity with very little staff input. The Year 4 residential trip to Hill End Camp and the Year 6 trip to Boreatton Park in Shropshire, give pupils many new personal learning experiences away from home and the classroom.

15. Attendance is unsatisfactory and attendance levels are below the national average. Absence is attributable to genuine illness, the large number of Traveller families whose children attend school sporadically and holidays taken in term time, which accounts for a third of all absence. Up to half the pupils in some classes take holidays during term time and this causes serious disruption to the education of the holidaymakers and hinders their learning. The level of unauthorised absence is well above the national average level. Punctuality is satisfactory.

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

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with many good features. Overall the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is now a higher percentage of teaching that is good and better. Of the teaching observed, 80 per cent in the Foundation Stage was good and none was unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1, teaching was at least good in just over 60 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in just under 40 per cent. In Key Stage 2, teaching was also at least good in just over 60 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 30 per cent and unsatisfactory in the remainder. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has remained unchanged.

17. The most effective teaching is planned thoroughly, with clear learning objectives identified and communicated to pupils. The teaching in all subjects has benefited from the methods introduced in the national numeracy and literacy strategies. Lessons are very well structured with an introduction, activity session and a plenary that draws together the learning that has taken place and extends it further. Planning and work sampling confirm that teaching makes effective links between subjects. This gives further relevance and purpose to pupils' work, enabling the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to be reinforced and extended well.

18. The effective teaching asks searching and challenging questions of pupils that encourage them to think carefully. This technique is used effectively to establish the degree of pupils' understanding, both in whole class sessions and with individuals. In lessons that are very good, teachers ask probing questions on an individual basis when pupils are engaged in their tasks. This helps pupils at all levels of ability to make greater progress and is an example of good practice. Positive and constructive relationships feature in all classes. There are examples of very good support given to the teaching by learning support assistants (LSAs) that contribute substantially to pupils' achievement. These are key elements of the good practice.

19. The good teaching is often imaginative and set in well prepared motivating contexts, for example, in art and design where careful preparation and first hand experience of fruit and vegetables was used to develop interesting and diverse collages. Activities encourage pupils to think, work co-operatively in groups and evaluate their work for example in physical education. Most pupils respond enthusiastically to the activities set and work hard at them. In the best lessons, teachers help pupils to use their initiative well and conduct the lesson in a calm, quiet and safe manner. Homework is used well. Teachers expect pupils to follow up ideas through homework and to take their work seriously.

20. In Key Stage 2, however, the quality of teaching is not always as good as this. Occasionally, lessons are not prepared well; equipment is not readily to hand and too little account is taken of the needs of the high and low attaining pupils. The challenging behaviour of some pupils is not managed well enough and this causes interruptions to the learning. On other occasions, the work of pupils with special educational needs is not supported adequately. For example, in English lower attaining pupils were unable to work effectively because the book from which they were working was too difficult. These factors hinder pupils' progress and limit achievement.

21. The improvement of the management of pupils' behaviour has been a key priority for teaching. The most effective teaching ensures pupils sustain concentration. However, during the inspection, there were instances where noise levels were too high in a number of classes and, in these lessons, for example in physical education, it took too long for the teacher to secure pupils' attention. On other occasions insufficient subject knowledge, for example in music, meant that teaching lacked sufficient challenge and motivation and as a result some pupils did not pay attention.

22. Teaching ensures that Traveller children are well taught and integrated effectively into the school. Pupils for whom English is a second language are well supported and most have a basic level of English. However, there are occasions when images that are more culturally relevant to such pupils would increase their learning and language.

23. The school has recently produced a sound policy for marking. This has been done to remedy the weaknesses identified in the last inspection in marking pupils' work. At that time, the quality of marking was too varied between teachers. Work samples as recent as

the last summer term confirm that too much work is left unmarked often in mathematics. The policy includes some useful guidance for marking work in English and mathematics in particular. The policy is being implemented this term, and, due to a number of new staff appointed this term, its impact on raising pupils' attainment cannot yet be judged. A strength of some of the teaching is the continuous use of assessment to provide specific guidance to pupils during lessons to help them improve their work. This is good practice, but does not occur often enough in many classes. Overall, at present, pupils are not receiving enough guidance to help them improve in their work.

24. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are now taught well and with increasing skill. Attention has been given to using the improvements made to the quality of teaching as a result of these strategies and applying them to the teaching of other subjects. For example, all lessons now have an effective framework of whole class introduction, group activities followed by whole class review and evaluation of learning. The school is aware of the need to ensure that the teaching of literacy and numeracy is practised and extended where relevant in other subjects. For example, in history and other subjects in which teaching and learning require pupils to read and write, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs require a wider range of strategies in order for them to be successful and to make satisfactory progress. As yet, there is not a secure framework for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching reading in Key Stage 2 and as a result pupils' learning in reading is not as fast as it should be.

25. The teaching of higher attaining pupils has benefited from a number of developments. The school has taken account of the last inspection where this was identified as an aspect to be improved. The school has established a register for such pupils to highlight and track their progress. Teachers have been required to ensure that lessons are planned to meet the different needs within each class. These strategies are effective practices. The needs of these pupils are met most effectively in the teaching in the Foundation Stage, in Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics, in Key Stage 2 in writing and in science throughout the school. In mathematics in Key Stage 2, SATs results indicate that the number of pupils achieving higher than average levels is increasing. However, in lessons observed such pupils are not always presented with work that is sufficiently challenging. In the teaching of reading in Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils make progress that is too slow.

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

26. Overall, the school offers pupils a broad and balanced curriculum catering well for their academic and personal needs. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been fully implemented. The school meets statutory requirements for all subjects, including religious education and collective worship, which is a significant strength. Time is taken to ensure that increasing pupils' understanding of the 'personal power' each has permeates all aspects of the life of the school through classroom discussion, displays, circle time and, when opportunities arise, in lessons. Provision for pupils' personal development is good balanced with the need to provide more guidance to pupils on how well they learning and how to improve. The school ensures satisfactory equality of access for pupils. However, the work for higher attaining pupils is at times too easy and for pupils with special needs too hard.

27. The school is committed to maintaining curriculum breadth and balance despite its drive to raise standards in the basic skills. The headteacher encourages learning from direct experience, for example through work undertaken in the local environment and pupil

participation in local arts events. History and geography are taught at specific times during the academic year. This allows field visits to be well planned. At present, curriculum plans do not indicate how pupils will be helped to maintain their knowledge and skills over time. Work is now being done to identify where these subjects can be linked effectively to work in literacy and numeracy.

28. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for their own learning, they organise themselves well in lessons and have targets to improve their learning. This is reinforced in the schools policies for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and behaviour, that encourage pupils to make good personal choices. There are some activities after school but there is scope to develop these further to appeal to a broader range of interests. The school has strong links with local partnership organisations, including the nursery and the comprehensive school and an after school club. As a result, pupils make a smooth transition between the different stages of their education.

29. The school provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual development with valuable time provided for quiet thought. Pupils show respect for the environment and awareness of the beauty of the world around them. For example, in the reception class children were keenly aware of the wonder of growth when looking at pictures of themselves as babies and now. The assemblies are worthwhile spiritual experiences. The education in values programme, exemplified by the Family Links scheme, successfully enables pupils to develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.

30. Pupils' moral and social development makes an important contribution to the school's ethos and the achievement of its aims. Pupils know the school rules well. The PSHE programme enables pupils to explore moral dilemmas. It draws on examples from life in school and is a strength of the school's provision. Adults provide very good role models and through well managed discussion groups such as 'circle time' foster moral and social responsibility.

31. Pupils' cultural development has a number of good features, for example, the school has a strong tradition of participation in local arts events and pupils have opportunities to meet writers and see visiting theatre groups. Educational resources such as musical instruments reflect a range of cultures. From time to time members of the school community talk to pupils about different religious celebrations. However, these elements are not linked with others across the curriculum to ensure a cohesive curriculum framework. This reduces the potential to progressively increase and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

32. The school is establishing good systems to ensure that all pupils receive a curriculum that takes account of their ages, attainment and needs. There are increasing strengths in the way the school does this. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and takes account of children's prior attainment. Good use is made of external advice and support to meet the needs of Traveller children. The school's register of able pupils is an increasingly effective strategy for raising attainment further. There are many instances where work has been well planned for pupils with special educational needs in literacy and numeracy. Learning objectives have been clearly identified in individual education plans. However, the present absence of a clear strategic approach to the curriculum for pupils with SEN hinders pupils' progress.

33. Good progress has been made since the last inspection to ensure that the weaknesses identified have been remedied. Curriculum provision has improved as a result of effective planning and schemes of work are now appropriately detailed. Lesson planning



now identifies consistently relevant learning objectives, although in Key Stage 2 there is more to be done to ensure that they are sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils and for pupils with SEN that enable them to make faster progress.

34. The provision for extra-curricular activities is as present too limited. There are few opportunities available to pupils. The school is remedying this and staff are to be encouraged to provide a wider range of provision. At present, this reflects a decline in the quality of provision since the last inspection when extra-curricular activities were judged to be suitably varied and available to all pupils.

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

35. The care and support that the school provides are still a strong and notable feature and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum. Teachers know their pupils well, and pupils are confident in their approaches to their teachers and other adults in the school and this helps pupils to feel safe and secure. The school gives a high priority to a very good range of procedures to encourage good attendance, good behaviour, good work habits and where pupils' welfare is safeguarded.

36. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registers are consistently maintained and absences are followed up to reduce unauthorised absence levels. Despite the best efforts of the school to try and encourage good attendance, absence levels stubbornly remain below the national average and holiday taking is the main cause. The school does discourage holiday taking during term time, but parents seldom heed this advice. Up to half of the pupils in some classes take holidays and this causes classes to be disrupted and hinders the learning of the holiday takers.

37. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. There is a consistently applied and very effective positive behaviour regime that is implicit throughout the school and forms an important part of the school's ethos. Pupils are familiar with their own class rules and high expectations for behaviour, and they usually behave very well. Pupils were able to confidently say that the school expects them to report poor behaviour and not to react to it. The procedures for eliminating any oppressive behaviour are outstanding. On the rare occasion when bullying is reported, the headteacher investigates and reports back to parents very quickly and takes effective action to stop it.

38. The arrangements for child protection are very good and meet all the statutory requirements. The headteacher is the designated person and has had recent training to update her and the school on changes in local child protection systems. All pupil injuries are questioned and monitored closely. The Social Development Group helps to counsel pupils who have difficulty in coping with school and other aspects of their lives. The outcomes are impressive and help pupils to enjoy school life more, raises self-esteem and learning is enhanced. When pupils are sick or injured they receive a high level of care and attention and all pupils' medical conditions are catered for well. The school has some thorough and very well managed systems for carrying out all the routine health and safety checking and additional risk assessments, based on a school building with so many hazardous design constraints.

39. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal, promoted by teachers who know pupils very well and sustain very positive relationships with them. Teachers show a high level of support and commitment to pupils and are able to give them good advice for improving attitudes, social skills and encourage a good work ethic. Staff use their helpful personal development guides well when assessing pupils' social and

personal development for annual school reports and for passing on good quality information to the next teacher.

40. Good work has been done to remedy the weaknesses in assessment found in the last inspection. As a result of the effective leadership of the headteacher, a strong whole school approach for monitoring and evaluating pupils' academic performance has been established. Very good procedures now exist. The principle upon which these procedures are based is very sound and requires the results of assessment to be used in curriculum planning. The deputy headteacher as assessment co-ordinator has played a significant role in this work. An assessment calendar has been agreed that informs all staff of the priorities for assessment, monitoring, evaluation and review. To date, pupils' work has been assessed and monitored in English, mathematics and science. This has included monitoring teachers' planning for these subjects, scrutinising pupils' work, analysing end of year national assessments and tests and observing teachers teaching. As a result of this extensive work, tracking records have been established for each pupil, performance targets set for them in English, mathematics and science and portfolios of successful work produced with them to take away when they leave the school at the end of Year 6. At present, the monitoring of pupils' progress in reading in Key Stage 2 does not provide a sufficiently accurate analysis of the range of information available.

41. This assessment programme is due to being extended to other subjects in a planned way. Much of this work has taken place over the last year or so. Consequently, it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these arrangements and their impact on raising pupils' performance. Assessment approaches for identifying and supporting special educational needs at present lack a secure and robust framework that involves all staff who work with them. In particular, assessment is not used effectively to identify the most effective teaching methods.

42. The school meets statutory requirements to meet the needs identified in pupils' statements of special educational need. Statements are up to date and the provision each identifies is implemented.

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

43. The school continues to have a very good partnership with parents. Parents are very supportive and are highly satisfied with the education provided and other aspects of the school. The school tries hard to work closely with parents, who feel warmly welcomed, and are kept closely informed about their children's learning and the day-to-day life of the school.

44. Parents particularly like the approachability of the headteacher and the welcoming and caring environment she has established in the school. Parents had slight misgivings about the amount of homework and the quality of information they receive on their children's progress and stronger doubts about the range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team found that the arrangements for homework are good. Each year group has a homework timetable and pupils have a homework book in which homework is set regularly. Year 6 pupils use their homework diaries well. The school also suggests a range of ways that parents can support their children's learning at home. The quality of information on pupils' progress is very good. The range of extra-curricular activities for a primary school is currently unsatisfactory but there are plans to improve the provision when the new staff have settled in.

45. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. The family induction arrangements are good and pupils settle quickly when they start school. There are good links with the local nursery and children make the transition to school easily and happily. Parents are given very good information about what to expect at school and details about the Foundation Stage. The school prospectus and annual report to parents meet all the legal requirements. The friendly and well-written school newsletters keep parents fully in touch with all news, information, dates for the diary and what their children will be learning for each half term. The quality of information parents receive about their children's progress is very good.

46. Parents have termly formal consultation opportunities to discuss their children's work and share new targets for learning. Staff also commendably make themselves available at the end of each day to informally discuss any more immediate issues with parents, and many do. School reports are good and meet all the statutory requirements. Parents are provided with good and detailed information about their children's performance over the past year, and are given some very specific individual advice on how pupils' weaknesses can be addressed and what the next steps should be. Good strategies have been employed to ascertain parents' views about the school. For example, in the past year the governors have conducted a parental survey to gauge parents' satisfaction and address any issues. Governors have also issued their own helpful newsletters to explain who they are and how they help and support the work of the school.

47. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. Parents are encouraged to be as involved in their children's school life as they want to be. Several parents regularly volunteer to help each week. They are given good guidance and are deployed well in a number of useful ways. When help is needed, the school only has to ask and parents are very supportive. When the Year 4 class needed help with their walk around Chipping Norton, parents promptly came forward and helped to make it a successful and safe visit. Parents' skills are known and used for specific purposes, like the skilled help parents gave during Art Week or helping with the French and football clubs.

48. The Friends of St Mary's is a very active and hardworking group that raises funds and provides the school with a busy social life. The school holds very successful school fetes, quizzes, discos, sponsored events like the recent sponsored poetry recital and many more events raising large sums of money. This was spent on library books, physical education and information and communication technology equipment, the cost of coaches for most school trips, play equipment, the visiting theatre groups and other artists and other items that staff requested to provide learning luxuries, like the parachute and the best quality armbands for swimming. Parents also run the uniform shop and sell school uniforms at almost cost price, making uniforms much more affordable.

49. Parents support meetings about the curriculum, events when their children are involved like concerts, productions, sports activities, assemblies and church services and charity drives. Many parents came to the recent Family Links course that featured the school's planned programme of "values" and related PSHE and were able to see a circle time demonstration. In this way, parents make a very good contribution to pupils' learning at school and help improve the quality of school life. Parents of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are appropriately involved in reviews of their child's achievements.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The management of the school is good and has been much improved since the last inspection. There is now a secure framework for continued school improvement and all evidence confirms that the improvements achieved since the last inspection are a result of the commitment, perseverance and hard work of the headteacher and senior staff.

51. The headteacher has maintained the positive ethos of the school, whilst establishing with staff, a deeper understanding of the values that underpin the school's work. She has established a well-constructed school improvement plan that is understood by everyone. The governing body has a shared understanding of the long-term direction of the school. Its long-term objectives are appropriate and clear. This has been achieved as the result of the good information provided by the headteacher to ensure decisions are well founded.

52. The headteacher has established a clear direction for the school's work and has focused on key aspects to bring about improvement. In particular these have been: the use of assessment to raise attainment; the use of performance management to improve teaching and improved procedures to monitor and evaluate the impact of these actions so that evidence is available to illustrate the school's success. She delegates responsibility to senior staff effectively whilst providing training and support. For example the deputy headteacher has undertaken extensive work to bring about improvements to assessment and monitoring and evaluation. There is now a rigorous approach to evaluating the school's work. There is an effective procedure for the induction of new staff. Again, for example, the deputy headteacher as literacy co-ordinator undertook a detailed programme of lesson observations shadowed by her successor. The focus was agreed in advance and related to the literacy action plan. This was followed by evaluation reports to the teachers concerned. This has improved the quality of teaching.

53. The headteacher has created a strong senior management team of knowledgeable professionals. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. The deputy has clear responsibilities assigned to her. The roles of staff with subject responsibilities have improved since the last inspection. These roles are clearly understood by all staff. Sensible cohesive practice ensures that curriculum planning and provision are audited to identify strengths and areas to be improved. An effective model of classroom observation is in place. However, further training is now necessary to ensure a sufficiently robust analysis of comparative assessment data by subject co-ordinators to identify implications for teaching and learning. Until this is done there is a weakness in the use of data to raise achievement. The school has rightly recognised this next stage of development.

54. The governing body has undertaken training since the last inspection. It now much better understands its role and is more effective as a 'critical friend'. Governors are involved effectively in discussing and agreeing what the school is trying to achieve. Nevertheless, as yet there is not enough understanding of the use of data to identify improvement targets for pupils' learning and achievement. For example, the literacy, numeracy and special educational needs (SEN) governors are not fully aware of the school's data in their areas or how they compare with schools nationally. This reflects the stage of the school's development. Whilst much has been done to establish assessment procedures and systems for tracking pupils' progress, the use of comparative data has still to be developed.

55. The arrangements for pupils with special needs are unsatisfactory overall. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is employed part-time. The special

educational needs register is not used with sufficient rigour as a management tool through which to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress and future needs. The assessment of pupils' special needs lacks sufficient focus. As a result, at times pupils' needs remain unidentified for too long and are recognised at too late a stage in their time in the school.

56. The school makes effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to promote efficient school administration. The office runs smoothly and appropriate day-to-day financial and organisational information is readily available. ICT programmes improve the analysis of data. More computers have been provided for pupils' use to raise standards in ICT.

57. The school makes best use of the resources available to it. It budgets systematically for new developments and the school improvement plan is appropriately supported by a financial plan. The headteacher and governing body undertakes regular monitoring of expenditure. Statutory reporting requirements are met and the school has taken full account of the last auditors report. Financial management is effective. Systems for financial management are unobtrusive and efficient. The school makes sound use of the principles of best value.

58. The school has good teaching and non-teaching staff. Teachers have an appropriate range of qualifications and experience. Although almost half of them are new to the school this term the procedures for induction, support and performance management are effective. New staff have taken up their posts well and strengths and future development needs have been identified through the evaluation of teaching and pupils' learning. These factors confirm good progress since the last inspection when the appraisal of teachers was judged to be unsatisfactory.

59. The school has good accommodation. The split-level site is managed well. It is very clean and well maintained. Classrooms are attractive learning environments. Additional space for small group work or specialist teaching is limited, for example, there is no activity room for music and the library makes best use of a corridor area. Outdoors, the school has pleasant playground areas and pupils and staff have worked successfully with the local comprehensive school to create interesting areas for quiet retreat. There is now a secure outdoor area for children in the reception class.

60. Resources in the school are generally satisfactory. Considerable improvements have been made to the range of resources available to reception age children. Resources are of good quality, well chosen, well managed and accessible to them. The work setting is well organised and activities planned that combine work indoors as well as out. Satisfactory provision has been made for work outdoors. Nevertheless, at present, the outdoor area does not sufficiently support children's imaginative play and independent use of equipment. Additionally, whilst reading resources are well presented and are of good quality the range of material to support children's understanding of phonics is too limited.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to raise standards and to improve the school's effectiveness, the headteacher, staff and governors should

**(1) Raise standards in reading in Key Stage 2 by:**

- Improving the teaching of phonics;
- Improving the planning to teach reading in a more systematic progressive way;
- Increasing the range of reading resources and materials to support teaching of phonics;
- Encouraging parents to continue to support reading at home throughout their child's time in the school;
- Training teachers to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress in reading.

*(Paragraphs: 2, 5, 24, 40, 60, 81, 85, 90, 93.)*

**(2) Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2 particularly for higher attaining pupils by:**

- Using the outcomes of regular marking and assessment to identify the skills that next need to be taught and that pupils know what to improve
- Improving the quality of teaching so that all lessons are well planned and take due account of pupils' different needs
- Utilising a full range of behaviour management techniques to ensure all pupils concentrate on their work;
- Providing sufficient time to undertake investigative and problem solving work.

*(Paragraphs 1, 5, 23, 25, 90, 95, 97, 98, 99.)*

**(3) Improve the use of assessment to increase the rate of progress made by pupils with special educational needs in ways that involve all who work with them by:**

- Ensuring that the special educational needs register is used effectively to monitor and evaluate the rate of pupils' progress
- Establishing a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and the teaching methods to be used.
- Ensuring that the assessment of pupils' needs is undertaken at an appropriately early stage.
- Establishing a secure strategic overview of the management of special educational needs.

*(Paragraphs: 2, 5, 9, 20, 24, 32, 41, 54, 55, 85, 92, 122.)*

**(4) Improve the levels of pupils' attendance by:**

- making sure that all parents realise the impact of taking holidays in term time on pupils' attainment. *(Paragraphs 15, 36.)*

Minor issues:

Establish a portfolio of assessed work in science and art to moderate the accuracy of teachers' assessment. *(Paragraphs 105, 114.)*

Establish procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in art and information communication technology. *(Paragraph 114, 128.)*

Ensure all teachers have sufficient knowledge to use information communication technology in their teaching. *(Paragraphs 126, 128.)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	83
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	21	31	26	5	0	0
Percentage	0	25	38	31	6	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	321
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6
National comparative data	5.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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
	2000	30	28	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	28	29
	Girls	25	26	26
	Total	53	54	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (81)	93 (94)	95 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	30	30
	Girls	25	23	27
	Total	53	53	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (88)	92 (90)	98 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (97)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year 2000. Attainment for 2001 is not yet validated nationally, however the inspection found higher standards achieved in reading, writing and mathematics than in previous years.

### 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
	2000	26	34	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	20	22
	Girls	30	22	26
	Total	47	42	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (65)	70 (65)	80 (80)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	20	21
	Girls	27	21	25
	Total	42	41	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (65)	68 (64)	78 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year 2000. Attainment for 2001 is not yet validated nationally, however the inspection found standards remain average in English, standards have improved in science and standards in mathematics show a decline.



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	2
White	285
Any other minority ethnic group	5

*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	27.7
Average class size	26.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	254.5

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	582372
Total expenditure	588138
Expenditure per pupil	1741
Balance brought forward from previous year	22866

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	321
Number of questionnaires returned	169

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	46	2	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	56	4	1	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	64	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	54	13	1	7
The teaching is good.	45	47	2	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	49	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	39	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	47	2	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	35	50	7	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	34	51	7	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	55	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	33	30	12	11

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

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

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

62. At the time of the inspection the reception class contained 19 children. They had spent six weeks in school, attending for the morning periods only. They will attend fulltime in the term after their fifth birthday. Nearly all of the children have had some form of educational experience prior to starting school. Attainment on entry to the reception class is in line with the level expected for children of their age. Higher attaining children have made good progress and already are achieving levels that are expected at the beginning of Key Stage 1. Average and lower attaining children make satisfactory progress. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of their reception year. The good liaison between the school and local nursery ensure children's learning is sustained on transfer.

63. The improvement of provision for the Foundation Stage has been a priority for the school. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Staff are confident and speak knowledgeably about what has been achieved and how it has improved children's learning. In particular, the curriculum has been improved and there is now better use made of assessment.

64. Curriculum planning takes appropriate account of the early learning goals for children's learning. Staff have benefited from training and the support of LEA resources such as Oxfordshire's Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and Early Years Entry and Exit Profile. These resources are being used well. An effective approach to teaching combines adult and child initiated activities successfully and includes as a basis well planned play activities. The teaching takes very good account of children's prior attainment and as a result children make a good start to their school lives and progress is sustained well from nursery to reception class. Overall, the provision for the Foundation Stage is now a strength of the school.

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

65. The reception teacher places an important emphasis on this aspect of children's learning at the start of the school year. As a result, children have settled in well and have positive attitudes to school life. They demonstrate a sense of confidence and self-responsibility for their work because they have been taught to know the teacher's expectation for how to behave well and to carefully look after the resources available to them. As a result of good relationships between adults and children they readily take part in whole class activities as well as sustain working independently. Children with different levels of prior attainment are confident to talk to adults about their work. Classroom management and organisation are good. Equipment is well managed, accessible and of good quality. Children have been taught well so they know where resources are to be found and how to return them. As a result, children feel secure and can make choices and decisions about their work.

66. Teaching insists patiently and firmly on good behaviour and thought for others. Consequently children demonstrate good social awareness, take turns, and help one another and play well together, for example, when using wheeled vehicles on a self made road system outdoors. On other occasions, because teaching ensures materials are readily available, children work quietly on self-chosen activities, for example, selecting materials to

practise and improve their drawing skills. Children's confidence and ability to develop self-responsibility are enhanced by the well-laid out and varied activities.

67. At this early stage children are developing confidence, more independence and good social skills. Already, children play well together, share ideas and resources and show enjoyment in the success of others. Children showed good levels of self-discipline in their circle time when they were able to distinguish between the right and wrong choices for classroom behaviour. They also show respect and consideration for adults and peers alike. The children try and listen and answer questions to the limit of their ability and are eager to please their teacher with their good efforts.

68. Children show increasing ability to manage their personal needs well. With support, they change their clothes appropriately for physical activity and dress themselves again afterwards. They are able to co-operate as a member of the class.

69. The good quality of provision for children's personal, social and emotional development is achieved as a result of sensitive teaching and well-timed interventions in children's learning. Good contexts are provided for children to increase in confidence to initiate their own activities as well as follow those provided by adults.

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

70. Teaching develops children's language skills effectively. The teacher knows the children well and has taken appropriate steps to plan for the range of need that she has identified. As a result nearly all the children speak clearly and enjoy talking. They speak and listen well because adults provide the time and good opportunities for them to talk about their activities. All children are well supported in acquiring the skills of reading and writing. Good questioning and teaching strategies ensures both lower attaining children and higher attaining achieve well. Some higher attaining children are already able to read simple texts and write simple sentences. All children enjoy reading. This is because the effective teaching uses well chosen reading material so that children understand the story, follow the print using 'big-books' and know that the writing conveys meaning. Good questioning enables children to identify and use a range of clues from the story to predict what might happen next. They make sensible attempts at reading unfamiliar words. Children make good use of well planned opportunities to choose reading and writing activities independently. They sustained concentration well, for example, two children showed good understanding of spelling conventions and ability to spell simple words accurately when they wrote lists of words and then read them to each other. Children's understanding of letter – sound relationships are supported by good teaching. The school has rightly identified the need to widen the range of reading schemes used to include more that help the teaching of phonics and group reading.

71. Teaching utilises elements of the national literacy strategy appropriately. A whole class discussion about the traditional nursery rhyme 'Jack and Jill' was supported effectively by all children following and reading the rhyme from a large print book. The lesson ended with children encouraged to use the model of the rhyme to record a class version of 'Kevin and Kate'. The teacher acted as a scribe so that children were able to give their ideas freely. Children sustained this challenging activity well because the teacher provided an effective role model generating a sense of excitement in the work. This was particularly appropriate in involving the children for whom sustained concentration is more difficult. In particular, this strategy effectively regained the attention of the minority of boys whose interest had lapsed.

72. Children talk happily about their work and life in school as a result of the positive atmosphere that prevails. All children have an understanding of the progress they are making in their learning. They are optimistic that they will be successful as a result of the realistic encouragement they receive from their teacher. The teacher constructively encourages rephrasing of children's responses when their first efforts would benefit from improvement. Teaching is good at developing children's listening skills. All children are expected to give their full attention when the teacher or another child is speaking.

73. Teaching provides effective support for those children whose language is not as advanced as others. Additional adult support is available on a regular daily basis and is well deployed.

### **Mathematical development**

74. Good teaching ensures that numeracy is taught well both within dedicated lessons as well as being reinforced through the day to day routines of the reception class. Teaching creates effective practical contexts for children to count for example linking counting activities in games with bat and ball. As a result children demonstrate understanding at the level expected for their age with some showing higher levels of attainment. Good teaching ensures that children are making good progress. Most children can count to ten and backwards to zero; they can add one more or subtract one from numbers to ten.

75. Children are taught to use mathematical language well and describe what they are doing using language such as 'add one more' and 'one less than'.

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

76. Children's learning and curiosity are well supported by the well-prepared learning environment. They make good use of the construction kits available to them. Children use simple computer programmes well independently, make choices and know how to control a mouse. They benefit from well-planned opportunities for imaginative play such as in the home corner. Teaching effectively uses simple activities such as challenging the children to devise an imaginary roadway through which to learn about road safety to good effect. As a result of carefully described instructions teaching ensures that children confidently carry out the tasks requested as well as respond with their own suggestions. They are then able to sustain the activity of using the circuit they have created employing traffic lights and pedestrian crossing with due regard to safety as well as the steps that need to be taken with inattentive drivers.

### **Physical development**

77. Teaching provides well-planned activities that take good account of children's different needs. An effective partnership between teacher and the learning support assistant (LSA) provides individual attention and coaching for each child to support greater co-ordination. Consequently children show good development in controlling and using large equipment such as wheeled tricycles and scooters. They use the large space in the hall well. They are responsive to adults and work hard during lessons. Varied activities sustain children's interest and they rise to the challenge of hitting a ball with a bat accurately. Teaching appropriately takes full account of children's need to develop a wide range of fine and large physical skills, using for example construction sets and 'small world' toys.

78. A secure outdoor area has been provided to improve provision for children's learning. This has now made it possible for children to move spontaneously between

indoors and out. Large outdoor equipment is now available. The school next needs to give attention to providing 'areas' within this environment to support children's choice of activity and learning. For example: perhaps providing a 'vehicle park' for wheeled toys which follows the conventions of a car park and allows children to acquire more self-discipline.

### **Creative development**

79. Teaching effectively ensures that the opportunities for children to express themselves creatively and to acquire the skills to do so are well integrated into the curriculum. Time is managed well to enable children to think about what they want to create and resources are readily available to stimulate ideas. For example, children are given time to explore materials and resources so that they respond thoughtfully to stimulus that engages all their senses. They are able to create images using paint and to learn how to use fine and large paint brushes as well as crayons and drawing pencils to enhance their work. The use of play as a teaching strategy throughout the curriculum supports children's increasing creativity and self-expression effectively. Children's imagination is fostered in the provision of role-play areas in the classroom such as the home corner. Attention is given to providing equipment so that the area has a sense of realism. A good start has been made in this regard although more resources are needed to provide furniture of an appropriate size.

### **ENGLISH**

80. Since the last inspection standards in Key Stage 1 have improved consistently in reading, speaking and listening in line with national trends. There has been a greater improvement in writing where standards are now well above the national average. There is no difference between the attainment of boys and girls, this is in contrast to results found nationally where girls out perform boys. In the national tests for 2001 standards have continued to improve when compared with all schools nationally. In comparison with similar schools there is a marked increase in the number of pupils achieving standards that are above average. These standards are reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Average attaining pupils in Year 2 were already achieving standards that are expected nationally at the end of the academic year and higher attaining pupils were already working at an above average standard.

81. In Key Stage 2, standards in English show improvement in recent years with a small decline in performance in 2001. The results of national assessment in 2001 indicate that attainments in reading and writing are below national averages. However, the per cent of pupils achieving above average standards in writing is above the average found nationally with girls achieving slightly higher standards than boys. Assessment evidence shows that in the past, pupils have made progress that is too slow in Key Stage 2. The school has taken effective steps to address this weakness. As a result of actions to improve standards in writing, inspection evidence confirmed that pupils in Year 6 are now making good progress and attainment was judged to be satisfactory or better. However, pupils' attainment in reading remains unsatisfactory and until addressed this limits pupils' future achievement across the curriculum.

82. In Key Stage 1, pupils continue to make good progress in speaking and listening, as identified in the last inspection report. Nevertheless not all pupils volunteer responses readily in class sessions. Teachers target questions effectively to individuals to overcome this; however, a wider range of strategies such as 'talk partners' would provide more opportunity for all pupils to contribute ideas. Pupils use precise language well to describe aspects of their work, for example referring to the use of bullet points in instructional texts.

83. In Key Stage 2, standards of speaking and listening are good. Most pupils are confident to express ideas and opinion although as in Key Stage 1; a minority of pupils are insufficiently willing to contribute to whole class discussions. Nevertheless, pupils talk well in smaller groups. They are taught a wide range of interesting vocabulary and as a result too, the quality of their writing is improved.

84. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is above average and they make good progress. They are encouraged to read a range of texts, including books for information. A Key Stage 1 library has recently been established to promote this further. Pupils' reading is monitored appropriately and they read frequently at home. There is a good exchange of comments between parents and teachers and as a result parents know how well their child is progressing. The literacy strategy has been adopted well and group-reading activities are used effectively to ensure good progress. Higher attaining pupils read with expression and have a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. For example, in Year 2 higher attaining pupils are already reading demonstrating more advanced reading skills. They can read fluently and accurately, showing understanding of the main points they have read and express preferences. For average and lower attaining pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

85. Pupils' attainment in reading in Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory overall. Lower and average attaining pupils and those with special educational needs achieve standards, which are lower than they should be and against prior achievement progress is too slow. For example, average-attaining pupils can explain aspects of a story and make simple predictions however, their reading lacks fluency and accuracy. They omit or substitute words and do not correct themselves even where this affects the meaning of what is read. Lower attaining pupils can explain reasons for their book choices but their descriptions of the stories are largely based on clues from the cover or previous knowledge of similar books. They read slowly and hesitantly and know few strategies with which to decode unfamiliar words. At the beginning of Year 6 higher attaining pupils already show well-developed skills and achieve standards expected of pupils a year older than them. They read well, choose books from specific genre and authors and are able to summarise plot, characters and setting. They make good predictions of how the story might end.

86. The standards and quality of writing in Key Stage 1 are good. Pupils write for a range of purposes in narrative, non-narrative and poetry forms. This was exemplified in Year 2 where pupils wrote an instruction booklet for bulb planting – they could set out the text appropriately using introductory words and phrases such as *first*, *then*, and *finally*. Their handwriting is well formed and reflects positive teaching. Pupils can spell common regular words in line with the literacy strategy and make reasonable phonic alternatives for words they do not know. They are happy to write independently. Effective strategies are used to ensure that pupils commit the spelling of words to memory. For example, the use of a *look, cover, write, check* for pupils to learn their spellings is proving effective.

87. At the end of Key Stage 2 national tests confirm pupils' attainment in writing and spelling is average overall. This indicates that pupils' progress has been too slow. The improvement of standards in writing has been a priority for the school. The inspection confirmed that appropriate strategies have been put in place and they are having effect. The improvements can be seen throughout the key stage. For example, in Year 3 pupils write simple play scripts using colons and brackets accurately. They write in a range of genre using appropriate conventions and structures and in Year 5, pupils write dialogue for a character. Pupils participate enthusiastically in guided writing lessons and display a good range of vocabulary, though they are not yet always able to define grammatical terms. For example, pupils could demonstrate what an adverb was but were not able to explain it. Handwriting is not always consistently well formed. Although pupils try hard to present their

work well, many cited handwriting and presentation targets when asked what they were trying to improve on.

88. Teaching is good in Key Stage 1. The strengths in the teaching include detailed planning that links the key elements of the lesson together and builds on previous learning and the meaningful sharing of learning objectives. Teaching shows good understanding of the literacy strategy. In reading, teaching techniques such as reading in-groups are well applied to ensure pupils' good progress. Teaching ensures pupils know a range of strategies confidently to read unfamiliar words. Teachers use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to identify the knowledge and skills learned. Learning support assistants (LSAs) work well with lower attaining pupils. The teaching is best where pupils are given a sense of purpose in their work. For example, Year 2 pupils read and followed the instructions well for making sock puppets. They evaluated effectively both the finished product and the aspects of the instructions they had found most useful. Teachers monitor pupils' reading effectively and they read frequently at home. There is a good exchange of information between parents and teachers to encourage pupils' learning.

89. Teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2 with some good features. The pace and structure of lessons are usually appropriate and in many lessons are strengths. For example in Year 3 very good teaching creates a real purpose and enthusiasm for pupils' work with dictionaries that leads to sustained application and pace. There are examples of good teaching support for example in Year 6 an LSA worked well with a group reading a simplified biography. The discussion of the text was of a high quality and one pupil suggested that they look in the glossary for words they did not understand. However, there are weaknesses in teaching on other occasions when the lesson introductions are too long and lack variety, and where this happens pupils become inattentive.

90. At present, the strategies for teaching reading in Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory. A more structured approach to teaching reading in Key Stage 2 is required to sustain the progress pupils make in Key Stage 1. At present, whilst the homework policy requires reading to be maintained regularly at home, the inspection found this practice too variable from Year 4 onwards. This is a missed opportunity for parents to continue to support their child's achievement in reading, as they become older. Whilst pupils may choose books from class collections, school and public library and bookshops, as a result of lack of guidance some average and lower attaining pupils read books that are too difficult for them to understand. There are too few opportunities for teachers to regularly monitor reading. For example some middle and lower attaining pupils read books that are too difficult for them to read with understanding. Teaching does not fully utilise group-reading techniques and the teaching of phonics is not done with sufficient rigour. Reading resources and materials are too limited and as a result there is insufficient support for teaching and learning. Analysis of curriculum planning and work samples show that some teachers are beginning to make links with other subjects to reinforce the teaching of English, in particular history. This is good practice but is not yet consistent across the school.

91. Good classroom management creates a purposeful learning environment in almost all classes, with clear routines and positive reinforcement of good behaviour. All pupils have group targets for literacy and numeracy and these are reinforced through constructive marking – as in Year 6 where a pupil, when asked when he would know he had reached his target, said "From the teacher's comments in my book."

92. All pupils with special educational needs follow detailed individual programmes for literacy. Their work is closely monitored by LSAs who liaise regularly with the special needs co-ordinator. Group learning objectives in lessons ensure that they are included in all work.



This is helpful practice. However, teaching strategies to ensure these pupils also benefit from working in smaller groups, with a wider range of resources, are at present limited. On occasion pupils are unable to read the text meaningfully because the task is too difficult and the type of support available does not meet their needs. For example, some pupils need more prompts such as key words, help with creating sentences and the structure of writing frames. Despite these factors, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and contribute their ideas willingly.

93. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator has been in post for a year and in a short time, has worked hard to develop her own expertise and the subject across the school. She has worked closely with the deputy head and external support from the LEA Literacy Consultant has been used well to gain an overview of what needs to be done. She is well informed about her subject and has excellent documentation to support her work. A detailed action plan has been developed to raise standards of teaching and learning, with a focus on raising attainment in reading and writing. Improvement to reading material has already begun and interesting and enjoyable books have been purchased for Year 6 to encourage low attaining pupils. There are plans to evaluate pupils' and parents' response. This evaluation should also include measuring the improvement to pupils' reading. The co-ordinator monitors curriculum planning but has not yet had sufficient opportunity to evaluate teaching or pupils' work. Until this happens the school cannot be confident that the training and actions taken are having the desired effect on standards particularly in raising standards in reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. In the 2000 national tests, seven year-old pupils attained above average standards when compared to schools in similar contexts. This marked a sharp reverse of a trend of declining standards since 1996 to the extent that standards in 2000 were at their highest point for the past five years. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils attained above average results at nationally expected levels in shape, space and measures. The performance of high attaining pupils was particularly pleasing as their performance in all elements of mathematics was above national averages. Over the past three years both boys and girls have achieved at similar levels to each other, and they were about half a term ahead of their peers nationally. The results of the 2001 national tests were not as high as they were in 2000. In comparison with all schools and with similar schools attainment is average. However, inspection findings suggest that attainment in mathematics in Years 1 and by the end of Year 2 is higher than the tests indicate and that pupils are making good progress in the subject overall.

95. Overall, there is a trend of rising standards for eleven-year-old pupils. There has been a continued increase in results that has taken place over the past three years to the extent that standards in 2000 were at their highest point for the past five years. The proportion of pupils attaining higher than expected levels was the same as schools with similar intakes. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Over the past three years, both boys and girls have achieved similar levels in mathematics. The results of the 2001 national tests are similar to those achieved in 2000. Nevertheless the school did not reach the targets it set in mathematics for 2000 or 2001. The national assessment results in 2001 for the last Year 6 showed that pupils' attainment is in line with all schools nationally but below the standards achieved by similar schools. Inspection findings indicate that attainment in mathematics in the present Years 3-6 is average and that pupils overall are making satisfactory progress in the subject. However, progress for higher attaining pupils is too slow and they do not achieve standards that are high enough. During the past year, the school has been focusing on raising attainment in mathematics. The impact of this for

pupils in Years 3-6 is that standards have been rising steadily in these year groups in particular. The school acknowledges that there is more to be done to raise standards even higher.

96. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress in mathematics throughout the school. Those with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress in all classes. Higher attaining pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1 but progress is at times too variable in Key Stage 2. The contribution of other subjects, such as science, design and technology and physical education to numeracy is sound.

97. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can add and subtract three figure numbers. They can interpret picture and block graphs. They are learning to estimate and measure accurately in centimetres. They can arrange different lengths by size. Higher attaining pupils can calculate the difference between lengths they have measured. By the end of Year 6, most pupils can multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100. They know their tables and use them to work out problems. They can add and subtract money and can plot co-ordinates on a grid. They interpret line graphs and pie charts and draw acute and obtuse angles using a protractor. They are learning to work with improper fractions and mixed numbers. Evidence from pupils' work last year indicates that pupils spend too much time practising number work and too little time on investigative and problem solving mathematics. This imbalance is likely to depress attainment overall at the end of the key stage.

98. The quality of teaching in mathematics ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Overall, it is satisfactory. This is a similar picture that was noted at the last inspection. In the most effective lessons, teachers plan their work clearly, identifying learning objectives and stimulating activities that best achieve them. Lessons are very well structured with an introduction, activity session and a plenary that draws together the learning that has taken place and extends it further. This is good practice. Teachers ask searching and challenging questions of pupils that encourage them to think carefully. In the best lessons, teachers ask probing questions on an individual basis when pupils are engaged in their tasks. This helps pupils at all levels of ability to make greater progress and is an example of good practice. During the inspection, this teaching technique was observed in Year 2. There is a developing practice of assessing pupils' attainment in lessons and using this information to plan further work. This is not yet a common practice, but one that needs to be adopted consistently in all classes. Positive and constructive relationships feature in all classes and these form the basis upon which the teaching occurs. The very good support given to the teaching by learning support assistants contributes substantially to this. Each of these factors of the teaching helps pupils to learn and make sound progress in mathematics.

99. However, the teaching is not always as good as this. Occasionally, lessons are not prepared well and equipment is not to hand. Some are not planned well enough and there is too little account taken of the needs of the high and low attaining pupils. The behaviour of some pupils is not managed well enough and this causes interruptions to the learning. The pace in these lessons is too slow. Each of these aspects is a weakness in the teaching and adversely affects the amount of progress pupils make. This is a greater characteristic of teaching in Key Stage 2 and contributes to the slow progress during the key stage.

100. The leadership and management of mathematics are strengths and have improved significantly from those at the last inspection. A significant amount of monitoring and

evaluation has been undertaken during the past year by the school and appropriate actions have been taken to correct the weaknesses identified. This has included analysing teachers' plans, scrutinising pupils' work and observing teaching in classrooms. The outcomes of this monitoring and evaluation are firmly established in the school's planning of the future. For instance, there is an action plan for the subject and the progress of all pupils is tracked year by year and appropriate annual targets set for their learning. Other weaknesses that have been identified are included in the School Improvement Plan and in teachers' performance management targets. This is very good practice. As these procedures have been introduced quite recently, they have not yet had sufficient time to improve the standards achieved by pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

101. By the end of Key Stage 1, teacher assessment results in 2000 indicate that the percentage of pupils achieving the national average is well above average for those attaining the expected level 2, and above average for those attaining the higher level 3. On the basis of teacher assessment, the standards for 2001 are lower than this but still at least in line with the average expected. When the small number of pupils who accounted for the lowering of these standards are considered, attainment overall is above average. Teacher assessments and work sampling during the inspection suggest that attainment in knowledge and understanding is higher than in scientific investigation.

102. Good progress has been made in raising standards in science. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment in national test results in 2000 indicated that attainment was below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Whilst the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 4 was below the average for all schools the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was close to the national average. There has been a gradual trend of improvement in Key Stage 2 test results over the last five years. In 2001 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level 4 improved to a level comparable with that expected nationally with the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 increasing significantly to a level above the national average. Overall standards in science are average in comparison to all schools nationally. However, in comparison to similar schools standards are now above average. This is a considerable improvement. This is as a result of a careful analysis of pupils' work and test papers to identify weaknesses, and addressing those weaknesses by planning appropriate activities into the curriculum. Work sampling during the inspection confirms that weaknesses identified by the school's analysis as being weak have now been remedied. Pupils are now more proficient at interpreting data and average and above average pupils can draw line graphs accurately. They are beginning to repeat measurements and understand why this is important. They are more skilled at making generalisations. However, pupils still need to improve their use of scientific knowledge in making predictions and drawing conclusions.

103. Since the last inspection there have been a number of improvements. Higher attaining pupils are well catered for, as shown by the significant increase in level 5 grades at Key Stage 2. Attainment generally has risen to a level above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. In Year 5, for example, pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported to enable them to show their understanding of science. In some cases the teacher scribes for them, in other cases they show their understanding of a healthy life style by sorting pictures of pastimes into those likely to promote a healthy body, such as exercise and healthy eating, and those sedentary activities less likely to provide this outcome. Regular assessment is now built into the scheme of work. There was no unsatisfactory teaching and a greater proportion of good teaching. Resources have improved, as have aspects of subject co-ordination.

104. The quality of teaching is good. Planning is thorough, with clear learning objectives identified and communicated to pupils. These are often revisited at the end of lessons. Teachers place considerable emphasis on the correct use of scientific vocabulary and model this well in lessons. Older pupils are used to having a glossary of terms to refer to. Teachers use questioning effectively to establish the degree of pupils' understanding, both in whole class sessions and with individuals. Helpful prompt sheets help pupils to structure their scientific investigations. Teaching and learning styles are suitably varied and pupils are able to record their work in different ways. On a number of occasions however, the pace of parts of lessons could be increased. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They take pride in their work and show keen interest.

105. The subject is led by an able and knowledgeable co-ordinator who has a clear view of the developments needed. Very good progress has been made from the last inspection. Clear and appropriate priorities are identified in the school improvement plan. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work, and the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning are planned. A thorough analysis of test results has been undertaken, which has resulted in an identification of weaknesses in pupils' learning. The action taken has resulted in a significant improvement in Key Stage 2 test results. However, at present there is not a portfolio of assessed work to judge the accuracy of teachers' assessment. This needs to be established to provide a benchmark to secure a common understanding of the standards to be expected in each year group.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

106. Standards of work in art and design are, on balance, in line with national expectations in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In this respect the school has maintained the position established at the last inspection. However, there is evidence of work of a higher quality being produced as a result of the Art Week programme established in the last few years. This, and the opportunity to take part in the Oxfordshire annual art exhibition programme for schools, is a developing strength.

107. In Key Stage 1, pupils investigate possibilities in a range of materials and processes, such as painting, collage and printing. They explore systematically and apply what they have learned with increasing confidence. Younger pupils use materials with care and an understanding of their properties and potential. For instance, in Year 2 pupils explained how they use tissue paper to create a representation of a red pepper that they were working from. In this lesson the provision of real fruit and vegetables provided all pupils with the opportunity to make personal choices and use a range of materials to record what they see, and touch. Pupils talk readily about their own, and each other's work. In doing so they show an emerging understanding of the qualities of materials and can describe what they have done, for instance how to mix the particular colours they have used in their work.

108. Conversations with older pupils in Key Stage 2 showed that they are able to discuss and describe the subject matter and stylistic conventions of various artists and art movements. They could reflect on the work of the Pop artist Andy Warhol and understood how his work drew upon the popular and contemporary cultural imagery of the 1960s. In their own work they used these ideas to develop images related to their own contemporary heroes and icons. In doing so pupils demonstrated an ability to carry out research and an understanding of how artists develop ideas. Some pupils have used ICT to explore ideas for art, for instance they have used the work of Mondrian as a starting point for computer generated art.

109. Work undertaken as part of Art Week is often bold, exploratory and exciting. Some of this work is large scale and includes three-dimensional work such as a large sculpture woven from lengths of willow. This is a strength. Pupil evaluations show enthusiasm and a willingness to experiment. At other times opportunities are provided for pupils to work on projects which also enable them to work with subject experts. Work with the Oxfordshire Art Adviser to produce large banners using oil pastels and resist techniques are a case in point. Through such events pupils are encouraged to take risks, be creative and imaginative. Although the quality of work produced at such events is good there is less evidence of work of such quality being produced at other times.

110. By and large the individual skills of pupils as demonstrated in normal curriculum activity are satisfactory. There is little evidence of the systematic development of drawing through the school and this inhibits the quality of work and the progress of pupils. The further development of key subject specific skills, such as drawing, will enable standards to be further improved. Where art is used to supplement work in other subjects the quality is sometimes low, for instance in the practice of 'colouring in' to illustrate or decorate exercise books.

111. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They take their work seriously and are concerned to do well. Pupils are good at managing their work and their materials. There is evidence in the written evaluation of pupils that they enjoy and are enthusiastic about the opportunities provided by events such as Art Week.

112. Teaching in art is at least satisfactory and at times it is good or better. Teachers engage pupils well in discussion about art and artists. They provide interesting reference material and encourage pupils to find out more about the subject. This is supported by homework and displays, as well as by teacher led presentations and discussions. The teachers' expectations of pupils are high in many respects. For instance, they expect pupils to follow up ideas through homework and to take their work seriously. Where teaching is good lessons are well managed, and materials are carefully prepared and well organised. Teaching was very good, for instance, where careful preparation and first hand experience of fruit and vegetables was used to develop interesting and diverse collages. Teachers work very well with the school's committed and professional classroom support assistants and this effective partnership is a strength.

113. The curriculum planned is new this year and is based on the nationally produced optional units of work; as such it is likely to be appropriately broad and balanced. All units will include references to the work of artists and the overall scheme embraces an appropriate range of materials, techniques and media. However, units will need to be adapted to the particular circumstances and resources of the school and there is no systematic monitoring of progression, or planning for underpinning skills such as drawing.

114. The policy for art was originally written in 1996. It is to be reviewed and this is appropriate. The last inspection noted weaknesses in assessment and monitoring in the subject. These have not yet been addressed. The school is beginning to consider a strategy to support National Curriculum assessment in art. Some steps are being taken to compile a portfolio of moderated work, which will be helpful. The procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are, at present, informal. The school recognises the need to develop these aspects of the management of the subject which are currently weaknesses.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. A small evidence base was available. Only two lessons were observed, one in each key stage. Samples of pupils' work were available. On the basis of this, standards are in line with national expectations. Key Stage 1 pupils described how they made a fruit salad and what hygiene considerations were needed. They had investigated different ways of joining materials. In an activity to make a purse, pupils had examined a variety of actual purses as well as photographs, and considered different styles, sizes and fastenings before embarking on making their own purse. They learnt to make patterns larger to allow for seams and listed the materials they needed. In Key Stage 2 pupils had examined a number of different types of pencil cases and thought carefully about the qualities needed, such as strength, if they could be washed and ease of opening. Good quality annotated drawings had been produced. They had experimented with different types of stitching to decide which would be best for the seams. In a Year 6 lesson pupils researched information about different types of shelter and then found out detailed information about a specific chosen shelter. They produced good quality three-dimensional drawings, or two-dimensional drawings from different views. They explained which materials they would choose for particular purposes on the basis of their properties. In both key stages good quality final products were produced with appropriate attention to finish in most cases.

116. The small number of lessons observed means a secure overall judgement about the quality of teaching cannot be made, but in those lessons observed, teaching was at least good. It is evident from these lessons and the work displayed that teachers have a good understanding of the subject. There are some good examples of links with other subjects, for example the use of symmetry in mathematics to create patterns, or the use of ICT to create designs. Useful prompt sheets guide pupils in recording their work and there is good use of technical vocabulary. Pupils clearly take pride in producing products of quality and talked with interest about their work.

117. Since the last inspection the school has adopted national guidance in the form of a scheme of work, which is being implemented successfully. This has remedied omissions identified in coverage of the programmes of study identified in the last report. Assessment arrangements have been recently introduced which will enable the tracking of knowledge, understanding and skills. As yet there is no portfolio of work to exemplify different levels of attainment but this has been identified by the new co-ordinator as a future development. The co-ordinator has monitored planning and pupils' work and lesson observation is planned to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

118. It was only possible to observe one lesson in geography and four lessons in history during the inspection (1 lesson in Key Stage 1 and 4 lessons in Key Stage 2). Further evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work, teaching plans, displays of work and discussions with staff and pupils. This is a larger evidence base than the last inspection when no teaching of either subject was seen.

119. Standards in both subjects meet those expected nationally of pupils age seven and age eleven. This is because teaching uses a range of interesting resources and relevant contexts. For example, pupils visit the local area to extend their geographical and historical knowledge and understanding. In Year 3, pupils demonstrate good knowledge of the locality, use Ordnance Survey maps effectively and work well independently. In Year 1 pupils acquire a sense of past and present from their study of old toys. In Year 5 pupils learn about life in Tudor times from using secondary and primary resources. Good

preparation is made for visits to places of historical interest such as Sulgrave Manor. In Year 6, excellent video resources enable pupils to understand the changes in Britain since 1930. Effective teaching enables pupils to devise good questionnaires with which to interview their parents about life in the 1960s. Pupils' attitudes to the subjects are good overall. Homework is used well and pupils are encouraged to use the local library and museum for research. As a result of these factors, pupils in their last year in school are confident to talk about the past and to illustrate the passage of time, for example, by creating personal timelines.

120. Pupils with English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress in all classes. Those more able pupils are making good progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress overall in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are making steady progress although on occasions this is too variable. The quality of their written work is not as good as it might be because teaching does not provide a wide enough range of resources or strategies to support the learning. For example in a lesson in Year 5 pupils were required to use pictorial evidence to write a report about life in Tudor times, this was too difficult for them. They needed examples of simple questions they might ask or observations they might make.

121. Teaching shows imagination, for example in Key Stage 1 where the creation of a classroom museum provides a motivating and effective context so that pupils understand the relevance of a museum to an historian. Well-chosen artefacts support a good quality learning environment. Open questions are used well in each key stage to enable pupils of all levels of attainment to contribute to the lessons. In a very good lesson in Year 6, effective teaching ensures that pupils acquire the skill of devising open questions themselves, to extend their own knowledge and understanding.

122. The geography and history co-ordinator has made a positive start since assuming the role in September. An appropriate audit of the subjects is being undertaken with external advice from the LEA. A good beginning has been made to ensure that other subjects are seen as important tools to increase knowledge and understanding. For example in Year 3, studies of the locality, mathematics and ICT are used effectively to establish databases from which pupils find answers to the questions they raise. In Year 5, note-making successfully combines work in literacy to work in history. There is an appropriate action plan that identifies a timeline of improvements.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

123. Standards in ICT are above average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Much of this improvement is due to the development of an ICT suite of computers, the provision of a clear scheme of work, a generous time allocation and the positive efforts of the curriculum co-ordinator. Pupils are making good progress.

124. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can create simple pictures by selecting and placing different geometrical shapes and then colouring them in. All can produce a simple picture this way, with the more able being able to produce a face or a body. Pupils are good at navigating through a CD based programme, using hyperlinks and hot spots and can complete simple set activities from the CD. At Key Stage 2, all pupils can logon and select a programme. They can save their work to a personal file or to the hard disc and can print it out if required. Younger pupils can enter a set of data and produce a graph from it. Most pupils can then change the type of graph – bar, line, pie etc. – and some can evaluate and modify their work. They use databases to answer questions and use word processing

programmes, including changing font and using the spell checker. They have experience of programming floor robots and access the Internet for research. They use a variety of software to create diagrams and objects such as a pencil case. Older pupils use the computer to design a new classroom layout, by copying and pasting elements and then moving, resizing and rotating them. They evaluate their work and modify it to improve it. Lower attaining pupils achieve standards appropriate for their prior attainment and make good progress. All pupils have experience of a variety of software including Word, Colour Magic and Number Magic. They use spreadsheets and search engines and the Internet, incorporating text and images to support their research work. The higher attaining pupils understand the underlying architecture of web site design and the principles of web navigation.

125. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 and 2 is always at least satisfactory and is often good. At Key Stage 1, planning is thorough, with clear objectives building on learning made in previous lessons. In the good lessons, teachers had a good command of the subject, had planned appropriate activities and had developed excellent relationships with their pupils. In the satisfactory lessons teachers needed to give more individual help to those pupils who needed it and needed to take more time over the initial explanation of the task. At Key Stage 2 lessons were again well planned and presented as part of a logical sequence of lessons.

126. Teachers manage lessons well as a result of well-established routines. Whole class teaching is used to good effect to demonstrate skills and procedures and help pupils understand the general application of their work. Good use is made of the ICT suite of computers, so that pupils can have individual time using them and teachers give good individual support to those pupils who need it. Lessons are well prepared beforehand with appropriate resources and materials in place. Most teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject.

127. Pupils share resources effectively and work well together, taking turns to use the keyboard and mouse when necessary. They willingly talk about their work and can describe and recall the purpose of earlier work. All pupils were very keen and had no difficulty staying on task. In most classes, good working relationships existed between teachers and pupils. Pupils were confident in their use of computers and enjoyed working with them.

128. The subject is well led by an experienced and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has developed a basic policy and has adopted an effective scheme of work with which staff are becoming familiar. As yet the co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching. The excellent ICT suite supports teaching effectively across the other subjects of the curriculum. The school now has its own web site. Most teachers have completed the New Opportunities Fund training and further training is planned. The school gives a generous time allocation to ICT. Pupils benefit from using the well-equipped computer suite. Nevertheless, resources will need to be extended to classrooms to support teaching across all subjects.

## **MUSIC**

129. During the time of the inspection, it was not possible to observe music being taught in Key Stage 1. Therefore, it is not possible to make judgements on attainment and progress in Key Stage 1 or on improvement since the last inspection. However, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is in line with standards expected nationally and pupils make sound progress over the key stage. Improvement in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection has also been satisfactory.



130. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sing tunefully in assemblies and in the weekly singing practice, showing good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm and consequently sustaining a melody. They sing a two part round and provide an ostinato line to accompany the melody. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils follow and clap different rhythms set by the teacher. They understand how music helps to set mood and they create a piece of music using untuned instruments that changes to reflect different moods. Subsequently, they perform this piece of music, evaluating and amending their work as necessary. Other pupils identify the notes played on a xylophone and describe the sounds made by a variety of instruments with beaters and they know the difference between tuned and untuned instruments. Older pupils follow more complex rhythm patterns and most know how to classify simple pieces of music according to the pulse of the music – either pulses of three or of four. They could then add tuned wooden or metallic instruments to the music with the same pulse. Other pupils sing well when practising popular songs and other songs relating to their history topic.

131. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. All lessons were well planned, built on pupils' previous learning and clearly related to the school's agreed scheme of work. The objectives for the lesson are included in the planning, although these are not always made clear to pupils. The most effective teaching demonstrates good subject knowledge and well-chosen activities organised effectively. In the instances of unsatisfactory teaching, subject knowledge and teaching methods are less secure with the result that some pupils are not motivated to pay attention.

132. Leadership and management of music are satisfactory as present. The newly appointed music co-ordinator has the ability and enthusiasm to effectively move the subject forward. Her specialist music knowledge will help in this. A limited policy for music is in place, but the school does have a comprehensive scheme of work for music to help those teachers less confident in the teaching of music. The co-ordinator has begun work on assessment and monitoring and evaluation but further developments in these areas are needed.

133. Sensible steps are being taken to improve the teaching. Resources have been purchased and audited and professional development has been planned. The co-ordinator has begun to increase pupils' opportunities to learn music. Instrumental tuition is now available on a wide range of musical instruments. At present 13 per cent of pupils take advantage of this opportunity. The newly formed choir is well attended and is proving very popular. The Chipping Norton Youth Orchestra is now based at the school. Music performances and productions are planned and the subject is clearly moving forward.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

134. Standards in physical education are average throughout the school. This is similar to the standard achieved at the last inspection. Most pupils in Year 2 are able to move around the hall walking, running and skipping without bumping into each other even when their space is restricted. They can throw, bounce and catch softballs with reasonable accuracy. Higher attaining pupils throw softballs accurately and hit a target. They throw with the appropriate degree of force for the activity. Lower attaining pupils find such skill difficult and their balls are thrown too hard to be accurate. Pupils in Year 4 devise a game in groups with appropriate rules, using a given amount of apparatus. During two lessons observed, they discussed their games and agreed upon improvements. Year 6 pupils devised a dance routine linking appropriate skills, techniques and ideas to their performances. Most pupils generally make average progress in physical education, but, sometimes, they make progress that is good. This is when the teacher intervenes and

discusses directly with individual or groups of pupils how they might improve their movements. This occurred in lessons in Years 2 and 6 during the inspection.

135. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and generally sound in Key Stage 2. This is a slight improvement since the last inspection. Good planning of lessons is a feature of all lessons observed. Teachers set clear objectives for lessons and devise activities that are appropriate for achieving them. Activities encourage pupils to think, work co-operatively in groups and evaluate their performances. This is a strength. Most pupils respond enthusiastically to the activities set and work hard at them. In the best lessons, teachers help pupils to use their initiative well and conduct the lesson in a calm, quiet and safe manner. Lessons are well prepared with the equipment to be used at hand. Pupils are trained to get out and put away any equipment they have used during the lesson. However, on occasions, there are weaknesses in the teaching which need to be corrected. During the inspection, noise levels were too high in a number of classes and, in these lessons, it took too long for the teacher to secure pupils' attention. This presents safety issues if teachers are unable to be heard above the general noise of lessons. A more general point is that some teachers do not teach pupils how to improve. Examples of pupils' performances were seen in all lessons but, on most occasions, pupils who were observing were not encouraged to help others to improve nor did the teachers suggest improvements.

136. The co-ordinator for physical education is assuming the role on a temporary basis for this term only. This makes any longer term planning difficult. The scheme of work is useful and helps teachers plan their lessons appropriately. Unusually this term, there are no opportunities for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities. The school hopes to re-establish this provision as soon as possible.