

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBEYMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Abbeymead, Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115601

Headteacher: Mrs M McCloy

Reporting inspector: Mrs Christine Huard
27290

Dates of inspection: 11th - 14th June 2002

Inspection number: 196173

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mead Road Abbeymead Gloucester
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Parker
Date of previous inspection:	November 1997

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8991	Mrs P Goldsack	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
30669	Mrs M Sandercock	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities	
12764	Ms W Thomas	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education English as an additional language	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
26232	Mr C Grove	Team inspector	Geography Information and communication technology	
21992	Mrs J Newing	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbeymead Primary School is situated on an attractive site on the outskirts of Gloucester. It is larger than most primary schools. The 396 pupils mostly attend from the local area but a substantial minority are from further afield, some from the other side of Gloucester. In social and economic terms, the area is above average. Children join the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday and their attainment on entry is broadly average. Overall, there are slightly more boys than girls, with the biggest imbalance in Year 5, where there are 12 (20 per cent) more boys than girls. Most of the pupils in the school are of white ethnic origin, although a range of ethnic groups is represented in the school. Nearly all pupils speak English fluently but there are seven (two per cent) for whom English is an additional language; this is about average. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English and receive additional support. Fifteen pupils (four per cent) are eligible for free school meals, this is below the national average. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs, which is average. Six pupils (1.5 per cent) have statements of special educational need; this is broadly average. Additional support is provided for pupils who have difficulties with learning, dyslexia and Asperger's Syndrome.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Abbeymead is a good school with many very good features. Pupils are attaining standards that are above average overall and higher than those indicated by last summer's national tests. They work hard and have good attitudes towards their work, which has a positive impact on their achievements during lessons and over time. The school has effective strategies to promote inclusion and equal opportunities, and pupils achieve well, whatever their prior attainment. Pupils are prepared well for life in a culturally diverse society. Teaching is good overall and much very good teaching was observed. This enables pupils to learn effectively. The headteacher's leadership and management are outstanding. She has a very clear vision for the future, which is shared by staff, governors and parents alike. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the headteacher are outstanding, and she is well supported by the senior management team, subject co-ordinators and governors.
- Standards are above average overall.
- Teaching is good overall and enables pupils to learn effectively.
- The provision for children in the Reception year is very good.
- The very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of the pupils have a positive impact on their learning.
- The school cares for its pupils highly effectively through careful monitoring of their personal and academic development.

What could be improved

- Some subjects are not covered in as much depth as others because there is an inconsistency in the amount of time spent on each one.
- Time is not always used to best effect, particularly when lessons are split due to fixed timetabling arrangements.
- The session in between break and lunch is too long for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and sometimes leads to them losing concentration.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1997. Since then it has made good progress and successfully addressed the key issues identified then. The quality of teaching is much improved and pupils learn effectively because they are interested in what they are being taught and consequently they concentrate well. The curriculum is now broad and includes all the subjects identified in the National Curriculum, however the amount of time allocated to each subject is not always appropriate and requires further adjustment. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been greatly improved and better teaching enables pupils to attain much higher standards than previously. Monitoring of classroom teaching is very

good and occurs across all subjects, enabling the school to clearly identify appropriate areas for further development. Assessment procedures have been particularly well developed and methods of recording and the use of data to effect improvement across the curriculum are highly effective. After the last inspection, standards in national tests fell considerably. Since the appointment of a new headteacher, standards rose a little in 2000, with a much greater improvement in 2001. The pupils are now achieving well and inspection evidence suggests that standards are likely to continue to rise. Because of the very good leadership and management, the dedicated commitment of the staff and the very strong support of parents, the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	C	C	D
Mathematics	D	D	B	D
Science	E	E	B	C

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

In 2001, the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, they were below average in English and mathematics and average in science. However, pupils' performance in the 2001 tests was much better than might have been expected, given their results in the national tests at the end of Year 2. Results over the last five years have fluctuated, dropping until 1999, with a slight improvement in 2000 and a greater one in 2001. Although the trend of improvement overall is below that shown nationally, this is due to the earlier decline in standards which has been halted and turned around. Evidence from the inspection shows a continuing trend of improvement and confirms that pupils achieve standards which are good in relation to their attainment when they first enter the school. Standards are generally above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The school exceeded the targets it set for English and mathematics in 2001, and is likely to meet the targets set for 2002. There is no discernible difference in the achievements of boys and girls.

Pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2001 attained results in national tests which were above average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science showed standards to be well above average. When compared to similar schools¹, results were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. In the Reception year, children achieve standards which show they are already meeting the standards expected in all six areas of learning, and are likely to exceed them in their knowledge and understanding of the world, personal, social, physical and creative development.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because class teachers take good account of the targets set in their individual education plans when planning work for them, and pupils receive good support when withdrawn for individual help. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well because they receive good support, enabling them to participate fully in class activities.

Pupils attain well overall in the foundation subjects. Standards in art and information and communication technology are well above what is expected. The latter represents particularly good progress, as it was a key issue at the last inspection. In design and technology, geography, history and physical education, standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Standards in music are above expectations, but there are

¹ Similar schools comparisons are made between schools which have a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals.

some considerable strengths, particularly in singing. Standards in religious education meet those required by the locally agreed syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn and really appear to enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils are friendly, polite and show respect for each other and adults in the school.
Personal development and relationships	These are very good overall. Pupils help around the school and accept responsibilities willingly. The school council allows pupils to contribute to decision making. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are very good.
Attendance	This is good and above average. Lessons begin and end punctually.

Pupils' attitudes help them learn effectively because they concentrate well, and work independently. The excellent rapport between pupils and teachers has a positive impact on pupils' personal development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Children receive a very good start to their education in the Reception classes, where teaching is very good and particularly well matched to the children's prior attainment. Teaching observed was good overall and some very good and excellent teaching was seen throughout the school. Evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that standards in teaching are consistently good. The school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy effectively, and teaching of these key skills is good, enabling them to be used well across the curriculum. Teaching of English and mathematics is good overall and pupils learn effectively because areas for development have been carefully identified and focused upon. For example, in order to raise standards in mathematics and reinforce their learning, pupils have been taught how to use and interpret data in other subjects, such as science and geography.

Pupils learn effectively because lesson introductions are lively and successfully hold their interest. Class discipline is good and pupils listen attentively and respond thoughtfully to well-focused questions, which enhance and extend their learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Computers are used very effectively to support learning in many subjects. Teachers use assessment information very well to help plan future lessons. This means that tasks are well matched to pupils' needs and enable them to achieve their full potential. Pupils have opportunities to carry out independent investigations in several subjects, particularly art and history, which develop their research skills, and there are many opportunities for pupils to utilise the skills they have been taught and carry out experimental activities in science. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good and the school meets the needs of all its pupils effectively through careful planning and paying heed to the requirements of pupils' individual education plans.

There are very few weaknesses. Time is not always used effectively. For example, a Year 6 numeracy session at the end of a long morning came after a strenuous dance session. Too much had been planned for this short session and pupils were tired and rather unresponsive, despite the best efforts of the teacher.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and broad curriculum. A range of visits and visitors enhances the basic provision. However, the curriculum is not as well balanced as it could be and some subjects receive too much taught time and others too little. This means the depth of coverage in some subjects is uneven.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are of a good quality, specific to each pupil, and have set relevant and achievable targets, which are regularly reviewed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Work is planned with a specialist teacher from the local authority, who provides good quality support on an individual or small-group basis.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good in all areas. There are opportunities for reflection in collective worship and many lessons; pupils have a strong sense of responsibility towards each other and the wider environment. Pupils' cultural awareness is particularly well developed through the 'World Awareness Week' held each year.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school provides a very secure, caring and supportive environment in which its pupils can grow and develop. Pupils' personal and academic development is monitored very effectively.

The school's curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances pupils' learning. There is very good provision for the pupils' welfare and their health and personal education. The school works well with parents and encourages them to participate fully in the school community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has a clear sense of direction for the school. She is well supported by her senior management team, as well as by year and subject co-ordinators. There is a very strong spirit of teamwork and commitment to continued improvement among staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are committed and support the headteacher and school very effectively. They carry out their responsibilities efficiently. They play an active part in the school's development and improvement and are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses its results, teaching and curriculum very effectively and takes good action to improve. It consults widely on its further development. The school improvement plan is a good quality working document. It outlines immediate priorities very well and effectively communicates the long-term vision.
The strategic use of resources	Very good overall. Funds are directed to priority areas and their use is controlled and monitored well.

The leadership and management of the school are highly effective. The headteacher provides excellent leadership in maintaining the commitment to raising standards and the school's progress towards its development priorities. The management of the school is generally effective in seeking to ensure best value in its spending decisions by questioning what it does and ensuring that funds are spent wisely. The school has sufficient qualified teachers and support staff. The quality of resources is generally good and they are used well. The accommodation is of good quality, and the school makes very good use of the space it has

available.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children enjoy school and make good progress because the teaching is good.• The school has high expectations of both work and behaviour.• The school makes parents feel part of the school and they find the whole staff very approachable.• The school is very well led and managed.• The school helps their children become mature and responsible.• There is a very good range of activities outside of lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A small minority of parents expressed concerns about the provision made for pupils with special educational needs.

The inspection team concurs with parents' positive views. The provision for pupils with special educational needs was closely scrutinised and found to be very good, with pupils catered for effectively through small-group or individual support, as appropriate. Class teachers are very well aware of the needs of all their pupils and plan for them very well when additional support is not available.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Reception year with broadly average attainment, although within this there is a wide range. During their reception year, children make good progress and achieve well because of the exciting range of activities provided for them. The vast majority will meet the expected goals in all areas of learning² and many are likely to exceed them in language, literacy and communication, knowledge and understanding of the world, social, personal, creative and physical development.
2. In the national tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2001, results in reading and writing were above the national average and those in mathematics were well above average. When compared to similar schools, results were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. This indicates very good progress over time. Pupils in Year 6 attained results which were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Compared to similar schools, results in English and mathematics were below average and those in science were average.
3. The results at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over the last few years. They fell significantly in the two years following the previous inspection and because of this, the overall trend of improvement is currently below that observed nationally. However, following the appointment of a new headteacher, the declining trend has been halted and reversed. A slight improvement was achieved in 2000, and a much greater one in 2001. The pupils' performance was particularly good when compared with their prior attainment in the national tests at the end of Year 2, four years ago. A more rigorous approach towards monitoring the quality of standards of teaching and the careful analysis and evaluation of results have led to the identification of areas requiring development, and appropriate action has been taken to improve.
4. The results of tests at the end of Year 2 reflected the school's trend of recent improvement, with steady gains having been made in both 2000 and 2001. There has been a steady improvement in reading, writing and mathematics since 1999 and the overall trend of improvement for these pupils clearly exceeds that shown nationally. Although the boys performed better than the girls in reading and writing tests in Year 2, the inspection found that the performance of boys and girls was broadly the same throughout the school.
5. Inspection evidence confirms that the improved results of 2001 are likely to be at least sustained in 2002 and in all probability bettered. The standards of work observed at the end of Year 6, both during the inspection and in pupils' work since September, exceeded those expected in almost every subject.
6. Standards in English in Year 6 are above average and pupils' reading skills are well above average. Writing is above average because pupils are now taught basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation systematically and thoroughly from the time they enter the school. Pupils have the opportunity to write at length and for different purposes. Teachers choose tasks and subjects which will interest and stimulate pupils. For example, Year 5 pupils debated and composed convincing arguments for and against school uniform, following these up by writing persuasive letters to the Prime Minister on the same subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have made particularly good progress and achieve particularly well because they have had to learn a great deal in a short length of time. Handwriting is well taught and pupils throughout the school take a pride in the presentation of their work, so their skills are reinforced in every subject area.
7. In Year 2, pupils are achieving above average levels in their writing. They write in a range of styles and are also introduced to note-taking skills at an early age, which serves them very well in other subjects such as history and geography. Reading is well above average throughout the school because it is

² The 'Early Learning Goals' for children under five refer to personal, social and emotional development, language literacy and communication, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development.

taught systematically, and pupils have ample opportunities to practise their reading skills. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of literature and are expected to read regularly at home, and the majority do. This has a positive impact on their progress. Pupils achieve well in English because their progress is monitored carefully, which enables teachers to ensure their needs are met effectively.

8. Pupils are attaining above average standards in mathematics across the school. They achieve well because the numeracy strategy is well taught, classes are set challenging targets and staff are confident and knowledgeable. In addition, careful analysis has been made of results in national test and appropriate areas identified as requiring improvement. There is thorough coverage of all areas of the mathematics curriculum, with it being used well across other subjects. For example, the gathering and interpretation of data are used highly effectively in geography and science as well as in mathematics, and this has led to improvement in the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Inspection evidence shows that appropriate work is provided to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are set for mathematics and this enables teaching to be more focused and tasks planned within a narrower ability range.
9. Pupils' attainment in science is above average in Years 1 and 2, and well above average in Years 3 to 6. It is very well taught and achievement is very good because the curriculum is built around investigative and experimental activities. This means that pupils' enquiry skills develop effectively from an early stage. Scientific vocabulary is introduced from the time pupils enter the school, and the quality of independent recording is a particularly good feature.
10. Overall, there has been a good improvement in the standards attained since the last inspection, despite the fall in standards until 2000. Pupils are achieving well in English and mathematics and very well in science. The school has set targets for 2002 in English and mathematics which are challenging, but achievable.
11. From the observation of lessons and through the examination of their work, pupils throughout the school are achieving at a good level overall. The school tracks pupils' progress carefully in all subjects, which means that lessons are based on pupils' prior knowledge and teachers are assured of pupils' understanding before moving on to the next stage of learning.
12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans. Planning is very good and the support staff work effectively with the pupils in lessons and also when they are withdrawn for small-group or individual work. The support is so effective because the staff are very well aware of pupils' targets and the means by which these might be achieved. Standards achieved by higher attaining pupils are very good, because stimulating and challenging extension activities are provided for them, enabling them to be challenged to fulfil their potential. Appropriate arrangements have been made for the few pupils for whom English is an additional language to receive additional support from a specialist teacher from the local authority. As result these pupils are achieving well and are able to join in all class activities.
13. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in ICT is well above the expected standards. Pupils are gaining a wide experience in all elements of the subject. Skills are taught systematically and progressively through the school. The introduction of a computer suite is of considerable benefit to the school, but the pupils are also taught to shoot and edit video film footage, compose and refine musical compositions, and use digital cameras. Older pupils can use the interactive whiteboards and prepare PowerPoint presentations. Levels of attainment in art are well above what is expected. The vibrant and exciting displays of pupils' work around the school demonstrate an advanced level of knowledge and understanding of a wide range of techniques and the use of a variety of media. Standards in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are also above the expected levels. In religious education, pupils are meeting the objectives of the local Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 6 and there are considerable strengths in much of the work covered. Pupils show a good level of learning, which involves a good understanding of the tenets of a range of faiths. In some areas, particularly history and music, the standards of the work seen were high but not all elements of the subjects have been covered in sufficient depth because too little time is allocated to them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes toward school are very good and have improved since the last inspection. They work hard, take pride in their achievements and are keen to do well. Pupils listen very carefully to teachers and each other and ask questions and offer ideas and solutions with confidence. These positive traits make a significant contribution to their learning and add to the school's lively atmosphere. The direct link between challenging, well-taught lessons and pupils' conscientious, hardworking response was evident throughout the inspection. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils' high level of commitment and concentration enabled them to use different strategies for calculation and discuss which was the most effective method. Pupils' very high level of interest is also reflected in their participation in after-school clubs, sports, music and activities within the community.
15. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and throughout the school has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. This judgement confirms the views expressed by parents. All members of the staff have high expectations of behaviour and pupils rarely disappoint them. The school's positive approach to discipline and anti-bullying is very successful and pupils clearly know what is expected of them. Pupils accept the progressive sanctions for misbehaviour as fair and also look forward to being rewarded with an 'awardogram' at assembly or entry in the Champion Children's Book. There are more specific strategies such as behaviour contracts for pupils who have particular difficulties following the rules and these are very successful. Pupils display high levels of self-discipline as they move around the building and outdoors. Lunch is enjoyed sociably in the classrooms, and outdoor play sessions are boisterous and good-natured. Boys and girls include each other in games and play well together. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection and Year 6 pupils proudly hold the view that it does not exist in their school. Any rare cases of oppressive behaviour are addressed immediately according to the school's anti-bullying policy. Pupils treat books, equipment and displays with respect. As at the last inspection, there have been no exclusions over the last reporting year.
16. Relationships within the school and pupils' personal development continue to be very good. Pupils become more responsible as they progress through the school and this contributes to their good level of personal development. Children in the Reception classes sensibly deliver registers to the office and tidy up toys and equipment. Pupils in each class take turns distributing and caring for resources. They work well in pairs, and small groups of older pupils work productively in different areas of the building without direct adult supervision. Pupils make full use of the learning opportunities in the computer suite and their mature handling of this equipment contributes to their high level of expertise. Because they are directly involved in the life of the school, pupils demonstrate a high level of maturity and independence. Those in Years 5 and 6 are good role models and often escort prospective parents around the site. Year 6 pupils have had training in conflict resolution and negotiation and many volunteer to act as peer mediators at breaktime and help younger pupils sort out differences. During the inspection a hard working group of Year 6 pupils led a first-rate whole-school assembly with a PowerPoint presentation on the importance of behaving responsibly. Homework across the school is taken seriously and completed as assigned.
17. Mutual respect is the cornerstone of the excellent relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils themselves. Lessons in personal, social and moral education help pupils to appreciate cultural and racial diversity very well. Pupils are attentive during assemblies and reflect on moral and religious subjects with great respect. The school's racial equality policy is implemented fully and there is 'zero tolerance' for name calling of any nature. The quality of racial harmony within the school is excellent. Pupils' enthusiastic participation in the school's annual World Awareness Week helps to support their understanding and tolerance of different ethnic and cultural traditions very effectively.
18. Pupils like school very much and their attendance has improved and is now good. The rate of attendance is 95 per cent, which is slightly higher than the national average. It would be even better if all parents complied with the school's request and refrained from taking family holidays during term time. Nearly all pupils arrive promptly each morning and the low level of unauthorised absence is slightly below the national figure. Teachers and pupils have a good awareness of time, and lessons start and end punctually, with no time wasted between sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching observed was good and ranged from excellent to satisfactory. Eighty

three lessons were observed during the inspection. Of these, seven per cent were excellent, 32 per cent very good, 43 per cent good and 16 per cent satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in all classes. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved significantly since the last inspection, when 13 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory and only 7 per cent of lessons were judged very good or better. This improved teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and has been instrumental in raising standards across the school.

20. Teaching in the Reception classes is of a consistently high quality and very good overall. In the lessons observed, the teaching ranged from good to excellent. The teachers provide the children with high quality learning experiences, and have high expectations for children's learning. Planning ensures balanced development in each of the six areas of learning, with effective and interesting links between subjects. Teachers take good account of the children's ability when planning so that tasks set match their needs. Activities are well structured and ensure the consolidation and development of skills. The teachers ensure that they provide challenging work in a stimulating environment. Lessons include a rich variety of tasks. Some of these develop children's independence and others need adult support. Very effective use is made of support staff, who are well prepared and who provide unobtrusive and useful help.
21. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Well-qualified and experienced support staff provide good support which meets the particular needs of individuals or small groups. Work is well planned, based on careful assessment of achievement and well matched to individual education plans and the demands of the curriculum. Targets are clearly identified within the plans as are the means by which they may be attained. Class teachers make clear reference to pupils' targets when planning their class work. This enables the pupils to learn very effectively and make good gains in their learning. Higher attaining pupils have been identified and receive teaching which meets their particular needs, covering a range of subjects in all classes. Tasks are designed to be challenging, but fun, and extend the pupils' thinking.
22. Although there are only a few pupils with English as an additional language, the school is providing good, well-structured support for them in class and with the aid of a specialist support teacher. Pupils are taught individually and the focus, which is successful, is on developing vocabulary and skills to enable them to participate fully in class activities.
23. The great majority of teaching is well planned, motivating and exciting, with the result that pupils have a real zest for learning. The excellent rapport between the teachers and the pupils makes learning fun and enjoyable because the approach is lively, vivacious and highly convincing. This was particularly evident during a Year 5 dance lesson based on the topic of Victorian toys and playground games. Firm discipline mixed with considerable humour created a relaxed and enjoyable working atmosphere. Through skilful questioning, which involved all pupils initially, pupils were keen to show what they already knew about the Victorians and the games children played and the toys they used. The music selected - children's songs and rhymes played on a barrel organ - enhanced the quality of movement and pupils' sensitivity very effectively. They worked well in their pairs experimenting with movements and encouraged by praise and useful comment from the teacher. For example, they were advised to maintain eye contact and focus carefully on their imaginary diabalo.
24. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum are good. This is partly due to the policy of writing a review of each year's work, which is a useful guide to all teachers and enables them to understand the point pupils have reached within each subject of the curriculum. Teachers also show a flexibility and a willingness to move between year group classes. This is good practice and ensures that staff have a detailed knowledge of what is covered in all subjects in each year and have a very good understanding of the abilities and achievements of pupils at every stage of their development. Because teachers consistently display high levels of competence pupils can acquire knowledge and skills at a rapid rate. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils in Year 4 could explain and identify features of regular and irregular shapes. Through skilful questioning they could explain why a range of polygons was or was not symmetrical. Adept questions encouraged the pupils to make use of previous knowledge, enabled them to sort and chart a range of shapes successfully using Venn diagrams, and ensured accuracy in the pupils' responses.
25. The teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy is good. Correct terminology is used

throughout. Literacy and numeracy are reinforced effectively through their use in other subjects. For example, pupils in a Year 3 history lesson wrote the diary of a Roman soldier after having used their developing research skills effectively to find information from a range of reference books. Pupils in Year 4 measured accurately in science and recorded the results in a range of graphs. They then made an analysis as to whether a scatter graph or bar graph was most useful for retrieving the information they required.

26. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' achievements. Teaching methods are effective and highly appropriate and involve a range of different strategies. Wherever possible, first-hand experience is provided. For example, when Year 1 pupils were studying forces, they were invited to use a range of outdoor toys to find out which force was required in order for them to move or work effectively. This immediately set the tone for the lesson and pupils were instantly interested and motivated. Teachers challenge and probe the extent of pupils' knowledge continuously. They encourage them to think for themselves and expect them to research independently when they are not sure about a piece of information. Pupils are carefully directed to where the appropriate information they will require may be found, and many of the displays around the school have a range of books to enable them to do this.
27. Time is used very well in most classes. This results in a brisk pace to pupils' learning and was a strong feature in nearly all lessons. Most teachers make clear to pupils exactly how long they have to complete each task; this ensures that concentration is sustained and is particularly effective when pupils are working in pairs or groups. However, because the morning session is very long for pupils in Years 3 to 6, pupils sometimes become listless and lose concentration. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, which followed a strenuous dance lesson. The lesson content was not sufficiently inspiring to sustain pupils' concentration and the time was not well used.
28. Class management is very good overall. There is an excellent rapport between teachers and pupils. There is a very good balance of firmness and praise. However, because pupils are encouraged to be so involved in their own learning, there is a need for a high degree of understanding of the need for self-discipline. This is taught well from an early stage and managed very sensitively by teachers.
29. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. Teachers constantly assess pupils' learning during lessons. Marking is used effectively and ensures that pupils understand how successful they have been. Suggestions for improvement are useful and followed up well by pupils. Whole-class sessions at the end of each lesson give the teacher a very good overview of pupils' understanding of what has been learned.
30. Homework is set on a regular basis. It is consistently set in all classes, there is an expectation that it will be completed and pupils are very well aware of what is expected of them. It supports class work well and involves parents effectively in their children's learning.

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

31. The curriculum planned for the children in the Reception classes has improved significantly since the last inspection and now takes full account of the expectations for the Foundation Stage. Planning through the year very effectively provides a wide range of activities for the children across the six areas of learning. Very good links are made between the work in the different areas of learning so that, for example, the work in knowledge and understanding of the world strongly supports the development of speaking and listening. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging children to ask questions and express their views, with the result that children have developed a good level of confidence by the time they leave Reception. Each week, teachers plan the work carefully to ensure that all children experience a very rich and varied curriculum in a very supportive learning environment. All children, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special needs, have access to all the activities and take a full part in lessons.
32. The school provides a broad curriculum offering a rich and stimulating range of learning opportunities for pupils. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are well established and enable pupils to make good progress. However, there are some weaknesses in the way in which the curriculum is organised. Whilst all subjects of the national curriculum and religious education are taught, the time

allocated to some subjects does not allow them to be taught in sufficient depth. There are also occasions when time is not used to the best effect. For example, some lessons are split into two parts. Whilst this is sometimes necessary to allow for special activities such as dance, teachers do not always adjust the content of lessons to take account of this. In addition, the length of the session between break and lunchtime in Years 3 to 6 is particularly long. For the younger pupils in particular, but for all pupils to some extent, this is tiring and they find it difficult to maintain concentration for so long. The length of some lessons is inappropriate. For example, a personal and social development session lasted for 75 minutes.

33. Provision is good overall for pupils who have special educational needs. They are supported well in the classroom by teachers and learning support workers, and receive more specific tuition individually or in small groups, as required. Individual education plans are drawn up by the class teacher or special needs co-ordinator, with targets that are well focused, clear and achievable in the short term. The means by which targets may be achieved are also identified and teachers make useful, regular reference to targets in their short-term planning.
34. The school has made good provision for the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Two pupils currently receive support through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service and receive additional teaching from a visiting teacher on one morning per week. The teacher is also available to give support to colleagues in meeting the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. The teacher works with the pupils in the classroom or individually, as appropriate. Pupils receive good additional support in lessons from the learning support workers.
35. The school's documentation shows a very strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. Teachers follow the guidelines closely and in doing so create a harmonious, warm and friendly ethos. Every pupil is encouraged to take part in the full range of activities offered, both in and out of lessons, regardless of gender, ethnicity or cultural background. Good teaching and excellent relationships between the pupils and adults in school support learning well so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress. Although there is a slight difference in the performance of boys and girls in tests, inspection evidence reveals that all pupils are treated equally and have their personal needs addressed. No differences are evident in either the challenges set, the enthusiasm shown or the achievement of boys and girls of similar attainment.
36. The school has recently reviewed its policies for sex education and drugs awareness and improved the provision for teaching these by including them within the programme for personal, social and emotional education. In addition, the school nurse is closely involved in the sex education programme.
37. The school's basic curriculum is enhanced by a variety of supporting activities. For example, the school has developed a range of international links and is working towards an international school's award. As an integral part of this, teachers have made exchange visits to Kisumu in Kenya, Prague and Australia. In addition, the school held a World Awareness week in February to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of a range of cultures. The vibrant and interesting work on display showed a rich range of activities and pupils talked about their work with enthusiasm. Each class explored the culture of a different country through art, story telling, drama, music and food. This made a very strong contribution to pupils' cultural development. This enthusiasm for learning greatly enriches pupils' school life. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of after-school activities. These include sports, chess, choir, band, computer and drama clubs. These activities are well attended and greatly enjoyed by pupils.
38. The curriculum is enriched by regular educational visits. Each year group has two visits a year which are linked to the school's topic cycle. In Year 6, pupils make a residential visit to an outdoor activity centre. Year 3 pupils visit an environmental centre in the Forest of Dean. This visit involves an overnight stay. Pupils also take part in local festivals and some further afield, such as the Young Voices festival in Birmingham. Pupils were recently successful in a poetry competition held to celebrate World Book Week. There are good links with the local community. Representatives from the emergency services visit to talk about their work. The school distributes harvest gifts to elderly local residents and there are links with a local football club.
39. Links with local nursery and pre-school groups are effective, and children are well prepared for their

introduction to school. At the age of 11, pupils transfer to a number of local secondary schools. The formal transfer arrangements are effective, particularly for those pupils with special educational needs. The school has established good links with one local secondary school and has negotiated an arrangement by which it can use its superior ICT facilities. It also has useful links with the teachers from Years 7 and 8. The school's specialist dance teacher uses pupils from Abbeymead when providing demonstration lessons to teachers at other schools.

40. Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall, and one of the strengths of the school. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection, when this was described as sound, with strengths in provision for social and moral development.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their experience and that of others. Acts of worship are of good quality and make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. During the inspection, a group of Year 6 pupils made a short presentation on the theme of responsibility. Pupils are taught to respect and value each other. They listen attentively to stories from different traditions and begin to understand how others live. The work in World Awareness week encouraged pupils to "walk in another's shoes". In lessons, pupils are often thoughtful and reflective and teachers make good use of questions to stimulate pupils' thinking about a range of issues. In a Year 6 dance lesson, the teacher linked the work to a recent visit to Gloucester Cathedral as part of the class topic of pilgrimage. Pupils responded very sensitively to the theme and created a prayerful atmosphere. In addition, circle time sessions provide opportunities for pupils to discuss issues of importance to them.
42. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school is clear about what it expects from pupils. Pupils understand what is right and wrong. Their good behaviour shows that they recognise the difference. The five golden rules are displayed in classrooms and in common areas of the school. In the classrooms for older pupils, the "lunchtime commitments" are also displayed. Some Year 6 pupils act as peer mediators at break and lunchtimes. They are very proud of their role in supporting younger pupils but said that there is not a lot to do because most pupils behave very well.
43. Provision for pupils' social development is also very good. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons in pairs or groups. Pupils are kind and caring towards one another. Pupils regularly take part in fundraising activities for local and national charities. The good range of after-school activities also provides opportunities to work well together. For example, in the school band practice, pupils worked very co-operatively and developed the technique of ensemble playing. Pupils gain a greater social awareness of their responsibilities on a wider scale through various fundraising efforts. They raise money for a range of local, national and international charities.
44. The school makes very good provision for pupils' cultural development. The vibrant art work on display makes an instant impression on visitors. Pupils study art from a range of styles and cultures. Music also makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development. Music from a range of periods, styles and cultures is studied. Pupils are very proud of the African xylophone made especially for the school by the villagers of Kisumu in Kenya. Drama, dance and poetry are used very effectively in the school. The World Awareness week provided a rich range of cultural experiences for pupils from the seven countries explored in depth.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. This is a very caring and supportive school, where the happiness and wellbeing of all pupils is paramount to all members of staff. The school's very good procedures for providing child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare have been maintained since the last inspection. The headteacher is the named teacher with responsibility for child protection and an additional teacher supports her in this role. The school's own child protection policy appropriately follows guidelines from the local education authority. Staff members are regularly reminded about procedures and are sure of their responsibilities.
46. The arrangements to care for pupils who have medical needs or who become ill at school are very effective. Several staff members are trained to administer first aid. Ongoing, valuable lessons in

personal, health and moral education contribute very well to pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles and personal safety. The governors' premises committee takes the lead in ensuring health and safety through regular risk assessments of the building and grounds. Safe practices in and around the school are followed as a matter of routine.

47. The procedures for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance are very good. Registers are called at the beginning of each session and are maintained to a high standard. Pupils' absences are monitored regularly and great care is taken each morning to account for the whereabouts of all pupils who are absent. Parents and pupils are regularly reminded about the importance of prompt, regular attendance. Pupils with very good or excellent attendance are recognised with awards.
48. The school's procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are outstanding. The two key elements that contribute to this are the excellent quality of relationships and the consistent manner in which all members of staff support discipline throughout the school. Good behaviour is praised and reinforced throughout the day and misbehaviour is quickly addressed. The behaviour and anti-bullying policies are very clear and easy for all pupils to understand and accept. The additional strategies for pupils who have behavioural difficulties are very successful and implemented so that teaching and learning for all pupils can take place without interruption.
49. Class teachers monitor and support pupils' personal development very well. Pupils are very well known as individuals and there is very good communication among staff members to support them. Parents are updated about progress during regular formal and informal meetings and are given detailed information about pupils' developing maturity and responsiveness in the annual end-of-year reports.
50. Assessment procedures have greatly improved since the last inspection, when assessment was identified as an area requiring improvement. In English, mathematics and science, systems to track pupils' progress are well established and comprehensive. The results of national tests are analysed rigorously to identify any variations in pupils' progress by ethnicity or gender. The analysis of results shows a steady improvement in the core subjects from year to year. The impact of this analysis is becoming apparent in teachers' long- and medium-term planning. Teachers use the information to set group and individual targets for pupils.
51. The school has established effective procedures for assessing pupils' progress in the foundation subjects. At the end of each unit of work, teachers assess a specific activity according to agreed criteria. Teachers use these records well to plan the next steps of learning for pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. Parents have very positive views of the school and this level of approval has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents who contributed their views to the inspection were very supportive and enthusiastic about all areas of school life.
53. The impact of parents' involvement with the school and their contribution to their children's learning continue to be good. The school values the support provided by parents and welcomes any assistance they care to provide. A number of parents, particularly those of younger pupils, volunteer to help in lessons on a regular basis. Teachers can rely on this ongoing commitment and plan teaching activities that utilise the parents' skills and talents. In addition to reading, cookery and crafts, parents help with swimming lessons for reception children, they accompany groups on class trips and provide valuable support for World Awareness week. Many parents provide help that directly improves their children's learning by reading to them at home. Parents play an important role in the success of the homework policy.
54. The parents' support group, FabS', is led by a hard-working committee which organises fundraising and social events throughout the year. Parents and members of the community consistently lend their support to these activities. Funds raised provide extra equipment for classrooms, farewell gifts for departing Year 6 pupils and, most recently, helped to offset the cost of the high quality outdoor 'trim trail.'
55. The quality of information the school provides for parents is even better than it was at the last inspection and is now excellent. Each class teacher provides parents with exceptionally well-written

end-of-year reports for their children. Parents are clearly informed about what pupils have learned and can do, along with their targets for improvement. The information pack provided for parents of children about to enter the reception classes is first rate. Pupils' Records of Achievement also provide an informative collection of work and accomplishments and are built up each year by successive teachers. Parents receive very informative newsletters from the headteacher, curriculum information from each year group and attend regular meetings to discuss their children's progress. Whilst not all parents make use of homework diaries, those that do find them to be a valuable communication tool between school and home. Parents can also visit the school's website. The school considers the views of parents when it makes decisions on policies such as homework and behaviour management. Widespread support for the home-school partnership agreement helps to formalise this mutually supportive relationship very effectively.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. When she joined the school, it had been identified as a 'focus' school by the local education authority, indicating that standards achieved were giving some cause for concern. In the three years since her appointment, she has adopted appropriate management strategies to ensure that all key issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Academic standards, which had plummeted in the two years following the inspection, have risen to the extent that they are now above what is expected by the time pupils leave the school. The areas identified then as needing improvement have been tackled systematically, and other priorities have been addressed. She has a very clear vision for the further development of the school and has successfully blended the staff into a stable and cohesive team that has a strongly shared commitment to raising the quality of education still further. All work very hard to achieve this. As a result, the school has made a good improvement overall. Its commitment to and capacity for further improvement are excellent.
57. There is a very successful and comprehensive programme of monitoring. This includes examining teachers' planning, regular lesson observations, and the systematic examination of pupils' written work. These activities have contributed to the ongoing improvements in the curriculum and quality of teaching and learning as well as enabling the school to identify priorities for future development. Teachers receive good quality feedback on their work and are able to develop their practice through a well-structured programme of staff development. The curriculum is now very well planned, and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully. The headteacher has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and uses monitoring effectively to target action plans for development. There is a shared desire for pupils to achieve high standards, but this does not compromise the broad curriculum and wide range of learning opportunities provided by the school, and the development of all children as individuals. A highly positive environment has been developed and maintained. This, combined with pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, makes a significant contribution to their learning. The headteacher receives very good support from the three assistant headteachers, all of whom carry a separate area of management responsibility. This strategy is particularly effective as senior management team meetings are held regularly to ensure that no-one operates in isolation. All carry significant responsibilities for the management of the school, concerning pupil issues, the curriculum and community and staff development.
58. All teachers have management responsibilities, and their roles have been developed and consolidated well. The senior management team works closely to ensure that very good communication exists between all staff, and procedures are followed consistently. There are two co-ordinators for each subject area and they all have a very good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subject. Co-ordinators carry out subject reviews on a regular basis, using a range of monitoring activities well. They have the opportunity to observe lessons and work alongside colleagues, as well as examining pupils' work and scrutinising planning, in order to identify what needs to be improved. Finally they draw up action plans for their subject, which are incorporated into the whole-school improvement plan, with a view to raising standards.
59. The governors are strongly supportive of the school, and fulfil their statutory duties effectively. There are many new members since the last inspection and some governors are comparatively inexperienced. However, despite this they are very involved and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They receive good information on the curriculum through reports from the

headteacher and presentations from teachers. They operate effectively in committees, which deal with issues relating to staffing, finance, personnel, communication and premises. Many governors visit the school on a regular basis and they have a good understanding of their monitoring role. As well as governors responsible for literacy, numeracy and special needs, other governors have a special interest in other subject areas such as ICT. They meet with the relevant co-ordinators to discuss standards and other developments. The governors analyse and discuss the results of tests, and use this information to make comparisons with other schools, and are becoming more involved in setting the school's targets for literacy and numeracy. Their role as a critical friend to the school is developing well and increasing further as more training is held and knowledge and understanding become greater. Governors are becoming more directly involved in school development planning, reviewing progress made towards targets, and helping to ensure that key priorities receive sufficient funding.

60. Whole-school development planning is very good. There is a very good review of achievements and progress made the previous year and this forms the basis for future development. The school's monitoring programme also clearly identifies priority areas for development. Action plans are drawn up, taking into account staff training needs, associated costs, and relevant success criteria. The senior management team reviews the progress made on targets through its cycle of monitoring, with progress reports given to the governing body at meetings. The plan incorporates appropriate development points for all subjects for the school year. The plan runs for the academic year, which is highly appropriate, and budget implications are fully built in. The plan has a suitably long-term perspective, and takes appropriate account of priorities until 2004.
61. The school's financial planning arrangements are well organised. There is good liaison between governors, the headteacher and staff in formulating the budget. Governors take an active part and have ownership of the budget and the strategies behind it. They take decisions with confidence because of the objective information provided to them by the headteacher. The budget is properly considered and approved by the full governing body. The specific funds element of the school's finances is very well targeted. The funds are used effectively to raise the attainment of those pupils with special needs. There is very effective corporate decision making to ensure that the financial resources available to the school are properly targeted to improving standards throughout the school. The four principles of best value are specifically embodied within the school improvement plan, and the priorities of the plan are closely linked to decisions on spending. The headteacher and governors exercise effective financial control by regular scrutiny, in committees, of any patterns of under- or over-spending under all budget headings. The school has carried over about seven per cent of last year's budget into the present session but views this as a contingency fund in order to protect staffing levels and have sufficient funds available to provide adequate resources. Subject co-ordinators are expected to manage their own budgets as part of their overall management role.
62. The school's overall administrative arrangements and the day-to-day control of its finances are very good, as is the use made by the school of new technology in support of its management systems. The most recent audit praises the school for effectiveness of its financial accountability and the school's administrative systems and procedures are very well implemented. The school secretary, finance officer and the clerical assistant undertake their administrative and financial monitoring duties very conscientiously and well. They provide very good support to the school community, liaising well with the pupils, staff, parents and visitors.
63. The school has sufficient appropriately-qualified teaching and support staff, and the high turnover reported at the time of the last inspection has now been stabilised. All have appropriate job descriptions and the handbook for staff is detailed and deals with all aspects of their professional development, with mentorship of staff new to the school, support for newly-qualified teachers and the school's strategies for performance management. The staff development policy is thorough and based on the priorities of the school improvement plan and on a clear commitment to the maintenance of professional competency. Staff development is ably led by one of the assistant headteachers and, in addition to weekly staff meetings, consists of a careful blend of whole-staff training days and external course attendance. A further aspect of development is the opportunity for teachers to work alongside their colleagues as part of the subject review process. Very good arrangements are made for teachers new to the school, all of whom who are given a professional mentor to support their integration into the school during their first term. Newly-qualified teachers are well supported through the school's commitment to the county programme. The policy for performance management is well thought through. Procedures have been implemented effectively, with agreed targets relating to both personal

and school priorities. In January 2001, when the school attained Investors in People status, its supportive management atmosphere and people-centred philosophy were identified as major strengths.

64. The school building provides a good standard of accommodation and all areas are used well to teach the National Curriculum. The building is modern, bright and very welcoming, with many attractive displays that celebrate the pupils' own work. Special features such as the tower, library and studio are used throughout the day as extra teaching and study areas. The top-quality ICT suite is an important teaching resource that contributes directly to pupils' very good computer skills. The hard surface playground, green field and nature area are all used well to support learning. At the last inspection, the intrusive noise from open-plan classrooms was identified as problematic. This problem has been suitably addressed by installing a special audio system in each classroom. However, in some classrooms, there are still areas where it is difficult for pupils to hear what is being taught. The hall is small for the number of pupils on roll and pupils are cramped during whole-school assemblies. The site manager's efforts ensure that the school is cleaned to an exceptionally high standard and this enhances the quality of the teaching environment very well.
65. The school is well resourced. The school has relatively high spending on learning resources, which is appropriate, but the headteacher has also managed to obtain a number of high quality resources through inventive means. The library is a particularly attractive feature and is well stocked. It is also well used with pupils being taught appropriate skills such as how to use the Dewey classification system in order to be able to use the library independently. The ICT suite, containing 16 networked computers, is a relatively new facility and the school also has two interactive whiteboards, of which very good use is made.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. Abbeymead is a good school with considerable strengths. It offers a rich and exciting curriculum. However, in order to improve this further, the headteacher, staff and governors should improve the balance of the curriculum by:
- i. ensuring there is an appropriate amount of time allocated to each foundation subject to enable coverage in depth of all areas of Curriculum 2000;
(paragraphs: 13, 32, 132, 140, 143, 156)
 - ii. adjusting the length of sessions to ensure that pupils have sufficient time for recreational activity during the day;
(paragraphs: 27, 32)
 - iii. making the best use of time when, for example, lessons are split due to fixed timetabling commitments;
(paragraphs: 27, 106)
 - iv. ensuring that the length of lessons is appropriate to the subject and age group being taught.
(paragraph: 32)

Minor issues

The school might also want to consider:

- ensuring the sound system in class bases is correctly adjusted at all times, to ensure that all pupils can clearly hear what is being taught.
(paragraph: 64)

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

30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	27	36	14	0	0	0
Percentage	7	33	43	17	0	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)	396
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	80

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	26	33	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	30	33	33
	Total	56	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (81)	100 (88)	100 (98)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	26	26
	Girls	31	33	33
	Total	57	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (92)	100 (95)	100 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	25	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	25	33
	Girls	21	19	25
	Total	50	44	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (77)	76 (66)	100 (74)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	28	33
	Girls	23	21	25
	Total	51	49	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (77)	84 (77)	100 (83)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	314
Any other minority ethnic group	24

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	28.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	197

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	764,034
Total expenditure	749,105
Expenditure per pupil	1,784
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,266
Balance carried forward to next year	43,195

Recruitment of teachers

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

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	396
Number of questionnaires returned	173

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	46	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	49	13	1	0
The teaching is good.	56	40	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	43	12	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	34	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	40	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	11	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	50	47	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	45	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	46	7	1	4

Other issues raised by parents

A small minority of parents expressed concern over the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

67. Children are admitted into the Reception classes at the start of the academic year in which they are five. Provision for them in the Foundation Stage is very good. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum was not planned using nationally agreed targets, but this issue has now been rigorously addressed. The curriculum offered during the Reception year now takes full account of the requirements for children in the Foundation Stage. The school closely follows the national recommendations and carefully assesses children's progress in working towards the early learning goals in each area of learning. This accurate assessment of progress in each area of learning was not evident at the time of the last inspection and is a very positive improvement, ensuring that teaching is very accurately focused on the needs of every child.
68. Most children start school with standards in all areas of learning that are broadly in line with what is usually found for this age. However, assessments show that slightly more children are below the average than above. A significant minority experience difficulties in communication, language and literacy and have levels of mathematical understanding below what is usually found. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 of the National Curriculum, they have made very good progress and many have exceeded the goals in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. In the areas of communication, language and literacy a significant majority exceed the early learning goals in reading and in speaking and listening. However, in writing and in mathematical development, attainment is in line with expectations.
69. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was good, characterised by high quality relationships between adults and children and good use of support staff. Teaching is now very good. The whole teaching team is fully involved in ensuring that a very rich and varied curriculum is delivered with considerable skill. Teachers' planning for each day reflects the range of activities across the six areas of learning extremely well, so that children remain very absorbed in their tasks. Relationships between adults and children are excellent. Support staff are usually very well deployed so that all children, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are supported very well. Independent activities are extremely well planned. Small groups ensure that children benefit from discussion. They look at books, use computers and examine scientific evidence at first hand, all of which has a significant impact on developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Supporting adults ensure that children are very well challenged and the time allocated to tasks is used very well.

Personal, social and emotional development

70. Children enter the Reception class with sound personal, social and emotional skills. Provision for developing these further is very good. The positive relationships found at the time of the last inspection are still evident and are now judged excellent. High quality teaching, which focuses on being very encouraging, promoting positive self-esteem and valuing children very highly, contributes strongly to ensuring that children settle quickly, develop confidence and feel safe. Children come into school eagerly and each morning there is a delightful buzz of anticipation. Teachers' very high expectations regarding behaviour and co-operation quickly develop children's awareness of how to behave in school and with others. Children are very clear about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not and try hard to stick to these rules and to behave well. Skilled teaching ensures that, on the rare occasions when a few children become unduly exuberant, clear reminders are very effective in promoting good behaviour. The vast majority of children have already achieved the early learning goals relating to personal confidence, understanding codes of behaviour and forming positive relationships with others.
71. Children manage their own personal hygiene well, washing their hands and, when needed, dressing themselves, with a minimum of fuss. They are given a very high level of responsibility from an early age and many can already dry and change themselves confidently after swimming. Independence and responsibility are positively nurtured. Children take their turn to be the day's 'helpers' in class and all

children help tidy up after work. Tasks are carried out briskly and confidently. Independent tasks are a regular feature of planning in all areas of learning and the children accept responsibility and support each other well. Excellent preparation and a high level of support from parent helpers ensure that independent activities are well focused and the children are encouraged to treat each other with respect and share their views politely. The children work very happily together, sharing resources and co-operating very well.

Communication, language and literacy

72. By the end of the Reception year, most children will have achieved and many will have exceeded the early learning goals relating to speaking, listening and reading, although standards in writing are slightly lower and are judged to be average. Teaching is very good. Opportunities for children to use their skills are incorporated into every area of learning, and high quality planning is a very strong component of the teaching, which ensures children achieve well. Precise, regular and annotated assessments support progress very well.
73. Teachers warmly encourage the children to give opinions and answer their friends, and fully involve the children in class discussions. Informal but purposeful talk is encouraged when children are involved in independent activities. There are regular opportunities to contribute, for example, when listening to stories or joining in familiar songs and rhymes. Teachers' very high expectations ensure that children concentrate well when listening to others or to explanations. The children carry out instructions well, seldom needing reminders. They are beginning to explain consequences of particular actions. For example, when searching for mini-beasts, they explain that they must be careful where they put their feet as insects and baby frogs live in the grass.
74. Opportunities to develop the early skills related to reading are given in every area of learning and children are frequently encouraged to read labels and text. The teaching of letters and their sounds is undertaken routinely with the whole class and in small groups so that all pupils, including those with lower attainment, are very confident in reciting all the letter sounds. Planning ensures that all children share frequent and focused early reading activities with an adult, which ensures good progress. This includes the sharing of information books, which teachers encourage children to use in a purposeful way. A very good selection of texts in literacy sessions encourages children to begin to develop reference skills, and many understand the use of an index or contents list. This use of information books is very well linked to knowledge and understanding sessions. When talking about books they have read, most children can retell stories accurately and many can explain why they enjoy particular passages. Higher attaining children read from the scheme books confidently and can, for example, explain why they read in an emphatic way when they see bold type, words in capitals or exclamation marks. The majority of children should achieve the early learning goals related to reading, and several of the higher attaining and average pupils already exceed them.
75. Many children are on course to attain the early learning goals in writing by the end of Reception year, and a few of the higher attaining children will exceed them, which is in line with the national expectation. The vast majority can form letters correctly. A few higher attaining children are beginning to develop the idea of writing in sentences very well and compose well-structured pieces of some length. For example, one child wrote several sentences about an insect, accurately using capital letters and full stops and another retold the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', accurately sequencing the events of the story. Lower attaining children can sequence a story using pictures and discussion. Several children spell frequently used words such as 'like' or 'was' accurately and make good attempts at unknown words using letter sounds. Helpful reminders are invariably given, so that when children write lists, such as recording the mini beasts seen on their walk around the grounds, most are able to write recognisable words like 'ladybird'. A characteristic of the very good teaching is the precise reminders given to suit the needs of every child. During the mini-beast hunt, children who are not fluent writers as yet were asked to draw the insects and put initial letter sounds to identify their finds. Children take great care over their written work. Directed tasks and independent activities for developing children's writing skills are carefully completed. Children always try to write their names on their work, and most do this successfully, forming the letters accurately.

Mathematical development

76. By the end of the Foundation Stage, attainment in mathematics is average. The majority of children

should achieve the early learning goals and some should exceed them. The teaching is good in this area of learning and very clear assessments of children's achievements are regularly made. Counting and sequencing of numbers are very well taught. Some elements of the National Numeracy Strategy were in use at the time of the inspection, providing a good introduction to work at Year 1 appropriate to each child's needs. However, although sometimes children sing number songs and occasional references are made to counting, shape, size and the time in other areas of learning, these opportunities could usefully be extended.

77. Teaching is very clearly focused on counting and using numbers during numeracy time. The majority of children say and use numbers in order, most count to ten and usually recognise these numerals. Some higher attaining children can count well beyond ten and do simple addition and subtraction using single digit numbers. They count in twos, recognising the pattern that develops on a number square. Some children of average attainment can accurately add numbers to ten and can write them correctly. Support for learning is usually very good, although in whole-class sessions there is not enough individual help for counting and reasoning. A good range of opportunities for counting and ordering numbers in the every day routines at school is provided by the teachers but these are not always reinforced sufficiently for pupils who are less confident in this area.
78. Children's knowledge of shape and their use of mathematical language develop appropriately. The children recognise squares, circles and triangles, and the higher attaining children are familiar with other shapes like rectangles. They identify these shapes successfully when recognising and copying simple patterns. Good links are made with other areas of learning in this aspect of mathematics. When drawing and painting their mini-beasts amongst the flowers and under the ground, the majority of children recognise and use mathematical language. For example, they talk about the small bee, the longest worm and the shortest flower.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Standards are above what is usually found at this age across this area of learning. Nearly all children are likely to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year and many will exceed them. Standards are particularly high in aspects related to science and ICT. Teaching is very good in all aspects of this area of learning, particularly because planning is very detailed and assessments of what children know and learn are rigorously undertaken. The focus for activities is precisely identified, so that although much of what is planned is new to children, they learn at a very good pace. A very rich and interesting range of activities provides excellent opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, ensures a very good level of involvement and promotes very good progress.
80. When investigating objects, materials and living things, very careful planning and high quality interaction with adults ensure that children become very involved. Their work with mini-beasts is extremely detailed, linking their communication skills with scientific investigation in a manner that is exactly right for their age. Children are extremely enthusiastic and eager to discover and learn. The delightful natural area in the grounds and very good links with non-fiction texts ensure very good reinforcement of the characteristics of insects and the names of creatures. All children, including those of lower attainment, were able to draw and most could label the body parts of an insect using the scientific names like antenna.
81. Opportunities to build and investigate structures are very well supported by the high quality resources available to the children. The wide range of large and small construction material is well used, and skilled intervention provides good opportunities to select the right tool for the job. Teachers encourage children to think like designers and choose the most suitable materials. They provide a range of fasteners like tape and paper clips, so that children can assess, for example, which joins the segments of their caterpillars most effectively.
82. The opportunities provided in ICT are excellent. Children use the well-resourced computer suite confidently and responsibly. A computer for each child and the use of a large screen ensured that children stayed securely on task when they worked on tasks linked with their work on mini-beasts. The teaching was very good. A short introduction reminded children about the controls and icons, and the task was interesting. There was a very high level of purposeful discussion and the teacher responded to each child's needs very precisely, ensuring excellent progress was made. Children using an art programme could control the mouse, change colours, draw lines and infill. They use the correct

terminology. In this aspect of knowledge and understanding of the world, children have developed a very high level of expertise for their age. E-mail links and the digital camera are used frequently to familiarise children with the use of everyday technology.

83. Children's work on growing up gives them a good insight into early elements of history and this is well supported by regular references to the passage of time. Very good opportunities are given for studying the locality, with walks around the grounds and around the neighbourhood and these support early map-work skills very well. A roadway with traffic lights in the outdoor play area is well used to reinforce road safety and children make comments like, 'You're on the wrong side of the road,' which demonstrate that most have a secure understanding of road sense. During World Awareness Week, children were part of a whole school sharing of experiences about the life of children in other countries. Their own particular interest in life in Canada is extremely well supported by their e-mail link with a school there, providing photographs and letters and very good opportunities to compare lifestyles.
84. Good opportunities for understanding the cultures and beliefs within the community are given. In a very good session during the inspection week, a child who formerly lived in Korea was invited to teach others how to say 'hello', 'thank you' and 'goodbye' and these words were used, for example, when answering the register. Other family members also visited school to show the national costume, to discuss Korean culture and life and to encourage children to try Korean food. This contact and the very strong ethos for valuing and respecting others give children a very secure start in understanding the beliefs and cultures of others in our community and create a strong link with children's personal and social development.

Physical development

85. Teaching and learning in the area of physical development are very good and most children will attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Many will exceed them. Teachers and support staff give warm encouragement and praise, and records of skills mastered and progress made are used well in planning new tasks and setting new challenges.
86. The outdoor play area with a good range of appropriate equipment is accessible for use at particular times of the day at this time of year. Teachers use the equipment well to inspire independent activities and children are very capable when climbing, balancing, steering and pedalling the toys, paying due regard to safety. All children take part in swimming and the level of confidence in the water is very high. Teaching is very securely focused on safety, with parents and staff extremely well deployed to supervise, support and encourage. As a support for physical development, the sessions are very worthwhile.
87. The children move around the classroom with regard to the safety of others and line up well, without bumping. They are given a wide range of opportunities and resources to develop finer co-ordination. In painting, drawing and writing tasks, good provision of small tools like brushes, scissors and pencils ensures that control is developing safely and at a good level.

Creative development

88. Teachers provide a very good range of activities to promote the children's creative development, and these are very well taught. Across the area of creative development, attainment is good, with very high attainment in aspects relating to artwork. Music is well developed; most children will attain and many will exceed the early learning goals in this aspect of creative development. The children sing pleasantly and there are regular opportunities to play instruments and to listen to music, which encourage a real enjoyment of music.
89. Planning provides very good opportunities for the children to explore different media and materials. All children will attain the early learning goals relating to exploring colour, texture, shape, form and space and using their imagination in art, and the majority will exceed them. Tasks are varied well, sometimes demanding fine detail, but there are also opportunities for making large models, for example, of mini-beasts. When painting, children experiment with colours, mixing them well. They try hard to achieve the best match for their requirements, for example, when painting the different skin tones in their faces or the tones and textures of different fruits. Children attain very high standards in art, with work of exceptionally high quality evident in their sketching and drawing of buttercups and

daisies. These watercolours show extremely skilful use of fine brushes, and sensitive attention to detail of a quality rarely seen in such young children. Classrooms show many delightful examples of children's artwork, which contribute to a vibrant atmosphere for learning. Work is displayed carefully, clearly demonstrating that children's work is very highly valued.

ENGLISH

90. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain standards in English that are above average. Although these appear similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection, results declined in the following two years before the situation was halted and reversed. A good improvement has taken place since 1999. Results in last year's national test showed standards to be above average at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress because good support is provided for them, both in the classroom and in small withdrawal groups, where this is considered appropriate. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress and are able to participate fully in classroom activities. There is no discernible difference in the performance of girls and boys.

Speaking and listening

91. Speaking and listening skills are above average throughout the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 speak clearly when sharing their opinions. They are keen to share and explain their learning. Their listening skills are above average. They listen attentively to the introductions to lessons and show they have listened carefully by making relevant comments, for example, about the life of a Roman soldier. Sometimes the classroom environment makes it difficult for pupils to make themselves heard, through no fault of their own. Teachers are generally aware of this and try to ensure that the last part of each lesson is used effectively. Older pupils demonstrate above average speaking and listening skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 devised convincing arguments, and were articulate and persuasive during class debates. They listened attentively, asked pertinent questions and asked each other to amplify or justify the points made. Pupils in Year 6 speak confidently about their work in history using a PowerPoint presentation.

Reading

92. Reading is well above average throughout the school and pupils build well on the very good start they are given in the Foundation Stage. Reading has a high priority and pupils are provided with frequent and varied opportunities to read. They have individual targets which are carefully matched to their attainment. Daily reading is part of pupils' homework and has a significant impact on progress when it is done regularly. By Year 2, most pupils read fluently, with expression and understanding. There are several outstanding readers, that is, pupils reading at a level two years above their chronological age. Reading skills and strategies are consistently well taught and pupils' very positive attitudes make a good contribution to the standards achieved.
93. Reading is well managed in Years 3-6 and many of the oldest pupils have developed the more advanced reading skills of skimming, scanning and inference. These skills are developed effectively as part of literacy sessions and pupils have the chance to read and study a wide range of literature, fiction and non-fiction. They conduct their own research independently, making use of the library and note-taking skills learned earlier in their school careers. Pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 are reading within the expected level. There is a carefully structured programme from Year 1 to Year 6 to promote the development of library skills. The older pupils can find a wide range of books in the library using the Dewey classification system.

Writing

94. Standards in writing are above average throughout the school. Pupils are confident writers from an early age as a result of the very good use of guided writing sessions. For example, Year 1 pupils wrote the opening paragraph of a space story, trying to make it interesting and so that it captured the reader's interest from the start. They have good basic spelling skills, and the display of specific vocabulary and most commonly used words enables pupils to be independent writers. Pupils in Year 2 are being introduced to note-taking skills and presenting information in non-fiction text clearly. As

pupils progress through the school, their writing skills improve further. For example, Year 3 pupils show a good understanding of punctuation, especially speech marks, when writing fables. They learn to write in a range of styles for a variety of purposes. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 learned to write persuasive text. They understood the importance of choosing words carefully, producing a logical argument and varying the length of sentences for effect. Pupils in Year 4 constructed their arguments for and against re-cycling carefully and realised that they had to provide convincing evidence to support their cases. Year 6 pupils considered the features of report writing and chose words carefully to ensure that it was clear, concise and interesting.

95. Handwriting is taught and practised consistently throughout the school. The youngest pupils concentrate on correct letter formation and, once this is established, are taught to join letters together. Good handwriting style and pride in presentation are reinforced in all subjects and by all adults. By Year 6 pupils are confidently writing in legible, joined script across the curriculum.
96. Spelling is taught conscientiously and consistently throughout the school. There is a strong emphasis on learning letter sounds and high frequency words in the Foundation Stage and pupils build very well on this in the next two years. In Years 3-6 pupils are taught spelling, given words to learn at home and tested fortnightly. Test results show that pupils do learn their spellings and get most words correct in tests. Some of the words set are not those that are frequently used and teachers do not incorporate commonly mis-spelt words as a general rule. This may contribute to the fact that there are a significant minority of pupils with a spelling age below their chronological one. Dictionary skills are well taught during spelling sessions and the older pupils use dictionaries and thesauri competently.
97. Teaching in literacy is consistently good and sometimes very good. The strengths of the teaching are the good management of pupils, high expectations and good quality planning which matches tasks accurately to pupils' prior learning, and good marking which tells pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve. Teachers assess pupils' learning carefully and provide interesting and challenging activities to enable pupils to achieve well. Teachers' skilful use of the interactive whiteboards is highly motivating. They adapt their planning according to what pupils have learned and ensure that pupils have time to complete pieces of work. Target setting in reading, spelling and writing has been introduced fairly recently. Careful monitoring is required to ensure that progress towards achieving these is being tracked, and that they are referred to in marking. Some older pupils have achieved their reading target but have not been moved on to the next level. The learning support workers are used very effectively and make a significant contribution to the standards achieved by pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are attentive and interested in the tasks set. Pupils are enthusiastic and conscientious about homework and some choose to do extra in order to meet their targets. It is very well organised, relevant to class work and matched well to pupils' abilities. Marking is to the same high standard as class work.
98. Literacy is incorporated very well across the curriculum, for example, in the style of recording in science, diary writing and note-taking in history and in specific projects such as the attractive books produced in World Awareness Week. The use of ICT is incorporated well, particularly when used for drafting and re-drafting work, preparing presentations and the development of word processing skills.
99. Two experienced co-ordinators, one of whom was off sick during the inspection, manage English effectively. They monitor planning, pupils' work and teaching and learning. Good assessment procedures allow teachers to track pupils' progress. Data is analysed very thoroughly so that the school is aware of strengths and weaknesses within the subject. For example, writing was identified as a priority and has been a school focus this year. As a result, raising standards in writing has been built into all teachers' performance management targets.

MATHEMATICS

100. Inspection evidence shows that standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above average. Pupils enter the school with average ability in mathematics and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, achieve well and make good progress. Results in national tests last summer were well above average for pupils in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Standards in mathematics fell after the last inspection, but have shown a good improvement

since 1999. Standards achieved by boys and girls are broadly similar and the inspection noted no discernible differences between the two.

101. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively. Test results have been analysed and the school has worked successfully to improve pupils' skills in data handling. This was identified as a weakness in the last inspection report. Pupils have also developed their competence in solving mental mathematics problems. Appropriate targets are set on a year group basis. Individual targets have been developed from these, and are shared with pupils and parents.
102. In Years 1 and 2, pupils show a good understanding of addition and subtraction facts using numbers up to 100. Many pupils can undertake computation of numbers to 20 confidently in their heads. In Year 2, the higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of place value to 1000. They are beginning to recognise the links between addition and subtraction sums and can check their work by using inverse operations. Pupils name common two and three-dimensional shapes correctly, and some can recognise shapes that are symmetrical. They are able to classify objects and record their results using bar charts and tables.
103. In Years 3 to 6, pupils build well on their previous learning. From Year 3, pupils work in ability sets for mathematics. This is a good strategy and means teachers can focus on a much smaller ability range and match tasks very closely to pupils' prior attainment. The mental mathematics sessions at the start of lessons are brisk and pupils are becoming confident at mental computation. In the higher attaining set of Year 5, pupils were very successful in a challenging task of mentally converting decimal numbers to the equivalent fractions or percentages. They were well motivated by the notion of timing the activity and were delighted to have beaten their previous time by two minutes. In Year 6, pupils explain the range of mental strategies they have used. They are able to identify very quickly whether a sum is likely to be right by using estimation and by drawing on their knowledge of number facts and operations. Pupils have made very good progress in data handling. They can classify groups of objects using two criteria and record their results using Venn or Carroll diagrams. In Year 4, pupils use this knowledge in their science lessons. They discuss whether a bar graph or a scatter graph would be most suitable for recording their results of an investigation relating the length of their legs to how far they can jump. Pupils relish the challenge of a difficult task. A small group of higher attaining pupils in Year 6 worked on one, which involved them in using the computer to work out a problem using a spreadsheet. They were confident and competent at entering and using the appropriate formula and using this to check their answers. The attainment of this group was well above average.
104. Pupils enjoy their mathematics lessons and put a lot of effort into their work. They take a pride in their work and the standard of presentation of their work is very good. Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school, but progress in Year 4 is particularly good. In the higher attaining sets in Years 3 to 6, pupils' attainment and progress are good. However, as there are only two sets in each year group, each set is quite large. In some lessons for the lower attaining sets, the work set was the same for all pupils and did not always take enough account of pupils' different learning needs and stages of attainment. This meant that the rate of progress for these pupils was slower.
105. The quality of teaching was good overall and in one lesson it was excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The teaching in the upper set of Year 6 is of a particularly high quality. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Lessons are planned well and the learning intentions are clearly identified. These are usually shared with pupils, but in the very few lessons where they were not, pupils were not able to explain what they were learning. Teachers prepare for all lessons very well and the materials needed for the lesson are readily available. Teachers make good use of resources. For example, the use of individual whiteboards in the mental mathematics sessions enables teachers to check pupils' responses quickly and ensures that all pupils take part. In two lessons, teachers made very effective use of ICT, using the interactive whiteboards. This helped the lessons move at a brisk pace and kept all pupils involved and interested. The best lessons provided pupils with challenging tasks and encouraged them to work productively. A characteristic feature of many lessons was very good questioning which challenged pupils and stimulated their thinking. Good review sessions at the end of lessons were observed and these encouraged pupils to review and explain their work. This helped pupils to share their understanding as well as making links with the next objective. Teachers plan the use of ICT well to enhance pupils' overall mathematical experience.

106. Teachers manage their pupils very well and this ensures the success of lessons. Good use is made of teaching assistants, who mainly work with small groups of lower attaining pupils to support and reinforce the objectives of the lesson. The class teachers give them good guidance. Pupils receive homework tasks that effectively support the work they do in school. Some of the timetabling arrangements for mathematics result in lessons being split or quite short. This results in a small number of lessons being rushed, or lacking in continuity. Where the time available for mathematics is short, the school needs to review how this time is used and take any necessary action in order to ensure continuity in pupils' learning experiences.
107. The subject co-ordinators provide effective leadership. They have had good opportunities to monitor teaching and planning, and staff have been observed and received guidance on the teaching of numeracy sessions. The focus of some observations has been on developing the use of ICT. This has led to the development of a consistent approach and consolidation of good practice. There is a good range of resources to support the mathematics curriculum. Good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are in place, as is the analysis of national tests. These help teachers' medium-term planning to meet pupils' needs. Year group targets are based upon analysis of assessments. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' skills in mental mathematics and in data handling, both of which were identified as weaknesses in the previous inspection. These aspects are now much improved. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

108. Pupils at the end of Year 2 are attaining standards in science which are above average. At the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. In the national assessments of 2001, pupils in Year 2 attained well above average results in the teacher assessments, and pupils in Year 6 reached above average standards in the tests. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 spend significantly less time on science than those in Years 3 to 6, which means that science is not covered in as much depth as later in the school. Standards in science fell after the last inspection, which reflects a pattern common throughout all subjects. Since 1999 the trend has been one of improvement. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs are fully included in all science lessons and receive good quality support. They, like all other pupils, are achieving very well overall. Higher attaining pupils also achieve very well and are provided for through challenging extension tasks which encourage them to use initiative and further their thinking. Very good improvement has been made since the previous inspection when attainment was reported as being average throughout the school. Inspection evidence noted no difference in the attainment of boys and girls in science.
109. Pupils achieve very well and the programme of work provided carefully builds on their previous knowledge from year to year. Teachers make careful and accurate assessments, which means they know exactly what stage pupils have reached in their learning. This means teachers can plan appropriately for the next step. For example, in Year 2, pupils plant and study cress seeds, keep a careful diary and discover that after about 16 days, the cress dies if it is not given any water. In Year 4 this investigation is extended and pupils try to discover how much water is needed for a plant to grow, and whether it is possible for a plant to have too much water, by devising an investigation. They show that they understand the requirements for a fair test and in their groups decide how the test should be set up. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are able to independently devise a fair test to discover all the conditions required in order for a plant to grow. They work in groups, deciding on variables, the conditions to be measured, how to record results, and how they will evaluate results. The requirement for pupils to investigate and experiment is at the heart of the science curriculum and is fully integrated into the pupils' work. There is an excellent programme of investigations and assessments to ensure consistency throughout the year groups and support teacher confidence. Teachers place very good emphasis on the use of scientific language and this is introduced right from the Foundation Stage and extended appropriately as pupils move through the school. Pupils are highly confident in expressing views and predicting results in lessons.
110. By the age of seven, pupils are achieving standards that are above those expected in all areas of science. Teaching is good and the emphasis is on pupils learning through first hand experience and investigation. For example, Year 1 pupils were investigating forces. A range of toys such as bicycles, scooters, hoops and ribbons on strings was taken outside for pupils to find out for themselves which forces were needed to propel them. This lesson involved a lot of learning and a great deal of fun. The

pupils were totally involved, their behaviour was exemplary and they responded very well to the teacher's focused questions and instructions. Pupils in Year 2 were investigating similarities and differences between different animals, animals and humans, and different humans. The task set was comprehensive and the work was carefully matched to challenge even the most able pupils. The emphasis that the school puts on pupils' personal development was well illustrated in this lesson when the teacher reminded pupils that they should not put any descriptions or differences that would be hurtful or unkind to their peers. A range of methods is used for recording. The pupils construct graphs, bar charts and pie charts using the computers, and show they can successfully interpret and use the information they gather. They learn to observe carefully. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and the work they have produced shows that they acquire a broad range of scientific knowledge, as well as developing a high level of skills and understanding.

111. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 cover all the elements of the science curriculum in a great deal of depth and an analysis of pupils' work in Year 6 shows that much of the work is at a high level. For example, work on life and living processes includes advanced work on the function of major organs such as the heart and kidneys, and of the digestive system. Pupils in Year 3 discuss sensibly how an investigation should be set up in order to discover how much water a plant needs to grow. The quality of discussion is enhanced by carefully focused questions from the teacher such as 'how can we find out if the amount of water we give them is important?' These pupils show a very good understanding of the development of plants generally and one pupil explained that the plants need sunlight in order to be able to make its own food. Older pupils in Years 5 have been investigating solubility. They explain the behaviour of molecules in solids, liquids and gases when prompted by very good questions from their teacher. They show a good level of understanding and recognise that solids remain in solution when they dissolve. Whilst pupils in Year 5 were investigating how long a solid would take to dissolve and how this could be accelerated, pupils in Year 6 were investigating the solubility of a range of substances in liquids other than water. High quality discussion showed that pupils have good recall of previous investigations concerning solubility and saturated solutions. The teacher had a wide range of resources to hand and a supply of vinegar and lemon juice as the alternative liquids. The pupils predicted what they thought would happen when substances were mixed. They accurately described what occurred when, for example, bicarbonate of soda was added to vinegar: "The two have reacted together and produced a gas which made the solution bubble and froth."
112. Pupils collect information and record their results by drawing tables, diagrams and graphs. This links in particularly well with the school's drive to improve the use of data handling in mathematics by integrating it more fully into other subject areas. The pupils' written observations are of particularly high quality and they have many opportunities to plan, predict and express their views concerning the possible outcome of an investigation. Throughout the year groups, many opportunities are provided for pupils to make written observations in lessons, and recording tasks are challenging. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and the use of scientific language are of a high standard.
113. The quality of teaching is very good, which enables pupils to learn very effectively. In all lessons observed, it was at least good, with some very good and excellent teaching observed. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable when teaching science. The planning for every lesson is meticulous and all sessions have a clear structure. Lessons always begin with an appropriate recap of what was learned previously and the ensuing lesson builds on this prior knowledge. Teachers move the lessons along at a good pace so that pupils' interest is maintained and work is completed in the time allowed. For example, effective planning encourages pupils to work together to discuss tasks in short 'slots' of time. Pupils are expected to understand the planned activities and complete them without fuss. They think carefully and work together industriously to achieve the set objectives, which are shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. In all lessons, teachers use scientific vocabulary well. The marking of pupils' work is consistently good and provides pupils with clear points to improve.
114. The subject makes a good contribution to numeracy and literacy. Graphs and tables are frequently used to record results, and nearly all written work is completed independently, in an appropriate scientific style. There is very little use of work sheets.
115. The use of information and communication technology in science is very good and is very well planned for within the science curriculum. The school has included the development of information and communication technology in the development planning for science. Some initiatives in information and communication technology are in the early stages of development, such as using sensors linked to a

computer to record changes in, for example, the temperature of a beaker of icy water.

116. Resources are very good and cater well for the emphasis on the development of experimental and investigative skills. They are sufficient to provide pupils with opportunities to select their own resources and create their own investigations and experiments. The environmental area within the school grounds considerably enhances and enlivens aspects of science such as 'life process and living things'.
117. The co-ordinators provides very good overall levels of support in science. Since the previous inspection, they have organised the assessment of pupils' achievements to provide a greater level of awareness of standards, and have monitored teaching to develop a more consistent approach throughout the year groups. Several useful training courses have been undertaken and one co-ordinator has devised a particularly useful dictionary of scientific terminology to be used throughout the school. The co-ordinators are keen to support colleagues and continually endeavour to increase teachers' knowledge and expertise in science.

ART AND DESIGN

118. Only two art lessons were observed during the inspection. However, conversations held with staff and pupils, together with the outstanding displays of art work around the school, show that pupils make very good progress and attain standards well in excess of those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Particularly good features are the study of the work of a wide range of artists and the extremely broad coverage of the art curriculum as a whole. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is another language, achieve very well. There are no discernible differences between the work of girls and boys. Standards have risen significantly since the last inspection, when they were reported as being in line with those expected throughout the school.
119. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing a range of techniques in experimenting with a variety of media. During the school's World Awareness Week they studied aboriginal art, and have produced their own paintings using appropriate 'earth' colours. They can explain the various symbolism in the paintings; for example, the dots represent fruit or berries. They have successfully used a computer program to design their own colourful underwater scenes. In order to develop their skills they have carried out careful observations of a range of toys. This work is careful and detailed showing a developing understanding of the use of shading to give depth and texture. Pupils in Year 2 have studied the work of Seurat. They have looked at the effects gained by working with different colour dots and have created their own pictures using pointilism. They have chosen subjects that are familiar to them and the exercise has been particularly successful because the size of picture has been kept small and pupils have been able to experiment on a comparatively small scale. This has enabled them to finish a picture in one session, giving rise to feelings of satisfaction and achievement. Three-dimensional work has been carried out using clay and a variety of original and gaily coloured pottery fishes create an attractive display. The school has its own kiln and this is well used to make the most of pupils' work. As a whole base effort, Year 2 have reproduced a large mural of Monet's 'Japanese Footbridge' using pastels and water. This is an exceptionally fine piece of work and creates an atmosphere of serenity and calm. The work is of very high quality; subtle tones and shades have been created through the careful mixing and blending of pastels and water.
120. Pupils in Year 3 to 6 have extended the skills learned earlier. In Year 3, pupils have used clay to make their own Gaudi towers, concentrating carefully on the rolling technique to ensure their coils are of uniform size. The towers are highly individual and a high degree of originality is shown in the decoration of each one. In Year 4, pupils have studied Japanese batik and created their own designs using bold colours. Pupils in Year 5 participated in an 'Art Day' when, together with students from a local college, they created giant murals for the hall based on the story of 'Timmo's Journey'. A variety of techniques, well executed, such as tie-dye, and collage has been employed in the making of these. The finished murals are bright, colourful and extremely well suited to the purpose for which they were made. In the classroom, Year 5 pupils have created a photo-montage based on the style used by Andy Warhol. By using a digital camera they have designed a wall of pictures of all members of the class, using a range of camera effects and colours. It shows a very good understanding of camera skills and techniques and a high degree of expertise. A tapestry in Year 6 is based on work by Jean Miro. Again, pupils exhibit a high degree of skill and have worked hard on the initial design and the selection of colours.

The stitching is of a high quality and the variety used creates a range of different textures. The completed piece of work is of an exceptionally high standard.

121. The outstanding feature in the art work in the school is the coverage of the curriculum. The pupils study the work of a very wide range of artists and use their knowledge well to create their own works of art. The range of skills taught is very good and a good deal of expertise is shown. It is evident from the work seen that pupils work hard and gain great enjoyment from creating their own art works. They pay good care to detail and show sensitivity when working. The expertise they are gaining has carried over with benefit into other subjects, so that in history, for example, illustrations are carefully executed.
122. Although only two lessons were observed, it is clear that teaching must be very good in order for the pupils to achieve as well as they do. Teachers provide pupils with a wide range of opportunities to experiment, using a variety of media to increase their creativity. Planning is thorough and the school has a wide range of appropriate resources. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were being introduced to the work of Barbara Hepworth. The teacher ensured the concentration of their pupils was sustained by keeping the pace brisk and lively and providing short activities for them, such as trying to establish when specific sculptures were created. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are not afraid to experiment with new techniques and encourage the pupils to do the same. There is an adventurous spirit, which serves to enhance and develop pupils' skills and knowledge.
123. The co-ordinators manage the subject enthusiastically and effectively. They have very good subject knowledge. The teaching of art is enhanced by the provision of specialist areas, which enable pupils to work in groups on a range of projects. For example, in Year 6, one group was working on the completion of their coil pots whilst the rest of the class began work on a project about the work of Barbara Hepworth. The rooms and wet areas are ideal for pupils to work in effectively and relatively independently. The quality of resources is very good, in particular, those for ceramics, with a kiln and a wide range of glazes being available to the pupils. They allow pupils to experience the full scope of the art curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards are above those expected at the end of Years 2 and 6. Good improvement has been made since the previous inspection, when standards in design and technology were reported to be in line with those found nationally, throughout the school. However, there was no consistent method of retaining pupils' plans in Years 3 to 6. This weakness has been securely addressed, with pupils in all classes from Year 3 to Year 6 now recording their designs in suitable books, which they use through the school.
125. All pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in the tasks and activities. Careful planning ensures they have the support they need, so that their learning keeps pace with others.
126. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are higher than the national expectation. Designing and making skills are well developed. When making hand puppets, the pupils study a range of puppets and suitable materials, selecting appropriate fabric for the body of the puppet and for the appliquéd features and decoration. Good teaching, with high expectations about the completion of a project, ensures a brisk pace of working, and homework is well used to support the assignments. Pupils in Year 1, when designing a playground, used the Internet to get ideas, and this injected a high level of interest, sparking discussions about designs incorporating castles and jungles. Teachers' clear explanations and clear questioning supported the design tasks well, so that pupils were keen to make their products. Pupils chose materials carefully and used their imagination and enthusiasm to create interesting designs and to make interesting products. Year 2 pupils studied Italy during World Awareness Week. As part of this they made pizzas. They carefully drew the ingredients and wrote instructions about 'chopping the vegetables' and 'sprinkling the cheese'. Good links were made between design and technology and geography, supporting discussions about the food and culture of Italy well. Year 2 pupils are aware of the need for safety rules when handling tools and describe which tools they can use and those which they do not use yet, as they have not been taught how to. Their 'buggies' were very challenging to make and pupils used appropriate vocabulary like axle and wheels when describing how the cars run along different surfaces. Although pupils attain good standards in

the designing and making elements of the subject, their skills in evaluating the success of their design and suggesting improvements are not so highly developed and this is an area that needs to be improved.

127. By Year 6, pupils attain standards better than those expected for their age. High quality teaching ensures that pupils complete a range of tasks between Year 3 and Year 6 that builds up their skills and knowledge well. Pupils in Year 6 discussed and explained in detail why they thought particular frames were better for supporting a tent and particular fabrics were more suitable for the tent cover. Year 5 pupils, using glue guns and drills to construct cam and dowel toys, were confident and skilful and supported each other well. All were clear about the principle of using the cam mechanism, referring to their designs confidently whilst explaining how the toy will work. Year 4 pupils making pop-up books and Year 3 pupils working on different stitches in sewing showed a very high level of interest and involvement. The high quality interaction between teachers and pupils and the interesting links with other subjects promote a high degree of enthusiasm amongst pupils. In most classes after a whole-class discussion, small groups of pupils discuss how they will carry out their tasks and the resultant diversity leads to a good level of discussion and experimentation. However, in one lesson, following a good discussion, the same task was imposed on all groups. As a result, the pace of learning was slower. Higher attaining pupils, who could have moved on more quickly, became less intensely involved and did not finish the task.
128. From Years 3 to 6, opportunities to evaluate products and suggest modifications are regularly given and, when evaluating their products, pupils show a high level of common sense as designers. They make good suggestions for modifications, like using struts in the framework for a tent or the use of different fabrics and stitches. The very positive ethos in lessons ensures that different opinions are accepted and compliments readily given. Excellent relationships ensure that high quality discussions take place between pupils, which supports the development of speaking, listening and reasoning skills very positively.
129. Teaching and learning are now good throughout the school. This is the result of a well-structured programme for learning, which ensures that pupils experience progressively more complex activities to support the development of skills. The programme is interesting and varied. Pupils experience a range of challenges including cooking tasks, toy making, playground designs, designs for cards and books, sliding and lever mechanisms, puppet making and sewing. Design and technology opportunities in each class are tackled in a business-like way, so that by Year 6, pupils feel they are real designers with real jobs to be done and have real responsibility for the efficiency of the product.
130. The subject is managed effectively. There is a good policy and scheme of work and appropriate assessment procedures have been developed. It is clear from the work examined that most teachers stress the importance of pupils evaluating and modifying their designs effectively. Resources are good and there is a sound use of information and communication technology to underpin pupils' designs.

GEOGRAPHY

131. The standards attained at the end of Year 2 meet those expected and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Standards attained at the end of Year 6 now exceed national expectations and show an improvement since the last inspection. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well. They receive appropriate support in class, enabling them to fully participate in all activities. Higher attaining pupils are suitably challenged. There are no discernible differences in the levels of attainment of boys and girls.
132. In Years 1 and 2, the standards of pupils' learning in the classroom are good. For example, they can analyse pictures of landscapes to distinguish physical features from those which are the result of human activity. However, although there are good classroom opportunities to learn about aspects of geography, pupils have too little recording of work in their files and exercise books as a result of insufficient time allocation for the subject. In Years 3 to 6, standards of classroom learning are generally good or better, although time is still somewhat limited. In oral work with their teachers, pupils give thoughtful responses, express interesting ideas and produce good hypotheses. In their exercise books, they record a good range of their geography work, including descriptive material, diagrams,

map work and grid referencing, all of which are conscientiously and constructively marked. Pupils of all levels of attainment achieve well, and are well supported by their teachers. For instance, a lower-attaining group of pupils, returning to their teacher after work with their learning support assistant, had the context and the purpose of the class activity separately explained to them before they started work.

133. When they learn geography, pupils are well behaved and enjoy good relationships with their teachers. In whole-class work, they pay good attention and are responsive in answering questions. When they undertake work in groups, they show high levels of co-operation and of initiative. When Year 6 pupils undertake map work in preparation for their residential trip, for instance, they readily refer to the key in order to interpret information with which they are unfamiliar.
134. The overall quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and include attention to the needs of children of different levels of attainment. They have a clear purpose and focus, which teachers explain to their pupils. Teachers are confident and display a good knowledge of geography and enthusiasm for the subject which, taken together, lead to good interaction with their classes. They use and explain relevant terminology very effectively. For instance, in a lesson concerned with issues of rubbish disposal, one teacher used and explained words and phrases such as 'recycling', 'decompose' and 'nutrients for the soil'. Teachers also use highly effective questioning techniques, including open-ended questions and pausing to allow children time to think and to formulate answers. Where interactive whiteboard technology is available, teachers are making highly effective use of the facility to bring relevant geographical material, for example, a website relevant to the Dartmoor residential excursion or pictures illustrating key aspects of landscapes, into the classroom.
135. Teachers provide an appropriate and good range of resources. For example, pupils learning about recycling were asked to sort carefully prepared, and clean, bags of rubbish according to criteria previously discussed with the class. Most lessons are taught at a suitably brisk pace and in a productive working atmosphere resulting from good classroom organisation and effective monitoring of the children's work. Where teaching is less effective, it is either because some organisational details have not been fully thought through or because there is excessive reliance on didactic approaches which allow too few opportunities for more independent approaches to learning.
136. The display of pupils' work in the school, much related to their activities during World Awareness Week, reaches very good standards and includes a good deal of information of a geographical nature which serves also to raise the level of children's cultural understanding.
137. Since the last inspection in 1997, there have been improvements in terms of the quality of policy formulation and curriculum planning. There have also been improvements in the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6, and in the standards of pupils' work, despite limited curriculum time. However, standards in Years 1 and 2 have been static as a result of the limited opportunities available for pupils to experience a range of geographical work and to record it effectively.
138. The two joint co-ordinators are well experienced in the role and are highly enthusiastic about geography and its relevance within the primary curriculum. The subject policy is a very good and thorough document, setting geography in a broad curriculum context, and the environment and sustainable development policy is similarly wide-ranging. Both policies pay close attention to issues of values and are making a very good contribution to the moral, cultural and personal development of children. The geography policy is particularly good in planning for progression and continuity. The school adopted the scheme of work developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority a year ago, and has adapted it to suit the needs of the school, for example, through the link with Kisumu in Kenya. The joint co-ordinators are monitoring children's work across the school, but need to ensure that there is improved recording of geographical work in Years 1 and 2. Furthermore, the co-ordinators do not yet directly monitor the teaching of the subject. Resources for geography are adequate only, and could usefully be supplemented by additional globes, atlases and maps. The residential weeks for Year 3 pupils and Year 6 pupils, in the Forest of Dean and Dartmoor respectively, are making a valuable contribution to the impact of the subject and are providing opportunities for relevant fieldwork. The teaching staff are using the ICT resources of the school very well to support the teaching of geography.

HISTORY

139. Standards in history meet national expectations at Year 2, but are above at Year 6. There have been significant improvements in the teaching of history since the last inspection, when the subject was judged to be too knowledge-based, with insufficient development of skills. A new policy and scheme of work have been introduced and all topics are taught using an investigative approach. Literacy and ICT are used extremely well. Achievement is sound in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive appropriate support in class, enabling them to achieve as well as their peers.
140. Younger pupils, those in Years 1 and 2, learn about the changes that have taken place in toys, household objects and transport during the past one hundred years. Pupils have been given the opportunity to observe pictures and photographs carefully, pose questions and go on educational visits. However, as in geography, there is little recorded work because too little time is allocated to the subject.
141. Past work for pupils in Year 3 shows that literacy and ICT were used effectively in the topic on Ancient Egypt. This term, pupils are studying Invaders and Settlers, with particular reference to the Romans. They know about famous people, such as Julius Caesar and Queen Boudicca. They give valid reasons why the Romans invaded and explain the changes that took place in Roman times. Year 5 pupils are learning about the Victorian period, especially education. ICT is used exceptionally well and two pupils demonstrated their sound knowledge of the period using a PowerPoint presentation. Year 6 pupils show they have acquired a broad knowledge about Britain since 1930. Through this topic, they have developed key skills of understanding events and people and changes that have taken place. They use a wide range of evidence to develop their enquiry skills
142. The teaching of history is good, and sometimes very good. Lessons are motivating and planned thoroughly to include interesting, challenging tasks. There is a total absence of mundane worksheets. Teachers have enthusiastically welcomed the new investigative approach and display good questioning skills to help pupils hypothesise. Literacy and ICT are used very well. Visits and visitors enhance the teaching of history. Pupils learn effectively because they really enjoy history and the curriculum provided is exciting and motivating. Year 3 pupils enthused about writing a diary as if they were a Roman soldier. Year 5 pupils talk enthusiastically about their topic, the visit to the Black Country Museum and are looking forward to a Victorian school day later in the term. There are some high quality displays of work around the school. For example, a Year 5 interactive display on the Victorians shows important Victorian inventors, children in Victorian times and the changes in transport. Timelines connected to each topic help to develop pupils' sense of chronology.
143. Two highly motivated, knowledgeable co-ordinators manage history very well. They have reviewed the policy and written a new scheme of work incorporating the latest guidance. Co-ordinators monitor planning, pupils' work and teaching and learning and this ensures that lessons meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. However, although the quality of work seen was often good and sometimes very good, there is insufficient time allocated to the subject for it to be taught in enough depth throughout the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. The standards now being achieved in ICT considerably exceed national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection, when attainment in ICT fell below expectations for pupils in Years 1 and 2. At that time, teachers' subject knowledge was a cause for concern and overall the subject was a key issue for action.
145. The attainment of children throughout the school is well above expectations and they achieve very well. The younger children know how to operate simple features of the technology, for example, how to log on initially, how to use the space bar and the enter and backspace keys, and how to incorporate a picture into text. Year 2 children 'paint' seaside pictures, reproducing the pointillist techniques of the artist Seurat; they also learn how to use a search engine to identify information sources quickly. Year 3 pupils can send each other e-mail letters. Pupils in Year 4 acquire the skills of accessing an Internet application as follow-up to classroom work, and begin to learn about decision trees and branching

databases. The Year 5 children investigate the demographic characteristics of Victorian Chelsea. The oldest pupils make more sophisticated use of the Internet, for instance, using more advanced reading skills to identify aspects of information relevant to the topic in hand, and writing electronic notes on their findings. Children of all levels of attainment are given opportunities to make good progress. Lower-attaining pupils are frequently helped by their learning support worker, and teachers often give them opportunities to show their understanding, as when one such pupil was asked by his teacher to demonstrate the 'dragging' technique with a computer mouse for others to observe. In Year 6, higher attainers have opportunities to undertake appropriately challenging ICT work in their classroom when they use a spreadsheet to tackle arithmetical problems. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive appropriate language support, enabling them to understand tasks set.

146. For the great majority of the time, children's behaviour and attitudes to work are extremely good. In whole-class work, pupils are very attentive to their teachers and demonstrate good listening skills. In the ICT suite, they often work in pairs when sharing a computer terminal, and when they do so, they show high levels of co-operation as well as interest and enthusiasm. When they work in small groups in the classrooms, which they frequently do, they similarly demonstrate very co-operative behaviour. On the very few occasions when pupils do become unfocused in their work, teachers quickly intervene to set them back on task, and pupils readily respond.
147. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan their ICT lessons very well. The learning intentions underlying lessons, and the sequence of activities within them, are well judged. Teachers also prepare teaching materials very effectively, including good examples using ICT, and well-organised worksheets for some older children. Teachers regularly set high expectations for attention, behaviour and the quality of pupils' work, with very positive results. Children's good levels of achievement are then recognised by judicious use of praise. Very frequently, teachers show a high degree of enthusiasm for the work in hand, and this is a major factor in the positive climate for learning in the subject.
148. In very good lessons, teachers are highly effective in their use of the time available for particular work, and in their classroom organisation. This leads to high-quality learning. In making use of computers, particularly in the ICT suite, teachers show good levels of knowledge both of ICT use and techniques, and also of such subjects as geography, history and science. In the best teaching, flexible use of the interactive whiteboard facility is highly effective; good technical control of the medium allows teachers' attention to be entirely focused on teaching, learning and organisation. Lessons are predominantly well organised and most are conducted at a good pace, ensuring momentum in learning is maintained. In lessons where teachers are less confident in their use of computers in the ICT suite, there is a lack of pace, resulting in more limited achievement. Where minor issues of off-task work occur, teachers are adept at monitoring their pupils and at using unobtrusive methods of re-focusing them on their set work. Across a wide range of lessons, teachers show very good rapport with, and care for, their classes, leading to relationships of trust.
149. Since the last inspection, the school has installed a 16-terminal computer suite, and has ensured that all staff have undertaken training in the use of ICT. As a result, most teachers are now very confident to teach and use ICT, although a small minority remain more tentative. Interactive whiteboards have been installed in the computer suite, in one classroom and there is a third portable one which allows greater flexibility of use; these are being fully integrated into teaching. The computers in half of the classrooms are now networked, and plans are in hand to complete networking across the school in the near future.
150. The two joint co-ordinators are very well experienced in the role, and are highly enthusiastic about, and effective in the management of, ICT within the school. A policy for ICT, which includes a clear rationale and detailed attention to issues of planning, implementation and review, has been agreed. The school has also drawn up an Internet access agreement which all pupils and their parents are expected to sign. From the beginning of the current school year, nationally approved guidelines have been adopted as the scheme of work. This is to be evaluated at the end of the first implementation cycle. As an integral part of the development of the subject, co-ordinators analyse teachers' termly planning and evaluations as one basis for the further development of ICT. As a result of improvement to facilities and related staff development, the subject is now a major strength of the school. It is developing well, both as a discrete curriculum area and as a resource for the teaching of all subjects of the curriculum.

MUSIC

151. Standards in music at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above what is expected nationally. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations across the school. Timetabling arrangements during the inspection meant that only three music lessons were observed. In addition to this, two singing sessions were observed as well as a range of extra-curricular activities in music. The quality of singing in lessons and in assemblies is very good. The school has focused on developing pupils' singing skills and this has been very successful. They sing with enthusiasm and produce a good tone. Their rhythmic skills are developing well and their sense of pitch is good. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are developing the ability to sing in two parts and are making very good progress.
152. Pupils in Year 1 have good listening skills. They can identify different voices when listening to taped songs. Several of them could say that the verse was sung by a male voice but were not sure how to describe the quality of this. For example, they could not say it was a low voice. One pupil thought that the children's voices providing the chorus had a lighter quality. In Year 2, pupils build well on their skills. They were able to organise a set of hand chimes into a descending scale because they recognised that the longer bars produce lower notes. They are beginning to relate high and low notes to staff notation. All pupils in Year 2 are learning to play the recorder and remember their work in learning to read music. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were learning how to represent sounds by different symbols in the form of a graphic score. The lesson linked well to the class geography topic on recycling. Pupils used a range of paper off-cuts to produce different sounds and some invented words to describe their sounds. Pupils were thoughtful and imaginative in their responses, for example, one pupil described a crackling sound made by stiff paper as sounding like 'someone eating cornflakes'. Pupils worked very well together in groups to find different ways of interpreting a graphic score. The task was very challenging for them but they tried hard and made good progress.
153. Teaching in music is good overall, with teaching of singing being very good. The school uses a published scheme of work and all teachers follow this. Teachers vary in their confidence in music teaching but they receive good support from the co-ordinators. The more confident teachers supplement the lesson plans from the published scheme with additional activities. In singing sessions, teachers pay good attention to pupils' posture and help them develop good breath control techniques. Four teachers have attended a residential singing weekend and have provided professional development from this for colleagues. This has resulted in good improvements in singing standards throughout the school.
154. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop their musical skills. In Year 2, all pupils learn to play the recorder. The school has recently introduced a computer programme for music. Some Year 5 pupils are becoming skilled at using this for composition and will help to teach other pupils as they become more competent. The school provides a very good range of opportunities for pupils to learn instruments. Parents pay for individual music tuition, but the governors have provided bursaries for any pupils in financial need. There is a good range of extra-curricular musical activities. There are two choirs and a school band. These activities are very well attended and much enjoyed by pupils. Pupils often have the opportunity to play in assemblies. The school has made good progress in music since the last inspection, particularly in singing.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

155. Standards across all areas of study at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above those expected nationally, and have been maintained well since the last inspection. Pupils of all attainment levels are able to achieve well because appropriate support is available for those who need it.
156. In dance, Year 6 pupils demonstrate standards well above what is usually found due to the well-devised programme taught by a specialist dance teacher, who works with all pupils at intervals through the year. Swimming is taught to pupils in Years R, 1, 3 and 4. Those who are unable to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 5 have additional opportunities to swim in Years 5 and 6 in order to attain the national expectation by the end of Year 6. The well-planned programme of learning ensures that pupils make good progress during the year and achieve well. Skills improve at a good rate and the full range of activities is taught to each age group during each year. The amount of time allocated to

teaching the subject is very high and means that all areas of the curriculum are very well covered. A good range of extra-curricular activities supports pupils' development well and contributes to the good standards in the subject.

157. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good. In Year 2, athletics lessons on the field offer individual challenges to improve skills against personal targets, for example, in shuttle run, soccer ball throw and bean bag pick up. Very clear explanations and good warm-ups give opportunities to practise running and turning techniques and pupils show a level of skill above that which is normally found. They have learned a good running style, using their arms well. Their work on yoyos encourages imaginative movement and shows a good awareness of being pushed down into the box or being released and free. Awareness of space develops well through both year groups, due to clear reminders from teachers, both when using small equipment to improve their throwing skills and when using music in their dance lessons.
158. In Years 3 to 6, teaching was good, with some very good and excellent teaching in Years 5 and 6. In Year 6, very good teaching in athletics ensured that pupils were fully aware of the skills required in jogging and sprinting, and they discussed their standing start and sprint positions using terms such as 'aerodynamics'. These pupils demonstrated a very high level of sensitivity in their dance work. Very careful selection of the theme, which linked extremely well to pupils' religious education work on pilgrimage in Year 6 and to their history work on Victorian toys in Year 5, ensured relevance and a very high level of involvement. These pupils showed an extremely thoughtful response to the music and were totally involved in their work. Sensitive but unpretentious teaching ensured an extremely positive attitude to dance, and all groups of pupils worked hard to improve the quality of their work. Year 6 pupils showed a very perceptive piece of work, using strong contrasts between running to join the pilgrimage, processing to the cathedral and the time for prayer. Music was very carefully chosen to stimulate the movement and accompany performance and pupils responded to the differences in mood very well. Planning in Years 3 and 4 focused on skills for field games, identified a clear purpose for the activities in the lesson and ensured that learning was good.
159. All groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are well supported in activities so that they improve their skills levels well. Parents and support staff are well deployed to support small group activities. At the time of the last inspection, a need to provide time for reflection was identified. This has now been incorporated into all lessons. Pupils are invariably encouraged to think about their performance, the new skills acquired and the positive health benefits. Throughout the school, teachers intervene effectively to enable pupils to refine and improve their performance. Extremely good relationships between teachers, support adults and pupils result in very good attitudes and behaviour so that safety issues are very securely addressed.
160. The co-ordinators manage the subject very effectively. They carry out appropriate subject reviews and monitor the subject carefully. Standards are high because a lot of time is allocated to this subject which ensures very full coverage of the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. Pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 attain standards in religious education that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This represents sound progress since the last inspection, when inspection findings were similar. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve appropriately.
162. Younger pupils are familiar with a range of stories from the Bible and have been introduced to some stories from other faith traditions. In their classroom acts of worship, they consider the theme of responsibility and discuss how they can care for the environment, for example, by putting litter in the bins and not picking wild flowers. They appreciate the attractive school grounds and understand that they need to take care of them.
163. Pupils in Year 3 were learning about Islam and the significance of the Qur'an as the Muslim holy book. They showed some knowledge of the Bible as the Christian holy book. They were very interested in learning how Muslims wash before handling the Qur'an and how it is treated. They showed very respectful attitudes to the book and were fascinated by the Arabic writing. At the end of the lesson,

pupils were able to say that they had learned that Muslims regard the Qur'an as the word of Allah, and the book gives guidance as to how Muslims should live their lives.

164. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were also studying Islam. The focus of the lesson was the importance of prayer in Islamic worship. They too showed very respectful attitudes. Pupils showed good recall of their previous work in religious education and spoke with interest about the mosque as the Muslim place of worship. They worked well together in groups to find out about different artefacts and pictures associated with prayer in Islam. Pupils presented their work well and talked about the significance of the traditions they had researched. For example, one pupil talked about Muslims washing before prayer, to wash their sins away. Another suggested that "they have to be clean to talk to God."
165. Teaching in religious education was at least satisfactory and in one lesson it was good. Teachers are all confident in teaching facts about religion. A small number lack confidence in the strand of teaching about the ways in which faith affects the lives of believers. In the lesson using the Qur'an, the teacher took great care to ensure that the book was handled with great respect, and ensured that she and all the pupils washed their hands before touching the book. In Year 6, pupils had studied Judaism. They linked the Ten Commandments to situations in their lives when they need to follow rules. Teachers plan their work well, using the scheme of work provided to support the agreed syllabus.
166. The two co-ordinators for religious education are knowledgeable about the subject. They have carried out an audit of staff skills and identified the need to develop colleagues' understanding of the second strand, "learning from religions". They regularly review colleagues' planning and have also monitored pupils' work. There is no local church in Abbeymead but a church group uses the school for meetings at weekends. The school also has links with a church in Gloucester and holds an annual carol service in the Cathedral. Year 6 have also visited the tomb of Edward II in the Cathedral as part of their work on pilgrimage. There are also visits to a synagogue and the two local mosques to support work in religious education.