

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CUMNOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

Cumnor

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123146

Headteacher: Susan Thomas

Reporting inspector: John Lilly  
12487

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 November 2001

Inspection number: 196700

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior  
School category: Voluntary controlled  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Oxford Road  
Cumnor  
Oxfordshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Elizabeth Manson

Date of previous inspection: 7 July 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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			Religious education	
			Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	
9075	Juliet Baxter	Lay inspector		Attitudes Partnership with parents Care and welfare
27736	Jeremy Collins	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage	
			Science	
			Design and technology	
			Art and design	
27654	Robina Scahill	Team inspector	Mathematics	Curriculum
			Geography	
			Physical education	
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			Information and communication technology	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cumnor is a voluntary controlled Church of England school with 191 girls and boys on roll between the ages of four and 11. It is of average size and serves an attractive village not far from the city of Oxford. Most pupils come from the locality of the school, although an increasing number are coming from further afield, including pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils come from homes that are more or much more socially and economically favoured than the national average. Children enter the school with above-average levels of development. Slightly above average numbers of pupils have statements of special educational need but lower than average numbers of pupils are on the lower levels of the special educational needs register. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic cultures is higher than usual and many of them speak or are learning English as an additional language. The range of additional languages is wide. Although an average number of pupils join or leave the school other than at Reception or Year 6, they have tended not to be spread evenly across years, and the school reports that those leaving tend to have higher attainment than those who join.

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

The strengths of the school lie in its family ethos and very good provision for personal development. It has a team of talented and committed teachers and the pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and behave well. Relationships are warm and caring and the school is determined that each and every pupil grows in self-esteem and succeeds. Children join the school with above-average development and make satisfactory progress, leaving aged 11 with above-average attainment. The new headteacher, backed by supportive governors and staff, has made a determined start to rectifying unsatisfactory elements in management and other weaknesses that have resulted in standards remaining static. The school provides a sound quality of education and satisfactory value for money.

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

- Teaching is good
- The school makes very good provision for personal development
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and behave well
- There is a very good partnership with parents
- There is a very good range of activities outside the classroom
- Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent
- Teaching at the Foundation Stage is very good
- Attainment in mathematics, and art and design is very high
- Relationships amongst pupils and between adults and pupils are very good

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

- The rate of improvement in attainment
- Elements of leadership and management, including financial management
- The effective use of assessment
- Provision for information and communication technology
- The effectiveness of support for pupils with special educational needs, for those who are learning English as an additional language and for all pupils in helping them develop as independent learners

*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 on 7 – 10 July 1997. That inspection identified a need to improve leadership and management, aspects of assessment, attainment in information and communication technology, the progress of high ability pupils, standards in design and technology, and attainment, even though at that time it was high overall. There has been some improvement in provision for the most able pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, and some improvement in design and technology. However, most of the weaknesses remain and, consequently, standards of attainment of pupils aged 11 have remained the same as in 1997. Improvement overall has been unsatisfactory.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	A	A	C
Mathematics	A*	A	B	C
Science	A	B	B	C

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average     E

A\* represents extremely high attainment compared with other schools.

Results in National Curriculum tests and assessments for pupils aged seven have improved at the national rate. In 2001 standards were well above average in reading, above average in writing and mathematics, and above average in science. Standards compared with schools that serve similar communities were average for reading and mathematics but below average for writing. There has been improvement in writing since summer 2001. Results in National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 11 have remained static since 1997, and have not matched the national improvement rate. They are now average for similar schools. There has been some improvement in standards attained by pupils currently in Year 6. The way that standards of pupils aged 11 have not improved for several years causes concern and represents some under-achievement by pupils. Targets do not sufficiently reflect the highest standards achieved in similarly favoured schools.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and schooling.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good.



Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. They are a strength of the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils are punctual for lessons.

These aspects of the school are its core strengths, providing a secure foundation for improvement in attainment. There is a marked absence of bullying and very good relationships between pupils of different faiths, cultures, characteristics and backgrounds.

## 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.*

The school has a highly talented and expert team of teachers supported by skilled classroom assistants. Teaching in Reception is very good, and is consistently at least good in Years 1 and 2. Overall, teaching from Years 3 – 6 is good, but varies from excellent to poor. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a strength of the school, especially with regard to speaking and listening and mathematics. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory but the co-ordinator has insufficient time to ensure that support is sufficiently comprehensive and focused. Teaching for pupils learning English as an additional language is caring but insufficiently expert. Provision for the most able pupils is good, but less effective in Years 1 and 2. Pupils develop good work habits and work hard and collaboratively. However, they have yet to become powerful independent learners because they do not have sufficient opportunities for investigation and personal research, for example through homework and use of the library, and because there are insufficient links between targets to be met and their own plans to meet them. The teaching of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and, with the exception of information and communication technology, relevant to the pupils' present and future needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school offers satisfactory and often good support. Provision overall is improving but is not yet sufficiently comprehensive and focused.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils are recognised and their contribution to the school is celebrated but teachers lack the expertise to identify and address their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good and it lies at the heart of the school. It is good for spiritual and cultural development, very good for moral development and excellent for social development.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for the welfare of all its pupils.
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The school works in very good partnership with parents who significantly enrich the pupils' learning. There is a very good range of clubs and activities, trips and visitors to the school, and events, for example musical productions. The school takes good care of the pupils, although more rigorous checking of health and safety issues is needed. Staff provide strong guidance for pupils' personal development but this guidance is not sufficiently developed to enhance pupils' academic learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher has made a good start with creating a climate of improvement. Even so, significant improvement is required in ensuring that management raises standards, especially in subject leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very involved with the work of the school, but, as yet, have not been effective in raising standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has an insufficiently clear understanding of strengths to build upon and weaknesses to rectify because it lacks rigorous and systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	The school lacks a sufficiently comprehensive and coherent strategic plan for the medium and longer-term investment of resources.

Senior staff and governors have allowed standards to remain static because they do not have an effective and strategic improvement plan based upon rigorous monitoring and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses; the new headteacher has made a good start at rectifying this situation. Financial control and management are insufficiently systematic and, therefore, governors cannot ensure decisions are prudent and gain best value. There are sufficient qualified teachers and classroom assistants to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Accommodation is good but has not been managed to full advantage. Resources for learning are, in the main, good but there are insufficient computers.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• The teaching is good</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns</li> <li>• The school helps their children become more mature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• Information on their children's progress</li> <li>• Attainment and progress</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views of parents. They also agree homework should be more systematic. They find that staff keep parents well informed about their children's progress, but the school is looking for further improvement. Inspectors agree that attainment overall should be higher and progress more rapid.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most children join the reception class with above-average levels of development and make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, leaving when aged 11 with above average-attainment. This means the school does not build sufficiently on the high attainment the pupils when they join the school in order to support good or very good progress. The last report identified that standards achieved by pupils required some improvement, and this remains the case. Pupils' progress is not better because there are weaknesses in the school's strategies and management for improvement, weak management of some subjects and crucial weaknesses in the teaching. These weaknesses combine to hinder improvement. Consequently, pupils do not make the very good progress that might be expected from their good development when they join the school, and from strengths in the teaching and personal development.
2. In National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven in 2001, results were well above the average for all schools in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. In science assessments, results were above the national average but below average for the proportion of pupils attaining higher Level 3. Similarly there was significant under-achievement by higher-attaining pupils in writing and mathematics. When compared with schools that have similarly favoured social contexts, these results were average for reading and mathematics, but below average for writing and well below average for science. This means the school is not enabling pupils to make progress as good as in most similar schools. Between 1997 and 2001, results overall improved at the national rate but the rate was slightly better in reading and worse in science. The attainment of current pupils aged seven shows that there has been improvement in writing.
3. Results in statutory teachers' assessments for pupils aged seven in 2001, showed attainment overall in English that was well above average, but the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was only average. In these assessments in mathematics, attainment overall was below average, and well below average as to the proportion attaining the higher Level 3, with a particular weakness in number work. Attainment in science overall was above average, but below average for the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3. These science results show inadequate curriculum management because whilst attainment was very high in one aspect of the syllabus, it was very low in another. Overall, these assessments show under-achievement by the more able pupils.
4. Results for pupils aged seven in 2001 show that girls tended to do better than boys, but this does not seem to be the case with pupils who will be seven by the summer of 2002.
5. Standards overall in National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 11 have remained static between 1997 and 2001, and this means that standards are not improving at the national rate. As to subjects, standards in English and mathematics have remained static and in science they have declined. This trend causes concern.
6. Results in National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 11 in 2001 were above average in English, mathematics and science, and average when compared with schools with similarly favoured social contexts. When compared with all schools nationally, there had been good progress between Years 3 and 6, but this is usual in schools that do not need to deal with serious and negative social factors. Compared with all schools

nationally, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard was above average for English and mathematics, but only average for science. However, the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. There was no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. These attainments broadly reflect the attainment of current pupils aged 11. This provides a picture of able pupils making good and sometimes very good progress, those of average ability making satisfactory progress apart from unsatisfactory progress in science, and pupils of lower ability making variable progress, some doing well and some not doing well enough. This reflects the attainment and progress of current pupils.

7. The teaching of Year 6 pupils is very good but final attainment is the product of learning from reception to Year 6, and is the result of the overall quality of education provided by the school. These results show that the quality of education provided by the school is inconsistent and lacks cohesion, and, therefore, is only satisfactory. The school reports that some pupils leave after their seventh birthday; they tend to be high-attainers and they are replaced by lower-attainers. This will tend to depress results overall of pupils aged 11, but minimally. The school does not provide sufficiently developed support for these late entrants.
8. The learning observed in lessons and the pupils' previous work shows that in the reception class children make good progress and have already attained higher standards than when they joined the school. In Years 1 and 2, pupils attain good standards in English, mathematics, art and design, geography, music and physical education, and satisfactory standards in science, history, design and technology and religious education. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory. Progress tends to match these attainments and is good in English, mathematics, art and design, geography, music and physical education, satisfactory in science, history, design and technology and religious education, and unsatisfactory in information and communication technology. There has been some improvement since last year because the most able pupils are now making good progress and achieving their potential.
9. In Year 3 attainment and progress are good, but in Year 4 both attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make good and often very good progress and attainment overall is high. Overall, high-ability pupils make good or very good progress, pupils of average and just below-average ability make at least satisfactory and often good progress, but the progress of lower-attaining pupils is variable, some making good progress and some making unsatisfactory progress.
10. This variability relates to provision. Pupils with significant special educational needs are well supported by learning support assistants and satisfactory individual action plans; they make good progress relative to their prior attainment. However, too few pupils with slight but still important learning problems are identified, and, consequently, they do not receive the highly focused help they need and their progress becomes slow and erratic.
11. There is a higher than average number of pupils who speak or are learning English as an additional language. Teachers recognise these pupils and do their best, but the school does not have the expertise to assess progress in English development, nor to introduce the specialised teaching techniques these pupils need. Consequently, pupils who have well-developed skills in their main language quickly gain good language development in English and make at least satisfactory progress in their general work. However, if the pupil's language is not well developed in their main language, or they have confused language development because they are learning two or even more

languages at the same time, their English development starts off well but then slows, and this has a negative impact on their general learning.

12. Standards of literacy are high and these promote effective learning across the curriculum. Pupils have very good speaking and listening skills and good writing skills, which increase their ability to learn. Reading is competent but pupils tend to rush on and miss the nuances of meaning, and fail to infer and deduce. Although satisfactory, their ability to investigate and research using books is not well developed. Numeracy standards are high and this enhances all learning. Pupils can use number and can present and analyse data well; these skills are both developed by, and also benefit, learning across the curriculum. Currently, information and communication technology skills are not sufficiently developed to enrich all learning.

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

13. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and schooling. They are polite and friendly, greeting visitors in a natural and relaxed way and treating the outsider to an enjoyable and stimulating introduction to their school. Pupils are extremely well motivated and feel warmly about their teachers, other pupils and the attractive surroundings in which they work. They are very positive about their learning, they like most subjects of the curriculum and value the wide range of activities outside lessons; most of them are involved in at least one club and often more than that. They recognise the importance of a co-operative and caring school community that values every member whatever their background and they want to be good citizens of that community. They show maturity beyond their years.
14. These very positive attitudes ensure that pupils are keen to attend school each day and they arrive punctually. The attendance rate has remained above or well above the national rate for primary schools since the previous inspection. Teachers complete the registers in accordance with statutory requirements and attendance during the inspection was good. Unauthorized absence is rare.
15. Behaviour in and around the school is consistently good and standards of pupils' personal development are very high. Pupils abide by the school and class rules, which they understand and accept as sensible. They know what is expected of them in terms of good behaviour and respond very well to the corporate and consistent implementation of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils are courteous and considerate when walking around the school, and they play well together at break-times. They treat assemblies with respect, and create a strong 'family feeling' when they are allowed to sit with their particular friends instead of class groups. In lessons pupils usually respect their teachers and behave well, following the teachers' instructions. Unfortunately this positive picture of good behaviour is spoilt on occasions by bad behaviour on the part of a small number of boys, mainly in one particular year group; they can be disruptive and thus hinder the learning of others. There have been no exclusions in the school's history.
16. Pupils' personal development is a great strength of the school, and maturity grows rapidly year by year. They take pride in helping to make the school community work well and gladly undertake tasks they are given for example, when Year 6 pupils answer the telephone in the lunch break. Every year they are involved in the review of the school and class rules. This ensures that they are fully aware of any changes made and that they want to make sure that these changes work. There is an active school council that includes representatives from both key stages. Several groups of pupils confirmed that the 'council business' is effective and mature. Year 6 pupils in particular show the

highest standards of personal maturity and responsibility. They are acutely aware of their senior position in the school and that in a short time they will be moving on to secondary school where there will be high expectations of their behaviour and work. They wear the distinctive Year 6 uniform with pride, and accept the responsibility it carries to use their authority with a caring and common sense approach to other pupils. They care for younger pupils and enjoy providing the protection which those who are more vulnerable may need. An area for development is the encouragement of pupils to be more responsible for their own independent learning for example, through homework projects and research; this would build upon their maturity and keenness to learn.

17. Relationships in the school are very good between pupils and staff, and amongst pupils. They are interested in the culture and customs of others as was observed in a Key Stage 1 'sharing' session to celebrate Divali. They watched other pupils performing Indian dance with complete attention and fascination, and discussed the style and colours of Hindu dress with genuine interest. They value each other and are supportive of those children for whom learning is not always easy. They socialise well together in and out of school, and share resources and collaborate well when working in groups.
18. Pupils' positive attitudes, regular attendance, good behaviour and very good personal development and relationships are important strengths of Cumnor School and make a significant contribution to standards and progress.

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

19. Good and talented teaching is at the heart of the school's success. More than 80 per cent of the teaching observed was at least good and 45 per cent very good or excellent. The proportion of excellent teaching was very high when compared with most other schools. Five per cent of the teaching, however, was unsatisfactory or poor. This inconsistency has a negative impact upon the progress of pupils as they move through the school. In some classes all teaching was at least good, and in one class 90 per cent was very good or excellent. In another class, however, a third of teaching was unsatisfactory or poor. Although senior managers have attempted to rectify this inconsistency, they have not been successful because the school has insufficiently systematic procedures to correct the situation for example, by monitoring and evaluating teaching, and by providing firm staff development guidance and highly focused training when teaching is not good enough.
20. The pupils' previous work and achievements show that teaching throughout the year reflects the quality of teaching observed during the inspection. When pupils are well taught they make consistently good progress, and very good progress when taught very well. However, when there is mixture of satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching, pupils make unsatisfactory progress over the year, and pick up unsatisfactory work habits and learning skills.
21. Teaching in the reception class is always good and usually very good, and this provides a secure start to the children's schooling. Skilled teaching of the youngest children beginning work within the National Curriculum helps them continue to develop the social and work skills they need, alongside dealing with the more structured demands of, for example, mathematics and English lessons. This good teaching continues throughout Years 1 and 2. Teaching is mainly at least good and often very good. On the rare occasion when the teaching is only satisfactory, this relates to unsatisfactory leadership and management of the subject concerned.

22. The teaching overall between Years 3 and 6 is good, with a secure beginning in Year 3 and very strong teaching in Years 5 and 6.
23. The very good or excellent teaching is founded upon the teachers' very clear understanding of how far each pupil has come and how far they need to go within each lesson, each unit of work and in the longer term. Lessons have very clear objectives that the pupils understand, and these reflect the teachers' high expectations which they continually reinforce. Teachers use clear and rich language, driving the pupils to think for themselves and to gain a joy in learning new words and ways to express their views. The pace of these lessons is very rapid, but quieter sections allow pupils to think through their work and consolidate their learning. Pupils catch the evident enthusiasm of the teachers and, consequently, find their learning exciting. In these lessons pupils work highly collaboratively, listen and concentrate intensely, and eagerly try out new ideas. They take great care with their work and strive to do their best, openly showing their satisfaction when they succeed.
24. The unsatisfactory teaching is ill prepared, has muddled objectives and the learning activities are badly matched to learning objectives. The management of the class is weak and the pace erratic. Time management is poor, and when the lesson runs out of steam, the teacher introduces time-filling and unplanned additional activities. Learning becomes haphazard and the behaviour of some of the pupils unruly. It is worth noting that even in these lessons, most pupils still try to learn and do their best.
25. In most classes, teachers provide very challenging work for the more and most able pupils and these pupils respond very well. Since most teachers carefully match the work to each ability level, the pupils of average and just below average ability find their learning very satisfying. This produces confidence, self-esteem, and a willingness to learn from others and to try out ideas even if they prove to be wrong. The least able and those with special educational needs are well supported, usually working closely with very skilled learning support assistants. Pupils with individual education plans benefit from the purposeful structure these plans bring to their learning. Even so, there are further pupils who would benefit from individual education plans. The school has increased the number of classroom assistants and this has been a wise investment since these staff provide a significant enrichment to the learning. Pupils from minority ethnic communities are celebrated in classes, and encouraged to bring their different experiences to the general learning. Many of these pupils either speak or are learning English as an additional language, and, although teachers treat them caringly and build their confidence, staff lack the expertise to understand the particular hurdles these pupils need to jump, and the specific help they need.
26. Teachers build the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills effectively, not simply in lessons based upon national strategies, but in other subjects, for example extended creative writing in history and skilled use of numbers in geography. Teachers make some use of information and communication technology in lessons, but do not always provide access to computers in a systematic way. Consequently, progress in this subject is too slow. The lack of a computer suite means that full class teaching is almost impossible.
27. Teachers mark work conscientiously but only the most effective teachers consistently add comments that make clear why the pupil has succeeded and how they can improve. Assessment has yet to become sufficiently systematic and therefore a sufficiently powerful tool in guiding the teaching and learning. Most teachers make satisfactory use of homework, but this opportunity to learn has yet to be the systematic and enriching opportunity seen in the most effective schools. In this context, although

most teachers are beginning to introduce individual targets for pupils, the school has yet to develop a sufficiently effective system of short-term targets agreed by pupils who are then involved in planning for, evaluating and recording their achievements. This is a missed opportunity for developing the pupils' skills in managing and taking responsibility for their own progress. Overall, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for individual research and investigation, for example, through use of the library and the opportunities for homework.

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

28. The quality and range of the learning opportunities offered to the pupils in the school are good, and have improved slightly since the time of the last inspection. Statutory requirements, including those for religious education, are met. The provision for design and technology has improved but information and communication technology is still not covered in sufficient depth. The excellent provision for personal and social education contributes towards the school's rich, broad and balanced curriculum to which most pupils have equal access; the exceptions relate to inadequacies in teaching in a minority of lessons. The day-to-day planning of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection and the needs of the higher-attaining pupils are more effectively met especially in mathematics.
29. The curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage is good and based on the national guidance for children of this age. At present the outside play area is underdeveloped and it does not support all areas of children's learning. The school promotes good cross-curricular links, which enrich the learning experiences of the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school development plan is leading to greater development in this area. Planning for mixed-age classes takes into account the broad range of learning needs in each class, including those of pupils with special educational needs. However, pupils for whom English is an additional language are not always sufficiently catered for. The curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is good overall, with emphasis on English and mathematics. Planning in mathematics is particularly effective and leads to teaching and learning that are good or very good in the subject. English is used well across other subjects of the curriculum such as history and religious education. Appropriate sex education and awareness of the proper use of drugs are included in science and the personal, social and health education programme.
30. Pupils' learning is enriched by very good provision for extra-curricular activities which are numerous and varied, covering sports, art, choir, religious education and European languages. This includes the modern Greek Club which pupils of all ages attend. They have built up a good vocabulary and learned to count and sing songs in Greek. The school organises a variety of visits to theatres, concerts, places of local interest and museums, which support all areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils visit an archaeological excavation and a working Victorian farm to enhance history topics. Pupils in all classes in Key Stage 2 have the opportunity of a residential visit, which adds greatly to the breadth of the curriculum. Good use is made of outside experts, for example from a design and technology workshop, a visit by actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company and by musicians from a production of West Side Story.
31. The school has good links with partner institutions and has developed very good relations with local secondary schools. There are many visits to secondary schools for physical education, art, science, drama and music workshops. Secondary co-ordinators visit the school, so pupils experience a smooth transfer into their next school. Able mathematicians attend sessions at one of the local secondary schools with pupils



of similar ability from other primary schools There are also very good links with the local college that runs "Master Maths" classes.

### **Provision for personal development**

32. The school cultivates pupils' personal development very well. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is part of the whole ethos and underpins the work of the school. Overall, the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
33. Provision for spiritual development is good. This is mainly through daily assemblies and religious education lessons. Pupils enjoy school assemblies and listen attentively. Some particularly good work was seen in the younger pupils' work on Divali where pupils were fascinated by the lighting of all the little Divas candles they had made. This was particularly effective as the rest of the hall was in darkness. Good use is made of a focal point and pupils are encouraged to reflect quietly on the theme. The music played in assemblies is explained to them and they are encouraged to listen reflectively.
34. Provision for moral development is very good with staff providing fine role-models. Each year the pupils are involved in agreeing their class rules, which are displayed imaginatively in each class. An awards system rewards special effort, improvement in work or behaviour and consideration for others. The school has a caring ethos built upon mutual respect and support for one another. Teachers, teaching assistants and all other adults in the school set the tone for responsible behaviour through the respect they have for the pupils and each other. They make a point of praising good behaviour where appropriate. Pupils are encouraged to care for others and to respect their own and the wider environment. Raising money for charities is an important aspect of the school's work, with pupils often initiating and organising fundraising activities themselves. The school recently raised over £600 for Dr Barnado's. They were organising fundraising for Children in Need at the end of the week of the inspection.
35. The school provides an excellent environment for the social development of its pupils. Good relationships are successfully fostered and there is a strong sense of identity and community in the school. Older pupils are encouraged to care for younger ones, and this helps to promote positive attitudes and friendships throughout the school. Pupils are actively encouraged to take responsibilities and many do so unasked. The school council is very active and effective. It has been extended to include representatives from all classes. The school receives a number of visitors, including the local vicar, authors and musicians providing opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and awareness. Further opportunities are provided through the numerous educational visits, and residential visits for older pupils. The school has very good relationships with other local schools, enabling pupils to mix with others.
36. Provision for cultural development is good. The experiences that the school provides for pupils broaden their horizons considerably and enrich their cultural appreciation. There are school trips to art galleries, museums and other places of interest. The display of artwork throughout the school reflects the styles of a diverse range of artists and famous people from all walks of life, and music plays an important part in the life of school. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions and they participate in local music and dance festivals. Religious education makes a contribution to the pupils' understanding of the diversity and richness of other faith cultures, but this is not fully developed in other areas of the curriculum.

### **The contribution made by the community**

37. The school, situated in a beautiful village that is full of activity and interest and within easy reach of the city of Oxford, makes good use of all that is available in the local and wider community. There is full involvement with the local church and a pre-school nursery meets in its own building on the school site. This ensures that the children who attend it are well acquainted with their surroundings when they start school. Pupils take part in a variety of local festivals and interests as, for example, the County Art Show which last year was held at Blenheim Palace. There are trips to museums and theatres and a variety of visitors from the locality enrich the curriculum. Business partners have helped to provide a classroom, the wildlife area and the 'millennium garden'. The school takes advantage of good relationships with other agencies and a programme for the most able pupils. The school particularly values the community involvement of a number of citizen mentors who help by listening to pupils read.

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

38. The school continues to offer good standards of personal and pastoral care to all its pupils, maintaining high quality standards since the last inspection.
39. Staff know and understand the child protection policy and procedures are overseen by the head-teacher who is the named officer for child protection in the school.
40. Governors undertake health and safety audits at regular intervals in order to ensure a secure and safe environment. Even so, the inspection team identified two issues of concern in the school. There is insufficient communication between the caretaker, who has day-to-day oversight of health and safety, and governors. The risks identified by the inspection team suggest that more training is needed for all concerned.
41. Several staff in the school have up-to-date first-aid training certificates and others have undergone the general 'first response' first-aid training. Accidents and relevant incidents are recorded correctly and fire drills are undertaken at least once a term. The school office and foyer provide a caring but not ideal place for looking after children who are upset or unwell.
42. The school secretary enters the weekly records of attendance on the school computer and monitors them regularly and the education welfare officer visits the school at least once a term. These activities help to promote good attendance.
43. The transition from pre-school education and later transition to secondary schooling are well managed. An excellent programme for personal, social and health ensures that pupils gain the information, skills and ability to make their own decisions as they mature.
44. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are monitored well through profiles that contain records of personal and social development alongside copies of end-of-year reports and a copy of the home-school agreement. Additional monitoring is in the form of awards at the Monday assembly for example, recognition as 'Stars' and 'Child of the Day'. The rewards and sanctions policies are well promoted, consistently implemented and well understood by pupils.
45. Assessment, evaluation and tracking of pupils' academic progress have not made sufficient improvement since the last inspection and are still unsatisfactory. Whilst the school provides a wealth of opportunities for assessment to take place, for example interim standard assessment tests and commercial tests, teachers do not use them consistently throughout the school. As one result, information is not always available to

be entered into the school's assessment software package. Secondly, there is insufficient information to analyse what value the teaching is adding for individual pupils. Thirdly, lack of relevant and comprehensive information prevents the school from analysing the progress of different groups of pupils, for example by gender, ethnic groups, stage in learning English and different levels of ability. Currently the school is also unable to set specific and time-scaled targets for either cohorts or individual pupils because it lacks this information. Some of the assessment activities currently operated in the school do not fulfil a clear purpose and it is unclear why an assessment activity is undertaken or what is the planned use of the data. There is a lack of clarity as to who is responsible for each aspect of assessment, for instance, should the moderation of handwriting be assessed by the English co-ordinator or the assessment co-ordinator. Inspectors recognise that the school has identified assessment as an area for priority improvement.

46. Staff as a whole do not use assessment sufficiently to help pupils understand why they succeed and what they need to learn in order to improve. Marking seldom makes these points clear, and the school has only begun to agree short-term targets with pupils. The school gives insufficient opportunities for pupils to agree these targets, plan for themselves how to achieve them, and evaluate and record their achievements.

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

47. The partnership between the school and parents is a strength. This became clear from the minutes of the pre-inspection parents' meeting and the good number of positive returns on the parental questionnaires. There is an open-door policy at all times and parents are fully included in, and consulted on, many aspects of the day-to-day running of the school. They are welcome in the school each day and many of them bring their children into the building each morning before the official start of the school day. A large number of parents also help in the classrooms to provide welcome extra pairs of hands and to support teachers and classroom assistants.
48. A strong and hard-working school association organises many social and fund-raising events a year. Funds raised are spent in consultation with the headteacher and staff to enhance school facilities and thus benefit all pupils.
49. There is a well-devised and structured home-school agreement that is reviewed annually in consultation with parents and improved if necessary.
50. The quality of information provided by the school for parents is extremely good. Newsletters are regular, plentiful and informative, often through the work of parents 'linked' to each class. Pupils' annual reports at the end of the school year are detailed and make clear to parents what their children know, understand and can do. They contain simple targets for pupils in English and mathematics so parents can help their children at home. There are open evenings in each term to give parents an opportunity to discuss their children's learning and progress with staff, although some parents feel they are given insufficient time.
51. Homework and reading diaries provide a useful form of communication between home and school. Parents are well informed about pupils' forthcoming study each term. The school prospectus and annual report of governors to parents are further ways of keeping parents fully informed about school matters.

52. The genuine partnership that exists between parents and the school is a strength that supports pupils' academic progress and their personal development, and contributes significantly to a warm and welcoming school community.

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

53. The leadership and management of the school require improvement. The weaknesses tend to devalue the strengths and have resulted in standards by the time pupils are 11 remaining static, and other weaknesses not being rectified. The last report found that improvements in leadership and management were required, and this is still the case. The new headteacher realises that there is much to do and is determined that standards will rise. She has already produced a revised school improvement plan that sets raising standards as a clear priority and has already seen every member of staff teach. She is building a climate of improvement and provides good personal and professional leadership. The leadership and management express the aims and values of the school for example, provision for personal development and partnership with parents, but these aims place too little priority on high achievement. Leadership and management are judged to be satisfactory because the leadership of the new headteacher and the close involvement of governors have begun to create a school in which standards have begun to rise and full benefit is beginning to be felt of a strong staff team and very positive attitudes of the pupils.
54. The senior management team meets regularly, and the headteacher has been successful in building this into a team of key managers to drive standards upwards; present members of this team are already working closely together in a determined manner. At present, however, the team does not have a sufficiently clear idea of ways forward because governors and senior staff analyse and interpret assessment data with insufficient rigour and expertise, and because of the lack of a probing and systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation. Similarly, policies and procedures require auditing, improving and making more coherent, so that they set precise targets for standards of attainment and quality of provision.
55. Inspectors found significant inconsistencies in practice. Policies were implemented inconsistently and there was a marked culture of staff getting on with their own tasks, rather than ensuring everyone worked as members of a close-knit team with shared objectives. Where this teamwork was most apparent, standards were rising rapidly for example, in music. The quality of subject leadership and management varies considerably from good to unsatisfactory, and as an aspect of full school management is unsatisfactory. When the subject leadership and management are good, attainment is high, for example mathematics, and where leadership and management are weak standards are unsatisfactory, for example science. Subject and aspect managers have insufficient time to fulfil their responsibilities, for example, monitoring and supporting better teaching. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has worked hard and effectively, since taking up her role, to build her expertise and ensure the appropriate systems are in place. She is given, however, insufficient time away from class teaching to perform her role, for example, working with pupils and supporting colleagues. Governors have recently cut the non-teaching time available to the co-ordinator, and this means she is not available to help pupils who join the school late and with low attainment. Several subjects lack definitive schemes of work and programmes to monitor their implementation. Even so, the high professionalism of most teachers overcomes these deficits week by week; the damage becomes apparent over time since topics may be repeated or missed and the continuity and progression of the pupils' learning are not made secure.

56. The governing body includes a wide range of expertise and shows determination. They are closely involved with the work of the school and specified governors work closely with each subject co-ordinator. There is a sensible pattern of meetings, and governors are satisfactorily involved in budgeting and improvement planning. Governors ensure the governing body considers all aspects of their statutory responsibilities. Even so, they are insufficiently effective at raising standards because they have an unclear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors do not have a sufficiently rigorous system for monitoring standards, for example in teaching, and do not rigorously analyse assessment data for example, National Curriculum test results, to identify trends and where they need to direct action. They set targets for the school to achieve, but these tend to be on the basis of present ways of working, rather than the standards a school such as Cumnor should achieve, namely the highest standards achieved by similar schools. As a result, their decision-making tends to be reactive and piecemeal, rather than powerfully strategic. A strong exception to this tendency was the clear thinking and rigour that they put into selecting and recruiting a new headteacher.
57. Planning as a whole does not specify sufficiently clearly what is to be achieved and therefore, measuring and reviewing progress are too imprecise. Planning does not set a strict schedule for interim achievements, although the most recent school improvement plan has begun to address this deficit. As a result of unclear views as to the school's strengths and weaknesses, priorities are muddled, insufficiently coherent and are not firmly related to setting challenging targets for individual pupils, classes and the school as a whole.

## **Accommodation**

58. The buildings and grounds provide an attractive place in which to teach and learn, and many improvements are evident over the last year. Overall, the accommodation is good but it has not been managed to full advantage. Classrooms and public areas are attractively decorated and displays are of good quality. There is a very attractive 'millennium garden' and a wildlife area, though a pond in this area poses a health and safety risk. Classrooms are of an adequate size and well furnished, and the school is in good decorative order. The caretaker, supported by one cleaner, keeps the school clean and tidy. He is responsible for identifying health and safety issues on a daily basis but he is not included at meetings of the premises committee or on occasions when governors undertake health and safety risk assessments around the school. Hard play areas are satisfactory, although not very large for the number of pupils involved, and the senior playground lacks sufficient adventure equipment. Attractive, quiet sitting areas are being developed and the deputy headteacher has imaginative ideas for future development. Although there is a recently fenced area adjacent to the reception class this has yet to be landscaped to provide appropriate opportunities for structured outdoor play. This area does not have gates with child-proof catches and this poses a health and safety risk. Even though there is a spare internal classroom and a smaller room used for music and small group activities, there is no room assigned for information and communication technology. Good use is made of small spaces to provide for example, a food technology area.

## **Staffing**

59. There are sufficient qualified staff to meet the requirements of the curriculum and sufficient numbers of trained classroom support staff, although additional training is needed for information and communication technology. Parents and other volunteers significantly enhance and enrich the pupils' learning. Staff are efficiently but not always effectively deployed for example, providing too little time for co-ordinators to fulfil their responsibilities and allocating insufficient time for the teaching of information and communication technology. The insufficient time for the co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs has resulted in provision for such pupils being insufficiently managed and pupils needing support being missed. There are sufficient administrative staff but there needs to be better management co-ordination so that information flows effectively, for example, concerning financial data. Currently, information is not always immediately accessible and this leads to decisions being made on the basis of incomplete or inaccurate data, for example, records on attendance supplied to government.
60. The school has in place statutory arrangements for the performance management of teachers but these procedures are not yet sufficiently rigorous. They are insufficiently backed by the monitoring of teaching that informs the teacher what works, what does not and what needs to improve in the context of standards of attainment to achieve, and assessment of pupils' progress. Similarly, there are no published criteria to help teachers differentiate good from other teaching. There are satisfactory arrangements for the appraisal of support staff. The school arranges training for staff but it is not part of an overall plan nor sufficiently related to the needs of the school development plan, or training needs identified by appraisal and monitoring of performance. Procedures for dealing with unsatisfactory performance are not sufficiently systematic and rigorous. Not all staff have up-to-date job descriptions.

## **Resources for learning**

61. Resources are of adequate range and quality overall. However, there are insufficient computers, and library resources do not provide sufficient literature from cultures other than British. There are insufficient resources for outside play at the Foundation Stage.

### **Efficiency**

62. Recent changes in personnel have created discontinuity in financial control, and this has made more damaging the weaknesses in the governors' and senior management's management of finance. As a result, management and governors could not readily explain why a reduction in the annual surplus had been budgeted to reduce from some £28000 to under £2000, and could not show that the school could fund present provision in the next financial year. This is an unsatisfactory situation and represents a decline in standards since the last inspection.
63. Previous governors' minutes do not make clear that governors make investments that are tightly related to raising pupils' attainment and the performance of the school, that are sustainable in the longer term, or are based upon a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Assigning budget sums to areas of expenditure was said to be 'conservative'. This seems to mean that although sums of money are allocated, there are not the tight costings as to maintenance and development needs that effective budgeting requires. Consequently, expenditure is insufficiently prudent and strategic because governors hope, but cannot demonstrate, that there will be a reasonable balance by the end of the year. Although there is a budget making cycle, it does not produce a budget for the coming year that has sufficient precision as to appropriate priorities and does not project sufficiently into future years to ensure essential improvements can be funded and the present provision sustained. Although the school knows the principles of best value they are not applied with sufficient rigour. The school invests funds it receives for such areas as special educational needs appropriately.
64. Despite the above, considering the revenue of the school and the high attainment and good personal development of pupils, the school offers satisfactory value for money. Weaknesses in financial control and management, however, mean governors cannot ensure that this remains the case. The new headteacher recognises these deficiencies and has made improvement an urgent priority.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

65. The school provides a sound education and makes very good provision for personal development. However, improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because weaknesses identified at that time have not been adequately rectified and, consequently, inconsistencies remain. There remains some under-achievement amongst pupils, especially those of lower ability and those facing greater problems in their learning. A start towards improvement has been made but determined and urgent action by governors and all staff is needed because there is much to be done. What follows should be seen as equally important aspects of an overall improvement action plan.

66. To create a climate of improvement and to raise attainment overall, governors should;

(1) Make leadership and management effective by:

(The following are best exemplified by reading paragraphs to 53 – 65 as a whole, as each aspect supports the others.)

- creating a more strategic improvement plan that addresses current weaknesses with rigour. This plan should specify quality standards to meet, and set challenging targets at every level for pupils' achievement that reflect the highest standards in similar schools;
- basing this plan upon more systematic monitoring and evaluation, which identifies areas for immediate attention and sets interim time-scaled steps towards improvement so that governors can evaluate and measure progress;
- reviewing all policies and procedures, creating a schedule for future continuous improvement;
- increasing the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators;
- systematic planning for staff development and more rigorous management of performance;
- ensuring financial control and management are secure and well understood by every governor and member of staff.

(2) Make assessment an effective improvement tool by:

- designing and implementing a more coherent and comprehensive plan for the regular and systematic assessment and tracking of pupils' achievement;  
(Paragraphs 45 – 46)
- analysing these data in ways that interpret what works, what does not and what needs to be done next;  
(Paragraph 27 and 55)
- using these findings to improve teaching and curriculum;  
(Paragraphs 27 and 60)
- using these findings to set each pupil short term targets to meet, involving them in planning ways they can achieve them and evaluate their personal progress.  
(Paragraphs 43 and 45 – 46)

(3) Improve the effectiveness of learning support for all pupils by:

- increasing the time available to the co-ordinator of special educational needs for meeting her responsibilities;  
(Paragraphs 25, 55 and 59)
- improving provision and staff expertise for supporting pupils who are learning or speak English as an additional language;  
(Paragraphs 10 and 25)



- increasing the opportunities for all pupils to learn independently for example, through a more systematic and effective programme of homework, and effective use of improved library resources for individual research.  
(Paragraphs 16, 27 and 43)

(4) Improve attainment in information and communication technology by:

(What follows is best exemplified by reading paragraphs 136 – 143 as a whole)

- implementing more continuous and comprehensive training for all staff in the use and application of these technologies;
- increasing the number and accessibility of computers;
- designing and implementing a more effective and comprehensive curriculum plan for the teaching of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

The school should also rectify the following less significant but still important weaknesses.

(1) Improve the attainment and progress in design and technology by:

- ensuring lessons are planned in ways that place appropriate emphasis on the design process alongside the craft and making elements.  
(Paragraph 122)

(2) Improve the provision for children at the Foundation Stage by:

- providing appropriate outside equipment and hard areas for the development of gross motor skills.  
(Paragraph 71)

(3) Improve provision for the health and safety of pupils by;

- rectifying immediately risks identified during the inspection;
- increasing training for staff and governors;
- ensuring more productive working arrangements between the caretaker and the staff and governors accountable for assessing risk.  
(Paragraphs 40 and 48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	16	20	7	2	1	0
Percentage	16	29	36	13	4	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	191
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	95.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	93.9
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	15	19	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	12	14
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	32	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (86)	88 (90)	94 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	12	15
	Girls	18	17	18
	Total	33	31	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (90)	85 (93)	97 (100)
	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)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	21	18	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	18
	Girls	16	14	17
	Total	34	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (88)	82 (80)	90 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	17	14	16
	Total	33	29	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (92)	74 (88)	87 (92)
	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	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*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)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	24

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	142

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000 – 2001
	£
Total income	425217
Total expenditure	411141
Expenditure per pupil	1922
Balance brought forward from previous year	14180
Balance carried forward to next year	28256

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

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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	191
Number of questionnaires returned	91

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	40	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	41	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	51	19	7	2
The teaching is good.	60	35	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	40	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	32	7	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	52	41	4	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	46	49	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	35	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	49	40	9	0	2

### Other issues raised by parents

- Several parents felt homework should be set more systematically, especially in younger classes
- Several parents felt attainment should be higher
- Several parents felt there was insufficient support for most and least able pupils
- One parent felt the school did not sufficiently develop sensitivity to other cultures
- Some parents felt the time to discuss their child's progress at consultation evenings was too short
- Some parents were concerned over large class sizes
- Many parents felt the new headteacher was making a positive difference

## **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. Provision for the children at the Foundation Stage is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. The children enter the reception class in the autumn, spring or summer terms in which their fifth birthday falls. Many children attend the independent and voluntary pre-school class, which is on site. There are close links as teachers and children move between the classes. This benefits the children greatly as the younger ones settle in very quickly to the reception routine. The school also has good contacts with other nursery groups and children make a smooth transition into work within the National Curriculum in Year 1.
68. The teaching is of very high quality and is one of the strengths of the school. This has improved considerably since the previous inspection when it was only satisfactory. The highly experienced and qualified nursery nurse supports the teaching excellently. Other learning support assistants also reflect the same quality in specific areas such as creative development. The depth of planning, together with the highly skilled and imaginative delivery, noted especially in the literacy lesson, ensures that the children progress rapidly but securely towards the early learning goals.
69. Activities vary from lesson to lesson and engage the children most effectively. The staff plan and arrange the daily activities such as sand and water play very well, and this increases the children's learning opportunities considerably. An example of this was when the children had to name shapes as they felt them hidden in the sand.
70. The class teacher keeps detailed records of the children's achievements and is able to assess their progress most accurately. The reading records and the home-school diary are exemplars of the teacher's clear understanding of the need for assessment to target the children's future learning. The home-school record shows the deep involvement of the parents in their children's learning.
71. Facilities for outdoor play are very limited and unsatisfactory. The children have no large mobile toys such as tricycles or scooters to develop their young limbs. There is no purpose-built hard area, nor a suitable climbing frame. These shortcomings detract seriously from the excellent provision seen elsewhere.

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

72. Provision is very good. Care, friendship and respect predominate in the classroom. The teacher's concern for the children is particularly evident when they gather together for sessions sitting together on the carpet. She ensures that all children have every opportunity to express their own ideas, and build up their confidence and self esteem by listening and sharing their views with the group. When needing to calm down excitable children, she does so in an extremely gentle but firm manner, yet leaving the children concerned feeling pleased that they have learned to conform by behaving well. The children showed great respect for each other's work during an activity session. A number of children had made some vulnerable structures with wooden building blocks. Although many others were working and walking by them, they were most careful not to disturb these structures or knock them over.

73. The children are very happy to share and talk about their work. One child considered it was very important to show a visitor around the class pointing out the various activities and demonstrating some very confidently. The child was not at all embarrassed when a torch failed to work, whilst demonstrating light and dark. In many of the activities the children work very well together. They role-play very well in the 'make-believe' shop and organise themselves positively. The children also work independently on jigsaw puzzles and concentrate for long periods of time on construction toys, showing a growing maturity in understanding that some things take time to accomplish.

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

74. Provision is very good. The staff use every opportunity to extend the children's use and understanding of language in speaking and listening. The children work extremely well when presented with tasks that are developed from their own experiences and express themselves very clearly. In one lesson the teacher used photographs of various activities that had taken place in school. The children were exceptionally keen to provide captions for the photographs. The teacher's clear and probing questioning led the children to consider what they and their friends were doing. 'She's having a picnic and she's outside', and 'We are playing in the light and dark tent', are good examples of their growing use of structured speech. The children's oral language transfers remarkably well into their writing. The teacher working with smaller groups guides them most successfully in leading them from expressing ideas such as 'Me climbing', to 'I'm climbing'. Higher-attaining children are able to write their own sentences, show a good grasp of the sounds of letters and how to put them together to make words for example, 'I'm sweeing on the muckee bars'. Other children show a secure knowledge of how to spell correctly high frequency words such as 'the, is, and it'. They also make thoughtful attempts at sounding out the words, 'The optcqn (optician) came' and 'Kate is sw (swinging) on the ty (re)'. These are examples of the excellent progress the children are making in communicating to others.
75. All the children are able to write their names recognisably and they form their letters very carefully. The nursery nurse was reinforcing these skills particularly well. She described the hand movements, constantly building up the children's language skills, and used a shallow sand-tray in which they were tracing individual letters very well. Despite having a very wide variety of activity choices around the classroom, the children show a great determination to succeed in their literacy tasks. They concentrate on those that will increase their learning.
76. Provision for the teaching of reading is most thorough. Sounds are repeated daily. As the children progress they also build up very wide recognition of whole words, through flash cards practised at home and at school. All the children are enthusiastic about reading; some read with great fluency whilst others persevere and make good progress. The children are making great strides towards achieving the early learning goals in literacy.



### **Mathematical development.**

77. Provision is very good. Mathematical language features strongly throughout the teaching day. The teacher regularly asks such questions as 'How many...?' at registration and all children are making good progress in their counting from 0 to 10. There was some particularly good teaching on shape. By partially revealing shapes she completely held the children's attention and they were most enthusiastic in their suggestions of what the shapes could be. All the children could clearly recognise the difference between a square and an oblong, and a number of them could explain the difference very well. In a subsequent lesson they quickly learned the names of cubes and cuboids. One child noted that the cube looked like a dice. Using bubbles in an outside lesson the teacher most successfully showed the difference between a sphere and a circle. The children, working with the teacher, clearly recognised which shapes to use when building up a picture of a house.
78. In exploring shapes under the sand, the children carefully thought about the number of corners and sides of the shapes before they made their choice. The nursery nurse led this group very well, reinforcing the names and the characteristics of the different shapes at every opportunity. One child showed considerable skill in manipulating shapes on the computer, building up columns as if working with a jigsaw puzzle. Others were playing with jigsaws with which they were exploring the rotation of shapes and spatial awareness. The very good provision also included a well stocked 'grocer's shop' giving the children further practice in counting and using money. The children are making very good progress towards their early learning goals for mathematics.

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

79. Provision is very good. The school provides many visits from different people to give the children a wider knowledge of the world around them. One of great interest to the children was that of an optician. During the visit they delighted in trying on many different styles of glasses, sunglasses and those that the optician uses to gauge people's sight. They experimented and made good observations, 'These make you look blue'.
80. The computer is on throughout the day and the staff change the programmes available to match the teaching activities going on at the time. The children make good use of it and show considerable skill in working through a program. In a lesson on celebrations the children were very interested in Divali, the Hindu Festival of Light. The teacher's expectations were high and the children were very interested in the story of Rama and Sita and delighted in the intricately decorated Hindu dress. The children were able to relate well to the story through the follow-up activities of making puppets of Rama and Sita. In discussion later the children knew that Divali was something to do with light, 'because you light candles'. They also knew that the story came from India.
81. Children in the dark and light tent were keen to show how shadows changed when a torch shone from different angles and distances. Even though the batteries were flat, the children demonstrated well what would happen if the torch were working. Provision to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world is good and ensures a growing depth of interest. The children are well on the way to achieving their early learning goals in this area.

### **Physical development**

82. Whereas the teaching of physical education is excellent, provision for the subject is unsatisfactory for gross motor skills in outdoor play. In their lessons, however, the children follow the very active example of their teacher in learning to travel in many different ways. The high quality teaching sparks their imagination. They bound and hop sideways, slide and crawl. They show very good control and some of them collaborate very well suggesting slow and rapid movements. Throughout the lesson the children showed excellent spatial awareness. Even though movement was rapid, and sometimes in concentrated groups, the children were very careful to avoid collisions. On being questioned about warming up and cooling down, they clearly explain about the need to have the heart ready for robust exercise. The children can dress themselves competently.
83. The provision for the development of fine motor skills is very good. The children use crayons and pencils well, holding them correctly and a number of them show particular skills in colouring neatly and all write their names very legibly. Those children who were seen working on the computer manipulated the mouse with accuracy. All the children showed good proficiency when using the scissors to cut out their captions. Overall the children are making very good progress.

### **Creative development**

84. Creative development is a strong point in provision and is very good. In addition to the free-choice work areas in art, the staff ensure that the children experience many forms of media including three-dimensional work. During the inspection week the children were making clay Divali lamps for their candle display. They were very excited when making sunglasses following the optician's visit, cutting them out and gluing them with care. In a music lesson they clapped accurately to the rhythm of words and then followed simple graphic notation to make sounds loud and soft, and created simple pieces of music with percussion instruments. This gave them confidence when joining older pupils for singing. Children learn the joy and satisfaction of creating and are well on the way to meeting their early learning goals.

### **ENGLISH**

85. Provision for learning in English is good. Results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven in 2001 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard or above was well above the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing. When compared with similar schools, the school's performance in these tests was close to average in reading and below average in writing.
86. By the time the pupils leave the school, at the end of Year 6, they also achieve standards which are well above the national expectations of 11-year-olds. The school's overall performance in the English tests for pupils aged 11 was average for similar schools. This indicates a slight decline in standards that the school is now working hard to improve. Inspection evidence confirms this above average standard of work, which is reflected in good overall progress. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in the lessons observed and an analysis of test data shows that there were only very minor differences.
87. Overall, the standards observed during the current inspection are above those reported in the previous inspection. In both key stages, standards of speaking and listening are high. Pupils speak about their interests and experiences confidently in one-to-one situations. In small groups they take turns to speak and they make sure they express

themselves so that others can understand. They repeat their statements in a different way to express their intentions clearly. Pupils develop confidence in speaking to an audience during the review session at the end of the literacy hour, which encourages pupils individually and in small groups to explain what has been achieved. They speak clearly and confidently when reading to an adult, and during discussions about what they have been learning and about their attitudes to school life. They pay good attention to instructions from their class teacher and show a great deal of respect for others, as observed in Year 2, when enthusiastic pupils were reminded that it would be their turn next time to share their ideas with the class. Pupils in Year 4 listened attentively and with great interest to their peers when they describe their imaginary experiences of 'being sad and alone and being picked on'. Year 5 pupils effectively use role-play and drama in a variety of situations. They re-tell stories, read out prayers and plays they have written. They listen intently when their class teacher describes a scary house, while they imagine what the scene looked like, the sounds they could hear and the feelings they had. Teachers' reinforcement of the need to listen carefully at all times helps to establish good habits of listening and this contributes positively to pupils achieving good standards. Pupils in Year 6 spoke with enthusiasm about their opinions on 'The War in Afghanistan', 'Should Concord Fly?', and 'Breast Cancer.' They present both sides of an argument, while the rest of the class listen attentively and ask questions appropriately. They express interesting ideas about important world issues giving reasons for their views. They learn to express ideas and feelings clearly and effectively.

88. Attainment in reading in Key Stage 1 is above national expectations. The majority of pupils including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, read competently and fluently, often above the expected level. They show good understanding and read with expression. Pupils use phonics as well as the context of the story as cues to interpret unfamiliar words. They show sound comprehension of meaning and predict likely outcomes for the story. Most pupils recall with accuracy what they have read so far and readily find the pages referred to when talking about what they read. Pupils show confidence when reading to an adult and are keen to demonstrate their skills. The school has established a positive ethos for reading and parents are encouraged to participate. Home-school reading records are regularly checked and kept up-to-date. The comments of parents indicate that they play an important part in the development of pupils' reading achievements. However, the teachers do not keep a more evaluative and diagnostic record of the pupils' reading skills. In Key Stage 1 most reading follows a reading scheme, but in Key Stage 2 pupils read from a variety of books of their choice and show a preference for particular authors or themes. The teachers do not always direct the higher-attaining readers to more challenging texts, including non-fiction. Regular library periods are not timetabled in every class to enhance their reading development and their ability to locate and retrieve information is unsatisfactory.
89. Attainment in writing is above that expected nationally in both key stages. Pupils make good progress in their ability to write independently. In Key Stage 1 pupils write sentences and short stories using capital letters and full stops correctly. They write extended accounts of well-known stories such as 'The Bear' and 'The Scary Night' or 'The Lion Who came to Tea'. They write for a variety of purposes such as postcards, captions and labels for their science work and a set of instructions on 'How To Get To School'. Pupils have regular, planned handwriting exercises throughout the school and this has a positive impact on the standards achieved, although they do not write in cursive script in Year 2. The presentation of written work is generally satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 pupils structure sentences correctly and express their ideas clearly. They write creatively when analysing features of well-known stories, such as 'The Three Little

Pigs', or when devising suitable verbs and adverbs to dramatic effect, using examples such as 'spluttered' or 'mumbled' instead of 'said'. Pupils write in a variety of styles and for a range of purposes including poetry, instructions, observations and summaries. Year 3 pupils write imagined autobiographies on life in World War 2, which give a clear picture of their feelings and reactions to situations. They use appropriate vocabulary to convey meaning clearly and analyse how words have changed their meaning over time. Pupils study aspects of grammar and apply what they learn to improve their writing. They use the art of persuasion when designing their own uniform in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the good support given to them by classroom assistants, although the work planned does not always match the targets as laid down in their individual education plans. Pupils for whom English is an additional language do not always make satisfactory progress, as there is no clear provision for their individual needs.

90. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages; all lessons observed were taught at least well and a quarter very well. When teaching is most effective, teachers use their subject knowledge well and use first-hand experience to stimulate pupils' interest and enthusiasm and to enhance their learning. This was clearly demonstrated in Year 5, when the teacher's enthusiasm was transmitted to the pupils who in turn were keen to record their own reactions through drama. Effective questioning is used to consolidate understanding of text and use of language. In the very good teaching, questioning is used in a way that enables the majority of pupils to respond. Good examples of brainstorming are used to extend and explore pupils' ideas. This was amply illustrated in a Year 6 lesson where the teacher's subject knowledge, combined with the very good teaching, enabled all pupils to participate actively both in oral discussion and also when working within a group. Where teaching is less effective, this is mainly due to the teacher allowing pupils to talk out of turn or to lose their concentration. In some lessons there is a lack of attention to the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, especially those at early stages of learning English. Similarly, when teaching is less effective, the expectations of teachers are not sufficiently challenging. Objectives are not clearly focused and pupils are not stretched to achieve the standards of which they are capable.
91. Pupils are managed well. Teachers use positive strategies, praising pupils for good behaviour and giving stars and stickers as rewards and incentives. They apply behaviour strategies consistently and quietly, and achieve good standards of behaviour, creating an atmosphere where pupils concentrate and learn effectively. Very good questioning techniques are employed to assess pupils' level of understanding, to reinforce previous learning and to extend ideas. In shared reading lessons, all teachers recapitulate on what has happened so far before moving on to the next section. Teachers use the adequate supply of resources for literacy effectively, for example 'Big Books' enable whole class reading to take place, which helps the lower-attainers to increase their reading skills by participating with others. Teachers also prepare their own resources such as opposite words used for group games. Teachers make too little provision for pupils to use information and communication technology to enhance learning and often the computer is not being used effectively to help raise standards of literacy.
92. All pupils do homework regularly in the form of set reading tasks and work related to classroom exercises. This is effective in extending pupils' knowledge beyond the classroom and involving parents at home.
93. There is an adequate range of good quality books in classrooms and the library although there are not enough books that reflect cultural diversity. The library does not contain a

computer or more advanced reference books that can be used for further independent learning and research.

94. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. Literacy skills are used across the curriculum; for example, vocabulary is developed well in science. Younger pupils write about the parts of the body. Extended writing in the first person is used to convey pupils' ideas of what it was like living during World War 2 or life in Ancient Egypt. The good standards in literacy support progress across the curriculum, and in particular the high standards in speaking and listening, and teachers, in turn, use opportunities in other subjects to support progress in literacy. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
95. The co-ordination of the subject is not yet satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the role and has not yet developed a clear action plan for improvement. A scheme of work with systematic assessment procedures and individual tracking of pupils' progress is not yet in place. The teaching and learning are not monitored so that areas for immediate attention have not yet been identified. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

96. Provision for learning is good with many very good features. Standards in mathematics are above average. In 2001 national tests for pupils aged seven, results were above the national average and in line with those of similar schools. These results have risen over the last three years in line with national trends. Results in the national tests in 2001 at the end of Year 6 have shown improvement since the last inspection in the proportion of pupils exceeding the standard expected nationally, including exceptionally high marks from gifted and talented pupils. Standards in the 2001 national tests were above the national average. These results were similar to those of the previous year and are line with those of similar schools. They do not show improvement overall because of the higher number of pupils with special educational needs. There was no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
97. Pupils have good basic mathematical skills and as a result are confident in their approach to all mathematical tasks. Although the attainment of pupils with special educational needs is below national expectations, their achievement is satisfactory because they are well supported in lessons. Older pupils who are gifted mathematicians are also identified and given the opportunity to work with pupils of similar ability from other schools. They make very good progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language usually make equivalent progress to their English-speaking peers.
98. By the age of seven, pupils order numbers to 100 and know what each digit represents. They are competent with addition and subtraction and apply what they have learned to problems involving money. They understand multiplication as repeated addition and more able pupils know their two, three, four, five and 10 times tables. They use mathematical vocabulary to describe and classify two and three-dimensional shapes. They read the time on digital and analogue clocks, and estimate what they can do in a minute.
99. In Year 6, most pupils have accurate recall of multiplication tables, and work out calculations in their heads quickly. They choose appropriate number operations and different methods of calculation to solve problems. They have a good understanding of

the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimals. They know the properties of shapes and describe them mathematically, and set out their work in a methodical way. They extend their knowledge of symmetry by plotting the co-ordinates of shapes on a grid and reflecting them in the four quadrants. More able pupils were able to name different axes of symmetry. Lower-attaining pupils effectively use a computer program to reinforce their learning.

100. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good but there are inconsistencies. Of the lessons observed, a third were taught well and a third very well. Almost a third were taught satisfactorily but one lesson was unsatisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the pupils' needs. Lessons are well planned and pupils of different abilities are well catered for in both the questioning and the written activities. Lessons follow the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils are keen to answer the brisk and challenging mental questions at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and as a result pupils are attentive and well behaved. This ensures that time is well used. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. They correct pupils' mistakes sensitively and the children respond confidently. Good questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves and to explain how they work out their answers. In most lessons, explanations are clear and relate well to what the pupils have learned in previous lessons.
101. In a lesson where teaching and learning were less successful, the pace slowed as a result of long explanations and frequent interruptions, pupils were inattentive and as a result, not all of them understood the work they were given. In lessons where pupils make the most progress, activities are clearly explained, opportunities are given for pupils to extend their thinking and explain their methods of working. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils related the idea of groups of numbers to the multiplication tables they had learned. The pace of lessons was good and in the lessons where there were frequent changes of activity, the pupils remained motivated and interested for the whole lesson. There is a suitable emphasis on teaching the correct mathematical vocabulary throughout the school. Learning support assistants work closely with the teachers and are effective in supporting groups of younger pupils or individual pupils with special educational needs in the classrooms.
102. Teachers ask challenging questions, assess pupils' knowledge and encourage them to think for themselves. Time is used well at the end of the lessons to reinforce what has been learned. Marking is generally good, although not always consistent from class to class. Generally, comments to the pupils are both positive and encouraging. In one class, pupils were set individual targets related to their needs. Pupils are given homework, which reinforces the work they have been doing in class. Numeracy is promoted satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, as block graphs in science in Year 2, and line graphs in geography in Year 4. Most teachers use the pupils' strong numeracy skills to support effective learning in other subjects for example, geography, and also use other subjects to support development of numeracy skills, for example, through design and technology.
103. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. The mathematics policy has been updated and the scheme of work, based on the National Numeracy Strategy, is supported by a published scheme. This allows teachers to draw from a range of support material. Learning resources are good and used effectively. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues, monitors planning, and has started to observe the quality of teaching and learning. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' work are good. The

practice of target setting is not yet consistent throughout the school, but where it is used it is having a positive impact on standards.

## **SCIENCE**

104. Provision for learning is satisfactory overall, although it is inconsistent and lacks coherence. This is because management is unsatisfactory and there is wide variation in the quality of teaching. These inconsistencies lead to pupils not making steady progress as they move through the school, to pupils of different abilities not making equally good progress, and pupils' achievements in some areas of the syllabus being much better than in others. The quality of provision has declined since the last inspection and current standards are not as high as the good attitudes of the pupils and the effective teaching in most lessons would expect.
105. In 2001, statutory National Curriculum teacher assessments showed standards overall for seven-year-old pupils to be above the national average and in line with the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, however, was below average for schools nationally. The attainment of higher-attaining pupils was below the average for similar schools; although well above average in 'life and living processes', it was below average in other areas, and well below average in 'experimental and investigative science'. This lack of balance is a cause for concern.
106. The standards in National Curriculum tests for 11 year old pupils in 2001 were above the national average and average, when compared with similar schools. Standards in these tests have declined significantly over recent years, although results in 2001 show a slight reversal to this worrying trend. These data show that able pupils made good progress between Years 3 and 6, but the average and less able pupils made unsatisfactory progress in comparison with other schools. Since that time standards have improved a little and standards for pupils aged seven and 11 currently match national expectations. Even so, there is still some underachievement by the able pupils at Key Stage 1, and some underachievement by lower ability pupils at Key Stage 2. This is because assessment is insufficiently used to adapt teaching to their needs.
107. Overall, pupils show good attitudes, and their learning in individual lessons is good. The problem lies in their achievements over time and in the balance in what they learn. In Year 2 the pupils discuss in great depth the need for humans to eat the right types and amounts of food. Pupils have a very good knowledge of all the requirements for a healthy lifestyle. One pupil made a very interesting remark when he compared oxygen to electricity 'one keeps the light on, the other keeps you living'. The pupils maintained a high quality discussion, noting among other things that food produces energy and growth, and contains vitamins and calcium. Following this discussion the pupils then showed particular skill in selecting food that is good for you from a huge selection provided by the teacher. Another group were researching, showing good awareness of appropriate methods and building up a chart of healthy and unhealthy foods. A good discussion followed on roast chicken, some pupils considered it healthy, others not, though all understood why all chicken was best cooked and eaten without the skin on. Scrutiny of the work covered throughout the term shows that the same in-depth coverage was given to all life processes. Pupils tested their sense of taste systematically and participated well in a number of investigations, such as comparing food in lunch-boxes and favourite tastes. Pupils take all opportunities given and learn well, and made very good progress in the lessons observed. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language depends upon the stage they have reached in

their English development because some find it difficult to understand scientific vocabulary.

108. Analysis of work over the term shows that teaching in Year 6 gives pupils many opportunities to investigate sound and light. They showed great enthusiasm in class when they were given the task of filtering a mixture of water and soil. In answer to the teacher's question why the filtered water was still cloudy the pupils clearly understood that the microscopic holes in the filter paper were too large and smaller particles passed through them. After some discussion the pupils understood well why doubling up the filter paper would provide a clearer solution. The pupils in Year 5 show a very good understanding of fair testing, whilst investigating the force of the upward thrust on weights immersed in water. The pupils make sensible predictions even if proved false eventually. Most considered the weight would get heavier when combined with the weight of the water. Some said it would stay the same but only one pupil thought the weight would decrease, though she could not explain why. They were all amazed at the outcome, and as a consequence some good learning took place. By this stage, pupils have a good understanding of what makes a test fair.
109. The learning seen in Year 4 was poor, in contrast to the rest of the school, as the pupils were given little opportunity to investigate or research, and the planning in the lesson seen gave the pupils no information to work on. Therefore progress was poor for all the pupils.
110. The teaching ensures that Year 3 pupils have had the opportunity of intensive study on the human body and they have made good comparisons of the different ways in which humans and animals move. The pupils have looked closely at the effect muscles have on the skeleton. The pupil's work is well presented and shows a good understanding of the topics covered.
111. Between Years 3 and 6, the learning of the pupils in the school is satisfactory although not as good overall as the best teaching should allow. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language, in comparison with the others, do not make satisfactory progress, as there is little provision made for them in the school. This is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls. The attainment of pupils of different levels of ability tends to reflect that seen in statutory assessments and tests in 2001.
112. In the four lessons seen, the quality of teaching was inconsistent although good overall. One quarter was outstanding, one quarter was very good, another quarter was good and one quarter was poor. This inconsistency has a negative impact on progress overall because analysis of pupils' previous work shows that teaching over time in each class reflects the above individual lesson judgements. The outstanding and very good teaching was characterised by the teachers' enthusiasm and depth of knowledge that extended the pupils' learning considerably. The high expectations and probing questions challenged the pupils well and caused them to think deeply on the areas with which they were involved. In Year 2 the pupils rose to the occasion very well as they came up with some very good responses, 'fatty foods' are bad for you, and sugar because it is 'full of carbohydrates'. Year 6 pupils used very good scientific language in answer to questions describing the difference between soluble and insoluble mixtures. The teaching in the poor lesson lacked sufficient preparation and clear objectives for learning. As the teacher appeared to have little knowledge of the pupils' understanding of the earth and the solar system at the time, the lesson finished fifteen minutes early and the children went outside for an unscheduled twenty-minute break.



113. Science contributes a great deal to pupils' personal development, particularly in the area of health and hygiene. It contains many features that elicit wonder from the pupils for example, during the experiment about the upward thrust of water. The subject has a positive impact on social development, as pupils learn to work together well to achieve accurate results during investigations and experiments. High standards of literacy and numeracy support learning in science and are, in turn, supported by the work in this subject. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to enrich the learning.
114. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory; the co-ordinator is new to the role and has yet to design a sufficiently coherent plan for improvement. The co-ordinator has no time allocated to monitor teaching. There is insufficiently rigorous monitoring of planning. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there are no effective procedures in the school to inform future planning or the pupils' learning. These weaknesses are at the core of inconsistencies in provision and the main cause for standards being lower than they ought to be. There has been some good in-service training from the local education authority's advisory team. The subject is well resourced and centralised in the teachers' area. There is an excellent outdoor science work area with a 'dipping' pond. There are residential trips for the pupils and the local education authority has a number of centres to visit. There are also science links with a university and a number of secondary schools, and these links benefit the most able pupils in particular.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. The school provides very well for learning in this subject. Attainment when pupils are seven is above national expectations and well above national expectations by the time they are 11. This reflects the judgements made at the last inspection. The school has maintained the very good standard, and art is a strength of the school. Displays in the classrooms are of a very high quality especially in Year 6 where there was a superb display on Egypt. All pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make very good progress.
116. Printing and repeating patterns were the main focus in Year 1. Some pupils had prepared string-printing blocks the previous week and were producing very effective patterns. Another group was exploring patterns printed by using a wide range of small objects from commercial building cubes. A group led by the class teacher was making a large wallpaper design. Among the very good objectives was to produce a piece of collaborative work in which all the pupils were able to make a unique contribution. The result was very successful. Though no teaching was observed in Year 2 there were displays of painted and colourful portraits, which were of good quality. The work showed good commitment and careful observation.
117. Year 5 pupils were observed in an art appreciation lesson. They listened with rapt attention as their teacher brought to life the meaning of Picasso's 'Guernica'. One pupil who initially considered the painting 'cluttered' later felt that he had learned a great deal. He would look at paintings with more understanding in future. There was a very good display based on the work of Lowry where the pupils had captured the atmosphere of busy crowded streets dominated by looming towering factories. Computer generated pictures of exceptional quality displayed not only skilled use of this technology but a deep understanding of the work of Kandinsky and Klee.
118. Year 6 pupils have produced excellent potato prints; the care and quality of the work was truly outstanding. The prints were based on Egyptian patterns and though the

colours were subdued the overall effect was stunning. The pupils have also produced some very well made jars in clay. There was a display of very good line drawings of musical instruments showing not only very good drawing skills but also well-developed skills in observation.

119. All the teaching seen was of a high standard and one lesson was excellent. This is a great improvement since the last inspection where teaching was only considered to be satisfactory. The most notable characteristic of the excellent lesson was the manner in which the teacher drew a mature response from all the pupils. They realised that art has much to offer and is firmly embedded in reality, particularly when dealing with poignant events in history. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subject is transmitted to the pupils whose efforts to succeed are enhanced by the quality of the work they see about them. The school has a flourishing art club, which is run by a learning support assistant. The club is responsible for a fine display of tie and dye fabrics that greets the visitor on entry to the school.
120. The depth of appreciation of art that the pupils acquire in the school adds greatly to their spiritual development. The variety of works, based on Indian art and such artists as Klee, Kandinsky, Picasso, Lowry and many others, enables the pupils to understand the diversity and richness of culture that can be found throughout the world. There are class visits to the National Gallery and other, local, galleries where the pupils learn more of the history of art.
121. The management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator's personal commitment to the subject is evident through the all-round improvement of the teaching. There is no time allocated for monitoring but the co-ordinator feels she only has to view what is hanging up to make an accurate evaluation. Resources are good and so is accommodation as there is a separate room that can be used for art.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Despite improvement since the last inspection, the provision for learning is still unsatisfactory because insufficient emphasis is given to design elements. Even so, the standard of the 'making' aspects of the subjects at Key Stage 1 is good and at Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. This shows improvement since the last inspection. The continuing weakness, however, lies mainly in the design element required for pupils to really understand the technical process and how this will increase the quality of their work. Much of the work seen during the inspection was of good quality but the design element and the pupils' own planning for the work was very skimpy, consisting of rough sketches only. One pupil was observed making a sketch even though his work was partway finished. An examination of other sketchbooks revealed that these simple drawings were the only representation of the design process. This underlying minimal focus on the design process restricts and limits the progress of the pupils.
123. In Year 2, pupils were working on aspects of food technology. They showed a lively interest in the quality and nutritional value of different foods. The pupils clearly understood that to remain healthy one has to eat a balanced diet. Their objectives set by the teachers were to design a poster and create a healthy menu. Overall the pupils achieved this satisfactorily. There were very strong links with science in this work and they tended to predominate.
124. At Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils had made bread and devised different recipes. The design element was satisfactory and the pupils had also designed a menu and produced an afternoon tea. This was very successful, because the pupils were most

careful in their preparation. Year 5 pupils were making models of containers suitable for water. This work had a good cultural link with their history study on the Ancient Greeks, and the product of their very good craft work related to art based on the Greek designs depicting everyday life. This could have been a very good design and technology project except that the design process was lacking because the teaching was mainly concerned with manufacture of the artefacts. In Year 6 pupils had produced cubed mobiles of good quality with close links to mathematics, but again the manufacture predominated over the design elements.

125. Of the lessons seen, one half were taught very well and one half satisfactorily. Analysis of pupils' previous work shows that teaching is satisfactory overall. In the very effective teaching, the teacher organised the class very well so that groups of pupils could work independently. She placed very strong emphasis on the design process and, consequently, the pupils made very good progress in this aspect of their learning.
126. Leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory because it fails to stress the importance of the whole design process. The co-ordinator does not have time allocated for monitoring of teaching, and procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory. The curriculum covers all areas required by the National Curriculum, but teachers' planning makes too little use of this curriculum when covering the design process. One reason for this is that the school uses national guidance as its planning, though this guidance is usually considered to be a scheme of work to guide the planning. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. Provision for geography is satisfactory and standards are similar to those at the last inspection. Pupils at the ages of seven and 11 attain standards in geography that are broadly in line with those expected for their ages.
128. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning map skills. The youngest pupils describe the position of objects in the class and where they are in relation to others. They understand a plan is like a 'bird's eye' view. Year 2 pupils draw detailed plans of the classroom, follow a route round the class and trace it accurately on to the plan. Pupils in Year 4 who are studying the geography of an Indian village show they have good recall of housing, education and daily life and are able to compare and contrast these with similar aspects of Cumnor. They study the climate and weather of India and record the monthly temperature and rainfall on graphs.
129. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory. The lessons are planned with suitable activities to motivate the pupils and the learning is carefully linked to other areas of learning and subjects of the curriculum. The youngest pupils are taught how to read the correct word they need to describe position. In Year 2, the work is linked to stories in literacy lessons, and to routes and directions prior to using a floor turtle in information and communication technology. This lesson was well organised with a variety of activities to reinforce pupils' knowledge and skills. It contained a good balance of individual and whole class work, which challenged pupils to work accurately and to share their geographical understanding. In the best lessons, teachers give clear explanations that involve the pupils in the demonstrations and use good questioning to ensure that they remain interested and make good progress. In these lessons, pupils listened intently, participated well and contributed willingly to the development of ideas.

130. Younger pupils are taught some aspects of geography each term as part of a topic. This has been organised on a two-year cycle to take into account the mixed age classes. By the end of Year 6 pupils will cover six aspects of the geography curriculum, alternating each term with a history topic. This approach ensures that required aspects of the geography curriculum are taught, but does not encourage children to develop their geographical skills because too much time elapses between each unit of lessons. The local environment is used well to support the curriculum, such as on walks around Cumnor village and on visits to Farmoor Reservoir. Older pupils visit places further afield such as South Wales, Dorset and the Isle of Wight. This not only enriches the geography curriculum but also contributes to their social development.
131. The management and co-ordination of the subject are satisfactory. The policy and schemes of work have been updated in line with local recommendations and they meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers' planning is monitored but no time is allocated for observing teaching and learning. Assessment is not consistent across the school and teachers do not have sufficient awareness of the standards each pupil should reach.

## **HISTORY**

132. Provision for learning is good with many very good features. By the time pupils are seven their attainment is slightly above national expectations and by the age of 11, well above. Girls and boys at each level of ability make equally good progress, although those learning English as an additional language do not always get enough help with understanding new words and ideas. Teaching is very good and the curriculum is rich, relevant, and meets statutory requirements. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
133. In Years 1 and 2, even though the set unit was geography, the teacher used Armistice Day to consider the nature of war and its costs to people. The lesson was enriched by video, and medals and photos brought in by a parent. The pupils showed a good general knowledge, a well-developed sense of time, and even an understanding of the way events mark not only historical happenings, but also that happenings change the way people live. Other work shows they have a good understanding of how events happen in sequence for example, generations. They also show very high understanding of historical people in context. In Year 3 they show very good knowledge of World War 2, are able to understand what it was like and even how policies altered the way events unfurled. In Year 5, pupils not only had a very good understanding of Ancient Greece, its nature and culture, but also a superb understanding of what it was like to be a slave owner or slave. In Year 6, pupils had the normally expected knowledge about Ancient Egypt, but could use evidence and their own reasoning extremely well to unravel the way levels in society and government interrelate. By this stage the pupils are powerful and competent young historians.
134. Teaching observed was either very good or excellent. Lessons were very well planned and based upon good subject knowledge. Learning was well matched to each level of ability, and the degree of challenge increased as the lessons progressed. The lessons had great pace, driven forward by the enthusiasm of the teachers, the motivation of the pupils and skilled management of discussions. One lesson was a superb example of how risk-taking drama can help pupils experience the past.
135. The subject is well led and the co-ordinator's enthusiasm inspires others. Management is satisfactory with a useful scheme of work. However, work tends to be planned in half term blocks, alternating with geography. This strategy tends to disrupt continuity of

learning and makes more difficult the steady development of skills and understanding. Not enough time is allowed for monitoring and evaluation, and, therefore, quality cannot be assured or the needs for teachers to increase their skills discovered. There are no systems for the collection of assessment data or the moderation and evaluation of standards. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of visits to enliven and enrich the learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

136. Provision for learning is unsatisfactory. By the time pupils are seven and 11, their attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory and below national expectations. Pupils have not made enough progress because teachers' subject knowledge is weak, because there are too few computers and because those computers the school does have are insufficiently used. The introduction of the new computers is not impacting on standards because they are not used effectively. The school recognises these deficiencies and improvement has high priority in the current school development plan.
137. In Year 6, standards are unsatisfactory, and only the most able pupils, many of whom have computers at home, achieve acceptable levels in some aspects of computer literacy when compared with the national expectations. Skills in communicating through text and imagery are satisfactory only for some pupils, whilst skills in handling data and control are poor. The programmes of study for some aspects of the subject have not been covered sufficiently. Standards are also affected by the lack of planning by teachers and the inefficient use of the computers available.
138. Younger pupils are gaining confidence and enjoy using the keyboard and the mouse. However, they lack an appreciation of the value of ICT, and do not understand the impact of technology upon their everyday lives. With the exception of word processing and simulation packages, pupils have only a limited knowledge of the facilities within the program they are using. The higher-attaining pupils at Key Stage 1 can communicate information by making good use of the word-processing program for example, when redrafting work in English. They can change the colour and size of the font to enhance the appearance of the text. In Year 2, pupils are still developing their control skills when using the keys and the mouse to direct the cursor around the screen. This is well below what is expected by that age. When using an art program, higher-attainers create attractive pictures using a variety of tools. With the help of an adult they save, access and print their work. Pupils are learning to direct a programmable robot through inputting simple mathematical instructions.
139. Older pupils are not taught on a sufficiently regular basis and do not all have a sufficiently frequent turn on the computers in the classroom. Some aspects of each programme of study sometimes appear in other curriculum areas. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils use the CD ROMs to research information about the Egyptians. The local authority adviser is working with them to create a website. In science, they found information about the body, using an appropriate program. Year 3 pupils are using information from their science project on the body to create a database. Even so, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT skills across the curriculum for the purposes of data handling, monitoring and modelling, and this hinders their learning of these skills. Pupils use a word processing package in their English work to write a newspaper and are confident when calling up the program from the 'contents' screen and use the centre, space and backspace keys appropriately. They use the mouse competently and switch between upper and lower case letters with ease. Insufficient use is made of ICT for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom

English is an additional language. A computer is not available for pupils to use in the library. Higher-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged and do not forge ahead fast enough in their learning.

140. Pupils are enthusiastic about ICT. In discussions the majority have regular access to computers at home. They show real pleasure such as when they retrieved the appropriate information in an adventure game. Parents and pupils appreciate the newly acquired hardware and supporting software. Pupils are keen to exploit every opportunity given to use it. They work sensibly and carefully at the machines, and higher-attainers often help and support the less experienced pupils.
141. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory because teachers insufficiently incorporate ICT into their planning as a whole and most lack sufficient expertise. There is no clear scheme of work to sequence and pattern the learning and this results in pupils being unable to build on new skills as they progress from year to year. The potential provided by the resources in the classrooms are seriously under-used and pupils are given insufficient time to learn and practise new skills. There are few resources to teach control skills. Even so, when given the opportunity pupils can produce very good work..
142. Most teachers lack ICT expertise and offer activities that are not always relevant or at the required level to build on pupils' prior learning. There is insufficient monitoring of the attainment of individual pupils to assist the planning of activities to match their needs. The absence of a systematic check in every class means that there is no guarantee that all pupils receive regular, sufficient and effective access to computers.
143. The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory. Information technology was judged to have significant weaknesses in the previous inspection. The school has made some but insufficient improvements, and progress on implementing the action plan has been too slow. Addressing staff training and using the available resources to their full potential are now matters of urgency.

## **MUSIC**

144. Provision for learning is good and very good as to singing. Most pupils aged seven and 11 attain standards expected at those ages, and in singing they exceed them. Those learning individual instruments also have high general attainment in music. Girls and boys of different ability levels make equivalent and steady progress as they move through the school. Teaching quality ranges between excellent and satisfactory but is usually good and often better. Although the curriculum meets statutory requirements, attainment overall is depressed by insufficient balance in the learning caused by insufficient focus on aspects other than singing. Standards are broadly the same as at the last inspection but are improving. Music enlivens the life of the school and makes a considerable contribution to the learning and personal development of the pupils.
145. In class lessons observed at both key stages, the emphasis was on beating in time grasping increasingly complex rhythms. The concept of notation was introduced to older pupils and also the very young. The core teaching, however, is through singing in assembly or practice sessions. Pupils sing with obvious joy in performance, with a good sense of phrasing, dynamics and tone. They can sing in rounds and occasionally in parts. They think about the meaning of music and words, and, consequently, sing musically and expressively; they are able to evaluate so as to improve. A strength of the singing is pupils' well-developed sense of ensemble, and their consciousness of the overall beauty and power of the sound. In assemblies, singing plays a significant part in the worship, and the music playing as pupils enter and leave is not treated as 'sound

wallpaper' but introduced and explained by the music co-ordinator, emphasising the expressive elements and guiding pupils in how to respond.

146. Teaching is knowledgeable, skilled and enthusiastic. The best teaching was by the complete Key Stage 2 team. They built upon each other's skills, switching and changing, and fully involving the pupils. The standard and musicality of the singing grew continuously and rapidly during the session.
147. The subject is very well led with a sharing of enthusiasm, confidence and expertise. Management is satisfactory and the co-ordinator is introducing a much better scheme of work. She realises there is a need to create better balance in the curriculum for example, more opportunities for composition and critical listening. At present, the co-ordinator has too little time to work alongside colleagues, checking standards and finding ways to improve. Resources are satisfactory but there are too few keyboards. There is a good range of recorded music and the co-ordinator plans to extend the narrow range of tapes of music of other cultures. The learning of the pupils is enriched by many opportunities to hear musicians perform and to perform themselves for example, in the recent school musical production. There is very good range of individual instrumental tuition available and other opportunities such as recorder groups.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

148. Provision for learning is good. Standards are above average throughout the school and are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The quality of learning and progress is very good. In Year 2, pupils clapped and jumped rhythmically as they warmed up for the lesson. They had a good awareness of space as they moved around the hall and performed a range of well-controlled movements at different levels. They showed imagination in their balances and moved well to the music. They were active for the whole lesson and were enthusiastic and keen to improve. The dance lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 show what very good progress pupils make as they mature. In a Year 5 creative dance lesson, pupils created imaginative short sequences, working collaboratively in small groups. They composed sound patterns and introduced intricate synchronised movements. Each group's work was completely different as they developed their ideas. In Year 6, pupils have a high standard of body control and poise. They interpret the music with a variety of precise movements, which are then shadowed by a partner. The pupils worked well together and were absorbed in improving their performance. By the end of Year 6, all pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres. In the lesson seen, all Year 5 pupils were confident in the water and the majority of them could swim different strokes in good style. Their attitude to swimming is serious and all pupils try to improve their skills. Their very good behaviour ensures that they make good progress in each lesson.
149. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well organised, with carefully planned progressive activities. Pupils understand the importance of warming up before starting activities. Because pupils are well motivated, they remain focused and fully active for the whole lesson. The teachers' very good questioning encourages pupils to develop their ideas and leads to very positive and responsible attitudes. The pupils learn techniques to improve their skills. For example, in a lesson where rugby was introduced, pupils learned how to throw and catch the ball. The pace of the lessons is good, with suitable time for explanations and for pupils to practise their skills. Girls and boys of mixed ability work well together in groups, and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the teachers and by the other pupils.

150. Planning shows that all elements of the National Curriculum are covered. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including football, basketball, netball and judo at different times of the year; these activities include opportunities for competitive sport. The school is successful in competitions with other schools.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

151. Provision for learning is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The attainment of pupils aged seven matches the expectations of the syllabus and attainment by the age of 11 exceeds them. Teaching is good but very variable; even so, pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. They gain a good knowledge of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. Judaism is not covered in the same depth, but there are plans to rectify this. Standards have improved a little since the last inspection but weaknesses in management remain.
152. In the lessons observed, pupils in Year 1 made perceptive links between important rules and events in their own lives and the way Hindus celebrate Divali. They enriched their learning by making Divali cards and candles, and drawing Rangoli patterns. In Year 2, they extended this work positively by examining artefacts, looking at pictures and completing the same activities as in Year 1 but at a more probing level. In Year 3 they studied Islam and understood well not only how Muslims celebrate Ramadan but also why. When relating work in geography on India to Hindu faith and practices, pupils in Year 4 saw the part faith and religion plays in human lives. The pupils' understanding was reinforced significantly in Year 6 by linking respect in general to specific respect for special places and books, such as the Qu'ran; this learning was enriched and extended by cross-reference to beliefs in Ancient Egypt.
153. Most lessons were empowered not only by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the teachers, but also by the interest and natural curiosity of the pupils. Pupils show respect for, and appreciation of, the beliefs of others. They listen carefully to their teachers and value the contributions of other pupils, especially those of the faith they are studying. Pupils of all abilities and cultures have full access to the learning. These good learning opportunities lead on to good work in books, work that is usually completed with care and pride.
154. Teaching varies considerably between excellent and unsatisfactory, but is usually at least good. Most teachers have adequate knowledge of the topics covered, but few have good understanding of the meaning and purpose of religious practices or how to help pupils investigate, develop and express their own beliefs. Most lessons tend to focus on the facts and do not allow the quiet times in which pupils can reflect on faith and experience. Similarly, tasks are too often just that, rather than opportunities to experience for example, the way Rangoli patterns express the Hindu belief that all things and experiences are part of the same reality. This means that the subject makes a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development but less to their spiritual development. Occasionally, lack of subject expertise leads to mistakes for example, treating the symbolic meaning of candle flames as the same for Christians and Hindus. The excellent lesson showed how challenging and expert teaching enlivens any subject, whereas the unsatisfactory teaching was the result of poor planning and weak class management.
155. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The subject does have a clear policy that sets down the quality of teaching and learning required, and the unique aims and purposes of the subject. The scheme of work, however, is at an interim stage, and does not provide a detailed, step-by-step structure for learning. Little



monitoring or evaluation occurs and, therefore, the co-ordinator cannot assure quality or identify training needs. Resources are of adequate range and quantity. Good use is made of links with the local church, but not enough use is made of other local faith communities. A Christian club provides a good opportunity for pupils to deepen their developing faith and beliefs.