

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading, Berkshire

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 109795

Headteacher: Mr Roger Plackett

Reporting inspector: Kathryn Forsyth
12626

Dates of inspection: 20th to 23rd May 2002

Inspection number: 196710
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body, Southcote Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Beryl Soars
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17976	John Francis	Team inspector	Mathematics Information Technology Physical Education	How well is the school led & managed?
27644	John Tate	Team inspector	Foundation Stage History Design & Technology	
21163	Marsha Walton	Team Inspector	English as an Additional Language English Geography	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This larger than average primary school has 365 pupils (163 boys and 202 girls) between the ages of four and 11 in 14 classes. There are 53 full time pupils in two Foundation Stage (Reception) classes, 22 of these children are not, as yet, five years old. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average. Three pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below the national average. There are 64 pupils from ethnic minority families, mainly black Caribbean, black African, and Indian, and three pupils from refugee families. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is higher than most schools. Four pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. Twelve per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. The school draws its pupils from a wide catchment area of mixed housing. Much of the original council owned housing is now in private ownership, with approximately one quarter of families in council or housing association properties. During the last school year, 13 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission, and 19 left at times other than those of the normal leaving or transfer. This level of pupil mobility is not unusual. Attainment on entry to the school is generally below that normally found for children of this age. Eight of the 16 teachers have been appointed to the school in the past two years. The remainder of the staff have been at the school for 10 years or longer.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound standard of education and makes good provision for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they have good attitudes to learning. Achievement and standards are good in writing. In mathematics and science, achievement is satisfactory although standards in Year 6 are below average. The Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their education. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and, in some classes, teaching is consistently good or better. The headteacher, staff and governors show a high commitment to their pupils. There are very good relationships throughout the school and a strong sense of teamwork. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The Foundation Stage provides a good start for pupils and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils achieve good standards in writing by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school's good provision for pupils' personal and social development is reflected in their good attitudes towards their work and the very good relationships between pupils and adults.
- The school is successful in promoting good behaviour.
- The school provides a good range of well-planned visits which enrich pupils' experiences and supports their learning.
- Parents support the school well.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in mathematics and science.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can attain.
- Curricular planning for some subjects, such as art, geography and Religious Education.
- The quality of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work and the quality of the school improvement plan:
- The school library.
- Information for parents on pupils' progress.
- Provision for outdoor play for the youngest pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and has made satisfactory improvement since that time. The quality of teaching has improved and standards in English, for the older pupils are much improved. However, standards in mathematics and science remain below the national average and are lower than those at the time of the last inspection. There is more time allocated for the teaching of information and communication technology. This has supported improvement in pupils' attainment in the subject. Standards in music have improved and are now similar to those found in most schools (average). The school has been successful in promoting pupils' spiritual development. More opportunities are planned for in religious education lessons and in very good assemblies.

The school now meets all statutory requirements for the completion and security of attendance registers. The present management team have clear responsibilities and have been successful in initiating procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effects of curricular planning on pupils' attainment. However, the procedures are not sufficiently effective. In many cases, subject co-ordinators monitor across departments but they rarely monitor throughout the whole school. As a result, weaknesses are not always clearly identified and appropriate action taken to address them. The school's budget is managed efficiently and is monitored regularly by the finance committee of the governing body. Secure procedures are now in place to ensure that the school gets the best value for money. The strong commitment from staff gives the school a good capacity for continuous improvement in all its aspects.

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	D	D	B	B
mathematics	C	D	D	D
science	E	E	D	E

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

The information above shows that the school's results in national tests have improved in English and science and have been maintained in mathematics. When compared with schools that have a similar proportion of free school meals, mathematics is below average and science is well below average. However, these comparisons must be viewed with caution, as the school is in a district of mixed housing and Reading is an area of high employment and few pupils are eligible for free school meals. National data showing comparisons made with schools with similar prior attainment rather than a similar number of free school meals show results of A for English, C for mathematics and C for science. This shows a more positive and accurate picture and indicates that pupils' performance in English was well above average, above average across all subjects and average in mathematics and science. The significant improvement in English is due to pupils' improvement in their writing with a high proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the National Curriculum test. Although an above average number of pupils attained the higher levels in English, the school was very slightly below its target for the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level. In mathematics, the school did not reach its target and too few pupils achieved at the higher levels. By the age of 11, pupils have satisfactory skills in numeracy but do not have enough experience of using and applying mathematics. In science, the school's results are below average. Generally, pupils' have sound scientific knowledge but their investigative skills are unsatisfactory. The findings of the inspection are that standards in English are average. Whilst they are high in writing, many pupils do not read widely and some pupils have limited understanding of how books are arranged for ease of reference. Standards are below average in mathematics and science and pupils do not achieve highly enough in mathematical and scientific investigations. Although standards in information and communication technology are below average, there has been an improvement and pupils in Year 6 are making rapid and good progress in order to catch up. Standards in physical education are good but standards in art are below average. In all other subjects, standards are similar to those expected of 11 year olds.

The inspection's findings show that standards in Year 2 are good in swimming, below average in writing, mathematics and history. Standards in science are well below average. Pupils cover the programme of study in relation to knowledge but too little time is spent in investigating and exploring scientific concepts. In all other subjects, including reading, standards are average. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school with below average levels of attainment but are on course to reach the standards expected of children by the end of the Reception year. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily overall in Years 1 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and achieve satisfactorily in relation to their previous attainment

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils conduct themselves very well in classrooms and in other contexts around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and contribute significantly to the quality of lessons.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Punctuality is generally good for the majority of pupils. A few pupils arrive late each day.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection. There are fewer unsatisfactory lessons and more good and very good lessons. In this inspection, teaching and learning in almost half of the lessons seen were good or better and only two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 where a high proportion of lessons are very good. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although this masks a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than Years 1 and 2. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in Years 2 to 6. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching throughout the school.

Teachers have responded positively to the need to raise standards of attainment and have implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy with enthusiasm. In particular, the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been highly effective in raising the standards of writing in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning in literacy is of a good standard. Lesson objectives are clear and in most classes, shared with the pupils so they are clear what is to be learned. The very good relationships that teachers have with pupils, and each other, help to create a purposeful and harmonious environment for learning. The contribution made by some teaching assistants to the rate of progress made by pupils is significant. The teaching of all subjects is at least satisfactory and was judged to be good overall in mathematics, although this is not consistent in all classes, and in the teaching of basic skills in information and communication technology. There remain some areas for further development. At the time of the last inspection, a number of lessons were identified as lacking in challenge. This remains the case in a number of classes, mostly in Years 1 and 2, and restricts pupils in attaining the higher levels. The subject knowledge of some teachers in art in Years 3 to 6 and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 is limited.

Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively when learning in class or in groups. The Additional Literacy Support Programme is providing an effective strategy for pupils with special educational needs in English. Generally, individual education plans, which outline the learning targets for pupils with special educational needs, are too general and, therefore, lack a clear focus on the specific learning needs of pupils.

Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well provided for. They receive good quality specialist help each week and are well integrated into the work of their classes at other times. The visiting teacher makes careful assessments and designs a teaching plan around individual pupils.

The school is currently finding it difficult to recruit staff. The headteacher has been effective in recruiting some teachers on a part-time basis. The management of these teachers is good. Effective procedures are in place to ensure pupils do not suffer as a result of having different teachers over the period of one week.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are satisfactory and promote the aims of the school well. However, the time allocation for science is too low to raise standards in the subject. The school has recently moved from a topic-based approach to teaching some subjects to a more specifically subject based approach. Whilst the school is covering the knowledge base of these subjects securely, the skills required are not planned for sufficiently effectively. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good. There is a good range of well-planned visits to enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Pupils have access to a range of additional support in the class or in additional group work outside the class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils receive good quality specialist help each week.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The school creates a strong sense of identity as a very caring community in which everyone is valued, respected and supported well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school has good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development and promoting good behaviour. The school's procedures for child protection and are not fully understood by some staff. The assessment of pupils' academic performance is satisfactory overall, although procedures in most subjects, with the exception of English, are at an early stage of development. An up-to-date whole school risk assessment has not been carried out although health and safety reviews occur half termly.

The school has analysed test and assessment data in order to identify pupils who need additional support or who are underachieving in literacy. Whilst the support is valuable, some pupils in Years 1 to 2 miss the teaching of aspects of some subjects. In Years 3 to 6, such additional support work is managed more effectively and pupils are supported in class or withdrawn without missing other subjects. Parents' involvement with school makes an appropriate contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. Pupils are happy in school and the great majority work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher gives sound leadership and, with the support of the management team, gives direction to the work of the school. There is a strong sense of teamwork.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a suitable structure of committees and a high level of commitment to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The head teacher monitors performance through national test results and reports from different departments. Pupils' work and results are sampled by co-ordinators but this is not always effective in moderating standards throughout the school. The school has a school improvement plan that outlines appropriate areas for development. The monitoring and evaluation criteria lack the sharpness to help the school in measuring success.
The strategic use of resources	The school's budget is managed effectively. There are good procedures in place to ensure that the school receives good value for money. Resources for most subjects are satisfactory and used effectively. However, resources for art are very limited and the library provision for older pupils is poor.

The teachers are all suitably qualified. There is a good system of induction for teachers new to the school. Performance management is well established in the school. Teaching assistants are generally effective and, in most lessons, provide good support for the teachers and pupils. The school building is spacious and has good outdoor facilities such as the school field, environmental area and a well-used swimming pool. There is no secure outdoor area for pupils in the Reception class.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led. • The teaching is good. • Children like coming to school. • Children behave well in school. • Children make good progress. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to parents on the progress made by their children. • The range of activities outside lessons. • The amount of homework.

In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are generally pleased with all that the school does. Inspectors' judgements endorse the majority of parents' positive views which, in the main, are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions. Nevertheless, some parents consider that they are not well informed about their children's progress. The inspectors found that the arrangements for the viewing afternoons in the autumn and spring terms limit the opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress and that some end of year reports do not have sufficient information on how well their children are doing. A number of parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons and the inspection team concluded that the recent reduction has resulted in a more limited range of clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school. Some doubts were expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors concluded that the work set is generally appropriate with the amount increasing as pupils go through the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with overall levels of attainment below those normally expected for children of this age. The initial assessments conducted with these children show a variation year on year particularly in relation to mathematical understanding. However, levels of attainment in personal and social development and communication, language and literacy are consistently low. With the good teaching, children make good progress and, in the Reception year, most are on course to attain the expected levels for the end of the Foundation stage in all areas of learning.¹ The satisfactory to good standards reached by the under-five-year-olds at the time of the last inspection have been maintained and, in the case of personal and social development, improved upon.
2. The teachers have a good understanding of the needs of their pupils in the Foundation Year. A carefully planned programme of work, with an emphasis on personal, social and language development, ensures that the year children listen well to one another, share and behave well. Many children experience success in their understanding and application of phonic and early writing skills.
3. In the national tests in 2001, seven-year-old pupils' results were below average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with all schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, the results were well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. The comparison with similar schools is based on the percentage of free school meals and this should be viewed with caution in the context of Southcote School, as the area is in an area of high employment with few pupils eligible for free school meals. The results also show a discrepancy between standards of reading of boys and girls, boys being the lower attainers. Teacher assessments in science showed that standards were well below average. Standards in Years 1 and 2 have been maintained, although there is some variation in the standards achieved in writing.
4. The pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to reach the standards expected of seven-year-olds in reading, but standards remain below average in writing and mathematics. Standards in science remain well below average.
5. In English, reading standards are rising. This is due to the effective teaching of phonics in Years 1 and 2. There is no evidence of differing attainment for boys and girls. Pupils decode unknown words with skill and the majority of pupils have a basic competence in reading and attain levels expected for pupils of their age. Writing is below average, with too few pupils acquiring the skills to attain average or above levels of attainment. Handwriting is of a good standard but the range of writing offered to pupils is limited. The over-reliance on photocopied worksheets restricts pupils' opportunities for extended writing. As a consequence, sentence construction and the range of words used are below average. Pupils listen well but many pupils use a limited vocabulary and this influences the quality of their writing. In mathematics, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, count accurately in twos, fives and tens, can read time to the half hour and measure to the nearest centimetre. These are at the expected level for pupils of this age, but few go beyond this. A lack of precise assessments prevents teachers from providing sufficiently challenging tasks to ensure that pupils can achieve higher levels. In science, pupils do not make sufficient progress in order to attain the levels expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' scientific knowledge is sound but too little time is spent in investigating and exploring scientific concepts which means that pupils' understanding lacks depth.

¹ These are the areas of learning that include, personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development that children are expected to attain by the end of the Reception class.

6. Standards have improved in information and communication technology and music due to more effective teaching and the organisation of a broad and balanced curriculum for both subjects. In information communication technology in Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of how to operate computers and open programs and navigate their way around the screen using the tool bar. Standards are now average. In music, the attainment of pupils is broadly that expected for those of a similar age. This is an improvement on the previous report where standards were judged to be below expectations. Many pupils are now able to recognise and explore the ways in which sounds can be combined and used to convey meaning. Singing in assembly is melodic. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art and design and technology are at the levels expected for pupils of this age. Pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding are satisfactory, but their geographical skills are less well developed. Pupils' attainment in physical education continues to be good. Standards in swimming are a strength. In Year 2 most pupils cross the pool with the aid of armbands and floats. Standards in history have declined since the last inspection and are unsatisfactory. Pupils recognise the distinction between the past and present but the range of work analysed suggests that pupils are not confident in handling sources of information to answer questions for themselves.

7. In the national tests for 11-year-olds in 2001, the pupils' results were above average in English and below average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, based on free school meals, the school's results were above average in English, below in mathematics and well below average in science. However, these results must be viewed with caution, as the school is in a district of mixed housing and Reading is an area of high employment and few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Careful records kept by the school show clearly that national data showing pupils' progress between Year 2 and Years 6 show a more positive and accurate picture. Pupils' performance in English was well above average, above average across all subjects and average in mathematics and science. There has been significant improvement in English but mathematics and science have generally remained the same.

8. Although the school exceeds the national average for the number of pupils achieving the higher levels within the English test, overall, the school was very slightly below the target it set for the percentage of pupils expected to achieve Level 4. In mathematics, the school did not reach its target for the percentage of pupils expected to reach Level 4 and too few pupils achieve at the higher levels. The school targets for 2002 are slightly below those set for the previous year. The targets remain challenging given the previous attainment of the pupils taking the National Curriculum tests in 2002. The school is making satisfactory progress towards the targets.

9. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are average overall in English, and below in mathematics and science. Standards have improved significantly in information and communication technology and in music. In information communications technology, the computer suite, effective teaching and an improved curriculum have improved standards. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 have sound keyboard skills and they are beginning to structure and present information in different forms using computers. Pupils in Year 6 attain below average standards, although they are developing skills rapidly from a low starting point. In music, more effective teaching and better lesson planning have improved pupils' attainment. It has not been possible to make a judgement on standards in Year 6 as no music lessons were observed. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 were seen and standards were as expected of pupils of a similar age.

10. Pupils listen carefully in Years 3 to 6, and answer clearly and thoughtfully. Reading continues to be satisfactory. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to understand a range of texts, select main points and express preferences from given texts. Many pupils do not read widely and the library provision within school is of a poor quality, although the school makes good use of the central library loan service. Many pupils have little experience of how books are arranged for ease of reference. Handwriting is of a high standard and pupils take pride in their work. A significant number of pupils are

at above average standards in writing in Year 6. A high proportion of pupils write with conviction and imaginatively to produce some high quality pieces of work. In mathematics, pupils have satisfactory skills in numeracy but they lack confidence and skill in using and applying their knowledge. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels. Standards in science, remain below average. Pupils have a sound knowledge of science topics studied but their skills of scientific enquiry are below average.

11. Standards in physical education are good. Most pupils achieve expected standards for their age and many go beyond this and attain high standards. This is particularly the case in swimming. Standards in religious education, geography, history, design and technology and music are satisfactory. In religious education, pupils questioned were able to describe the key beliefs and teaching of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. They understand how people express their identity and their religious faith through outward symbols and compare their knowledge of religions studied. Pupils display high levels of sensitivity and respect towards the values and beliefs of others and discussions are often of a high standard. The standards in geography have been maintained and some excellent attainment observed in Year 6. Pupils were able to debate and discuss geographical issues at a high level. This was attributed to the outstanding teaching observed in this lesson. Throughout Years 3 to 6 the standards achieved in geographical skills are not sufficiently high. Standards have declined in history although they are satisfactory overall. This is due to the limited opportunities for pupils to be historical detectives and give reasons for events and changes. Standards have declined in art and are below average. Drawing is unsatisfactory and pupils have a limited range of methods to improve their work. This is directly linked to the lack of systematic teaching of skills and techniques throughout Years 3 to 6.

12. The pupils with special educational needs generally make satisfactory progress with respect to their capabilities. The previous inspection made no specific judgement about their progress, except to note that pupils with statements generally achieved targets set for them. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes to learning and are treated with respect by their peers.

13. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in all aspects of learning in all classes from Year 1 to Year 6 as teachers have a good understanding of their needs.

14. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage and satisfactorily overall in Years 1 to 6. Achievement in mathematics and science is not high enough particularly in mathematical and scientific investigations. In some lessons, there is a lack of challenge for pupils and achievement is limited. The school has set up good systems to measure pupils' progress. The data show a positive picture for achievement, particularly in reading and writing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships with each other and adults are strengths of the school and make a good contribution towards promoting their attainment and progress. This conclusion reflects the findings of the school's previous inspection and the widespread views of parents. Parents state that their children enjoy school and behaviour in the school is good. The attendance of the pupils is satisfactory.

16. Personal and social development is good in the Foundation Stage. Behaviour, in the classroom and around the school, is very good indeed. Children work and play together and are beginning to co-operate. They take turns and show consideration which was well illustrated in the play area developed as a Victorian classroom. Each individual was aware of the rules and their role-play closely mirrored the example set for them by their teachers and assistants.

17. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. This includes those of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils throughout the school often listen well because teachers explain what they expect them to learn. For example, this was noticed in a Year 4 literacy lesson making compound words where pupils also showed their eagerness to answer. They concentrate and show interest in what they are doing as was seen particularly in a Year 2 mathematics lesson working with number bonds to 20. Pupils in the infants department showed great enthusiasm when all the

classes were singing in the hall. The great majority of pupils settle quickly to group activities in lessons and continue to work even when not being directly supported by adults in the classroom. For example, during a Year 5 mathematics lesson on percentages, the well established routines ensured that, while the teacher was properly supporting a few boys with poor attention, the rest of the class continued to work by themselves. Nevertheless, in a few of the lessons seen where the pace was slow or the work was at too low a level, the pupils lost interest and did not pay full attention to the teacher.

18. Pupils' social and moral development is good. The pleasant and positive way that the staff treat the pupils encourages many pupils to behave very well in the classroom, at play and lunch times. They are open, well mannered, polite to adults and to each other, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong because teachers involve them in identifying what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This provides a good basis for their behaviour and the way they treat others. In particular, in a Year 4 'circle time' discussing rules, the pupils showed they knew what constituted anti-social behaviour. They move around the school in an orderly way even when not supervised. They wait patiently for other classes when going to and from their rooms for assemblies. Nevertheless, some pupils have not learned self-control or to pay attention and have to be reminded by the teacher to listen and not to interrupt. Any bullying is rare and the school deals well with any aggressive behaviour that may take place. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

19. Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good and contribute to the quality of work in lessons. The majority of pupils respond positively to the respect shown to them by the staff and are polite and want to please. Pupils get on well with each other when playing games at break and lunch times. During a geography lesson, Year 1 pupils worked together well when asking each other how they came to school. The trust they had in the teacher led to other Year 1 pupils, by the end of a twenty minute lesson, being prepared to swim across the width of the school pool. During an English lesson, Year 5 pupils co-operated well listening to each other's ideas about the poem *The Lady of Shalott*. Higher attaining pupils are sometimes paired with a lower attaining or a special educational needs pupil to help them develop their skills. In addition, this enabled pupils to show that they are learning to recognise how they can help and support others. Boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work together well when doing group work in the classroom and when playing at break and lunch times.

20. The pupils' personal development is also good. Their good spiritual development is demonstrated when, in a religious education lesson, Year 2 pupils showed they understood the importance of artefacts to both Christian and Jewish people. Year 4 pupils were very interested in the Egyptian belief in the afterlife during a history lesson. During a personal, social and health education lesson, Year 5 pupils showed their ability to understand the feelings of others when they put forward ideas on how to help people who may be lonely. Pupils use their initiative when moving around the classroom to find materials they may need and pupils in the Reception classes are encouraged to decide for themselves what they want to do. However, in some classes the work set does not sufficiently encourage the pupils to develop independence in their learning with much of the work being directed by the teacher. Pupils respond well to the variety of opportunities to undertake responsibility. They take on many tasks both within the classroom and outside and, for example, the older pupils showed maturity when supporting the younger at lunchtime.

21. As at the time of the previous inspection, attendance is satisfactory. During the previous school year, it was the same as the national average and contributes to the standards achieved by the pupils. In the current school year it has improved slightly. Absences are usually due to the inevitable childhood illnesses and medical appointments with a few parents insisting on taking their children on holiday in term time. Unauthorised absence is similar to that of other schools nationally. Pupils are generally keen to come to school and punctuality is good for the great majority of pupils. Nevertheless, there are usually several pupils arriving late each morning although normally only by a few minutes.

Registration takes place commendably promptly at the start of the day, and there are now good procedures to record the late arrivals.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the last inspection. There are fewer unsatisfactory lessons and more good and very good lessons. In this inspection, almost half of the lessons seen were good or better and only two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching throughout the school.

23. Teachers have responded positively to the need to raise standards of attainment and have implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy with enthusiasm. In particular the implementation of the Literacy Strategy has been highly effective in raising the standards of writing in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' planning in literacy is good. Lesson objectives are clear and, in most classes, shared with the pupils so they are clear what is to be learned. The very good relationships that teachers have with pupils, and each other, help to create a purposeful and harmonious environment for learning. The contribution made by some teaching assistants to the rate of progress made by pupils is significant. However, although the quality of teaching and learning of numeracy is good in Years 3 to 6, there are marked variations in Years 1 and 2. The best teaching is seen in the higher sets through much of the school, although, even here, the pupils are not always fully extended. At the time of the last inspection, a number of lessons were identified as lacking in challenge. This remains the case in a number of classes, mostly in Years 1 and 2, and restricts pupils in attaining the higher levels. The subject knowledge of some teachers in art and mathematics is unsatisfactory.

24. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. During the inspection, eight lessons were observed in the Reception classes. Of these, one was excellent, two were very good, three were good and two were satisfactory. Teaching of this quality means that all children learn at a rate appropriate to their abilities and make good progress in their learning. The teachers know their children well as individuals and they are skilful in developing the children's personal and social skills. Consequently, the children settle into school happily, and successfully develop good attitudes to learning. The classrooms are well organised to support learning and children are encouraged to make best use of this fact to help them with their work. In one lesson, children searched and found a label in the classroom to help them write the word 'minibeast'. The teachers and teaching assistants listen carefully to children and value any contributions they make. This instils confidence in the children and many were seen to be having a go. The teachers are restricted in their planning for physical development due to the lack of resources for outdoor play. They are creative and do their best to provide similar and challenging activities indoors.

25. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is satisfactory overall. There are fewer good and very good lessons and some unsatisfactory teaching. During the inspection, two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory and just over a third of all lessons seen were good or better.

26. Some very good teaching was observed in a Year 1/2 set for numeracy. The teacher began the session with an effective mental mathematics session which encouraged the pupils to think for themselves. The session had a good quick pace and pupils moved quickly from asking for number bonds for five to asking for subtraction sums beginning with five. The lesson was very successful as the teacher listened carefully to the pupils and used their ideas to move the lesson forward. The teacher actively encouraged the pupils to take a risk and to make a response. All answers were valued and, if incorrect, discussed so the pupil was able to understand what mistake had been made. The tasks set for the pupils were open-ended and allowed the pupils to investigate and explore their understanding of number.

27. The main weakness in the teaching of Year 1 and 2 pupils is the lack of challenge presented in lessons so that many pupils, particularly those who are more able, do not always do sufficiently well. In

some lessons, pupils' attainment is stifled through the setting of low-level tasks. Often, these tasks are photocopied worksheets from commercial schemes of work. These tasks often limit pupils' ability to think for themselves, or, in the case of mathematics, set out their own work in a way that gives them greater understanding of their calculations.

28. In subjects where pupils are set according to their ability, the best teaching was often seen in the higher sets, although, even here, the pupils are not always fully extended. The pace of learning for pupils in the lower sets is often slow and progress is limited. At times, pupils spend too long on the carpet and do not give enough opportunity for pupils to use and develop a range of approaches.

29. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory, the pace of the lesson is slow and is often pedantic and unresponsive to the contributions of pupils. The abilities and interests of the pupils are not sufficiently acknowledged.

30. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, although this masks a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than Years 1 and 2. During the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed in Years 2 to 6.

31. There is consistently good teaching in one class in Year 6. In this class, there are a number of characteristics which make a positive difference to the quality of learning. The teacher has high expectations of behaviour, level of work and pace of work. In a literacy lesson observed, the pace of the lesson was brisk and 30 minutes into the lesson the pupils had engaged in three activities. This left no time for off task discussion and pupils recognised the need to stay alert and engage with the lesson. The teacher knew her pupils well and accurate assessments of their knowledge and understanding were well used to inform the lesson and to target pupils' learning. The teacher was alert to the needs of the pupils throughout the lesson. She praised and built on good ideas and was quick to pick up on when pupils needed additional support. To move pupils on in their learning, the teacher encouraged and 'scaffolded' the task in hand so they were able to move forward with support.

32. The teaching of all subjects is at least satisfactory and was judged to be good overall in mathematics and in the teaching of basic skills in information and communication technology. Some good teaching was seen in music in Years 1 to 4, but no observations were made in Years 5 or 6. Similarly, in physical education some good teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2 but there were no observations in Years 3 or 6.

33. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs makes an effective contribution to the satisfactory progress that they make. Teachers have copies of pupils' individual education plans and teaching assistants have access to them. However, these plans are not sufficiently used by teachers to plan their teaching. The content of these plans is too general and strategies to help pupils meet their targets are not specific enough. It is, therefore, difficult for teachers to assess fully the progress of pupils over longer periods, such as a term. Teaching assistants provide effective support to pupils, but, in some lessons, when the teacher is teaching the whole class, they do little more than sit and watch. The withdrawal of pupils from lessons for support is not monitored closely enough to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum. The co-ordinator is aware of a need to review the arrangements. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology in teaching pupils with special educational needs. Because she has a number of other roles, the co-ordinator is unable to teach pupils with special educational needs and this is a weakness in the provision. The calm and controlled environment in classrooms contributes to progress made by pupils.

34. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well provided for and teaching is satisfactory overall. They receive good quality specialist help each week and are well integrated into the work of their classes at other times. The visiting teacher makes careful assessments and designs teaching plans for individual pupils.

35. The school is currently finding it difficult to recruit staff. The headteacher has been effective in recruiting some teachers on a part-time basis. The management of these teachers is good. Effective

procedures are in place to ensure that pupils do not suffer as a result of having different teachers over the period of one week.

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

36. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are satisfactory and promote the aims of the school well. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and offers pupils a satisfactory range of opportunities. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. The school has considered the balance of time allocated to subjects and has increased the allocation for information and communication technology. However, the time allocation for science is below that found in most schools and is not sufficient to raise standards in the subject. Provision for pupils' personal and social development is good. The school follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority framework for personal, social and health education and citizenship in Years 1 to 6. The use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught as part of this programme and through the science curriculum. Pupils are provided with accurate information, which promotes positive attitudes to a healthy lifestyle. The provision for homework is satisfactory across the school and is appropriate to pupils' ages.

37. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented and incorporated into the school curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy, in particular, is having a good impact on helping to raise standards throughout the school, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The National Numeracy Strategy provides the core for the teaching of numeracy and is supplemented by commercial schemes of work. In Years 1 and 2, there is an over reliance of photocopied worksheets which limits the attainment of pupils.

38. The school has recently moved from a topic-based approach to teaching the foundation subjects to a more subject focused approach. The school has allocated units of work from national guidelines appropriately to year groups. However, in subjects such as religious education, art and geography, the school has focused on teaching knowledge rather than considering this alongside the skills and processes of the subject. For example, in art, drawing skills are not taught systematically nor are mapping skills in geography.

39. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The curriculum provided takes full account of the recommended areas of learning. Planning is thorough and detailed for each area of learning and well linked to appropriate topics, such as minibests. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of quality. There is very good provision for personal and social development. This is a strength in the Foundation Stage which prepares children well for entry into Year 1. More focused teaching, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned for and introduced effectively to the children. Although the facilities do not extend to an outdoor play area, the Foundation Stage teachers provide indoor activities that offer appropriate physical challenges.

40. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Teaching assistants are well used in most lessons to provide good quality support to pupils with special educational needs although, in some literacy lessons, insufficiently effective use is made of the teaching assistants' time during the whole class session. The Additional Literacy Support Programme is providing an effective strategy for special educational needs. Individual education plans provide targets that are too general and, therefore, lack a clear focus on the specific learning needs of pupils.

41. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are well provided for. They receive good quality specialist help each week and are well integrated into the work of their classes at other times. The visiting teacher makes careful assessments and designs a teaching plan around individual pupils.

42. The school has identified a need to promote the development of language skills. This is reflected in all classes and in all subjects. The school has analysed test and assessment data in order to identify pupils who need additional support or who are underachieving in literacy. Whilst the support is valuable, some pupils in Years 1 and 2 miss out on some other subjects. In Year 6, such additional support work is managed more effectively and pupils are supported in class or withdrawn without missing other subjects.

43. The extracurricular activities provided by the school are satisfactory. However, the school has recently reduced the number and range of extra-curricular activities due to the increased demands on teachers and to the new arrangements for lunchtime. During the summer term, there remains an extensive range of after school physical education clubs such as Top Sport training in gymnastics, rounders, rugby, lacrosse and additional swimming instruction. Provision in other areas is limited at this time of year but the range of clubs planned for the autumn term is more extensive. Pupils are able to take part in various sporting activities with other schools, where they are often successful. The school are regular winners, or runners up of the local swimming gala. The homework clubs are well attended.

44. The school provides booster classes. These have been effective in supporting those pupils who need some additional support particularly in English.

45. The curriculum is enhanced through a very good range of visits and visitors. The headteacher often takes a lead on such visits as the river study, which follows the source of the River Kennet to the centre of Reading. Pupils visit different local places of interest and the theatre which all enhance pupils' learning in many areas of the curriculum. Older pupils take part in a residential visit to Wales. The planning for these visits is very good. Teachers have clear learning expectations for such work and work is always followed through back in school. Visiting theatre companies and musicians enliven pupils' understanding of historical events, personal and social issues and different cultures.

46. There are good links with the local community that make a positive contribution to pupils' experience and learning. Older residents are invited into the school to talk about the area when they were young and the changes that have taken place over time. Local visitors are welcomed into the school and to assemblies. The school has satisfactory links with the playgroup and the local secondary schools. These links help to prepare pupils well for their transfer to their next stage of education. There are good links with outside agencies for pupils with special educational needs.

47. The governors are very interested in, and supportive of, curricular issues. The curriculum committee talks confidently about the numeracy and literacy strategies and their impact on standards in school. The committee members are actively engaged in monitoring teachers' planning and visiting classrooms to assess the school's work.

48. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and has improved since the time of the last inspection. It is enhanced through religious education, where they learn about world religions and reflect on what may be learned from religion, and in very good assemblies. Here, pupils enter reverently to an atmosphere of calm created by well-chosen music. The focus is mainly Christian and pupils sing hymns well, take part in prayers and have time for real reflection. They experience the pleasures of making and responding to music in music lessons.

49. The provision for pupils' moral development is good and is founded on the high expectations of the staff. All staff provide good role models for the pupils and are very consistent in the way they show respect for both pupils and other adults. The school has a very positive approach to the management of behaviour. Rewards, such as the collection of credits and the high profile 'Eagle of Excellence' awards, accompanied by the headteacher's praise, are successful in building pupils' self-esteem and respect for others. Staff make pupils aware of what is acceptable and help them to develop an appropriate idea of what is right and wrong. Moral issues are taught well and pupils are

well behaved in and around the school. Through their sporting activities, pupils are developing an awareness of rules and pride in their team's achievements.

50. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. The school creates a very caring community in which everyone is valued, respected and supported well. Routines such as lunchtime arrangements are very carefully considered in order to promote social development. At lunchtimes, older pupils take lunch with younger pupils in order to provide good role models for behaviour and to provide care for the younger or less confident pupils in school. The school is currently setting up procedures for the development of a school council where pupils will be democratically elected to represent their class in a number of decision-making activities.

51. There is satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development. There are opportunities through the curriculum to learn of the cultural and faith traditions of Britain's multicultural population. There are some areas in which the range of resources does not fully reflect cultural diversity, such as in the library and examples of the work of a wide range of artists

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The staff provide good role models to encourage the development of the pupils. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development and for providing educational and personal support and guidance are satisfactory overall.

53. The staff show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils although, some procedures for child protection are not understood by all staff. The provision for first aid is good with several fully trained staff and others trained in emergency first aid. Records are kept of any treatment and letters sent home to parents as appropriate. The headteacher and deputy are the designated officers for child protection and the school follows local procedures. The staff generally are aware of the need to be supportive if any issues arise. Nevertheless, the school is aware that they do not all know the procedures to follow and will be discussing the arrangements at staff meetings. The school has recently revised its health and safety policy. The governors tour the school regularly to identify any potential hazards. Outside contractors check the fire extinguishers, electrical items and physical education equipment each year. The teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science and physical education. Nevertheless, the school has not carried out a health and safety risk assessment as is statutorily required. The school is aware of its importance and has acquired a proprietary package to enable one to be carried out in the near future.

54. The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance are satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the time of the school's last inspection. Children are assessed soon after starting school using procedures designed for this age range. Their early learning is measured continuously against the 'stepping stones' of progress for the Foundation Stage and the activities teachers plan for the children are related to their needs. Older pupils are assessed at the end of each term in English and mathematics. Such information is useful because the school identifies those who need additional help. It enables them to group pupils of similar ability and teachers to set appropriate targets for levels of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6. As their confidence in these clear procedures grows, teachers are beginning to amend their teaching plans, leaving more or less time for specific areas of work that pupils found difficult or easy, although this practice is not common throughout the school. Assessment in mathematics is insufficiently used to allow teachers to identify, and address, any gaps in pupils' skills and knowledge and thus help them to improve. Careful records are maintained to track pupils' progress towards the targets set for them. The significant omission of science, a core subject within the curriculum, from such procedures is unsatisfactory.

55. For other subjects of the National Curriculum, assessment and monitoring procedures are developing. With the exception of good quality monitoring of what pupils do in information and

communication technology, and physical education, and good assessment of achievements in physical education, the school has no effective plans to check how well pupils are doing against bench marks of success in other subjects. This is unsatisfactory. In addition, whilst the monitoring of what pupils do is checked across the year group, there is no strong watch on how their progress is developing throughout the school by those responsible for each subject.

56. A very good feature of the school's approach to assessment is to involve the Year 6 pupils, particularly in English. Through discussion with their teacher, they assess their own work and judge whether or not they are meeting the targets set for them. This is very good personal development and encourages them to achieve more. The marking of pupils' work is also particularly good where comments relate specifically to the main point of the lesson. As a result, pupils understand how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

57. Although at an early stage, the school's approach is beginning to provide a systematic method of assessment for the core subjects of English and mathematics. Yet to be developed are procedures for monitoring the achievement of different groups of pupils and so, currently, the school cannot be sure it is meeting the needs of all pupils. Many of the procedures are new to the school and have yet to be reviewed. The co-ordinator for this aspect of the school's work is new to the role. She is hardworking and, by her own admission, has learned much since the beginning of the current academic year. She has a clear strategy for further improvements to school procedures.

58. The school has sound procedures to identify those pupils who have special educational needs, particularly so in the early stages. Procedures are being established to track the progress of pupils through regular testing and assessment. However, there is insufficient use of data to establish the extent of their progress and the effectiveness of individual education plans is not monitored. Good use is made of a wide range of services and agencies to help meet the needs of pupils. Their individual education plans are reviewed each term and, where there are statements of special educational needs, these are reviewed annually.

59. Overall, the monitoring of progress and of pupils' personal development is good. It is extensive in the Reception classes although it is less structured in other classes and relies mainly on the teachers' good knowledge of the individual pupils. Their personal qualities are enhanced by the various tasks they have around the school. As well as the responsibilities in the classroom, the older pupils in both the infants and the juniors help to support the younger ones. For example, Year 2 pupils ensure that new arrivals in the Reception classes know their way around the school and play with them until they have formed friendships. Year 6 pupils hear Year 3 pupils read and, with the Year 5s, help the youngest at lunchtime. 'Circle time' helps pupils to learn to listen to others and to be tolerant of other points of view. Teachers have very good understanding of how to deal with difficult issues and, for example, were seen to be prepared to develop a discussion about suicide when it came up during a Year 6 'circle time'. Pupils' self-esteem is raised by the various rewards that are given out including the 'eagle' certificates and badges. During the inspection, the inspectors saw excellent contributions from a visiting group who discussed risk taking and anti-social behaviour with Year 6 pupils as part of the school's drugs education programme.

60. The procedures for promoting discipline and behaviour are good. Overall, the good quality of the teaching generally provides pupils with work at the right level so that they are fully engaged and behaviour is not an issue. Class rules are on display and teachers discuss them with the pupils at the beginning of the year and refer to them as necessary at other times. Pupils were able to quote examples of what they should and should not do. Good behaviour and positive attitudes are rewarded in a variety of ways by the teachers awarding stars, house points, merits or raffle tickets. The inspectors saw good instances in lessons of teachers ensuring that the pupils understood how to behave ranging from reminding them not to call out to, in rare instances, sending them to another class for a 'time-out'. Pupils were aware of odd instances of bullying or aggressive behaviour but were satisfied that the teachers dealt with them appropriately and successfully. Any pupils who show

sustained difficulty with behaviour are monitored well through the school's special educational needs system.

61. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory and make an appropriate contribution to the attainment and progress of all pupils. These arrangements show an improvement since the last inspection. The good relationships between the pupils and the staff mean that the pupils enjoy being at the school. The school has recently started to use a computerised system to monitor the overall level of attendance during the year and to highlight those pupils whose attendance is causing concern. In particular, the school contacts those parents who have not provided a reason for their children's absence. The education welfare officer provides good support.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are generally pleased with all that the school does. Inspectors' judgements endorse the majority of parents' positive views, which, in the main, are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Parents say that the school is well led and the teaching is good. Their children like coming to school, behave well and make progress from the level of support they receive. The school expects them to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. The school works closely with parents and they feel comfortable approaching the school with any questions. Nevertheless, some parents consider they are not well informed about their children's progress. The inspectors found that the arrangements for the viewing afternoons in the autumn and spring terms limit the opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress and that the end of year reports do not have enough information on how well their children are doing. A number of parents are concerned about the range of activities outside lessons and the inspection team concluded that the recent reduction has resulted in a more limited range of clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school. Some doubts were expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors concluded that the work set is generally appropriate with the amount increasing as pupils go through the school.

63. Overall, the school has established satisfactory links with the parents. The headteacher sends newsletters home once or twice a term providing general administrative information. Many other letters refer to more specific matters. However, no information is regularly provided on what is being taught in class or how parents can help their children at home. In the lower end of the school, the teachers are in the playground or at the classroom doors at the end of the day when parents are collecting their children. The inspectors saw several conversations taking place and it is very apparent that parents feel very welcome to come into the school. At the upper end of the school, the teachers do not usually come into the playground. Almost all parents come to the meetings with teachers each term. Those in the autumn and spring terms are seen by parents as opportunities to see their children's work and are not a structured opportunity to discuss progress. The summer term provides the only formal timetabled opportunity to speak to teachers. The annual report on progress is sent home in the summer term. This report generally provides a reasonable summary for English together with targets to help the pupils to improve. Nevertheless, in some classes, the information is more limited for the other subjects often concentrating on the work covered or attitudes rather than the skills and understanding acquired. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in the setting and review of their individual education plans.

64. The school prospectus does not give specific information to parents about the provision for pupils with special educational needs. A strength of the provision is that the special educational needs co-ordinator is well known to parents and also, where appropriate, they are able to meet with staff to review the progress of their children.

65. Parents' involvement with the school makes an effective contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. This is a strength of the school. Pupils are happy in school and most of them work hard and are keen to learn. These attitudes reflect the extent to which parents encourage their children to respect the school and education process. SPaTz, the Southcote parent teacher

association, is very supportive and arranges many fund raising and social events including ones for the benefit of the pupils. Few parents come to help in the classroom on a regular basis although many more are willing to help on trips out and with swimming. Parents are keen to know about the school and, in addition to the meetings with class teachers, a good proportion come to the annual meeting which provides an opportunity to talk about school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

66. The headteacher provides sound leadership and, with the support of the school's management team, gives direction to the work of the school and fosters a good team approach. The day-to-day running of the school is smooth. The previous inspection identified a weakness in the school's management structure. This has been addressed and the members of the present management team have clear responsibilities both to their tasks and the whole school. They meet regularly and deal with whole school issues and long-term strategy. However, little additional time is available for them to carry out their management roles. For example, the deputy headteacher, who is very effective, has a number of heavy responsibilities. These include co-ordinating assessment and special educational needs, both of which are large areas in this school, but insufficient time is allowed to monitor and evaluate these effectively during the working day. Great emphasis is placed on constant dialogue with staff to ensure that all have an opportunity to contribute their views. This is valuable in promoting professional development.

67. Most of the staff have curricular responsibilities and have produced schemes of work for their subjects: a good example is information and communication technology. However, as co-ordinators, they have little opportunity to develop their subject across the school, and give the direction that is needed, particularly through the monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching. As a result, weaknesses are not always clearly identified and appropriate action taken to address them. This is of particular concern in the core subjects of mathematics and science, where standards remain below average.

68. The headteacher monitors performance through observing lessons, scrutinising pupils' work, analysing national test results and reports from year groups. However, whilst much of this is general, some aspects have been identified as needing urgent attention, such as the drop in standards in mathematics and the operation of the setting arrangements. This is being revised in an attempt to improve standards, throughout the school. The management team uses the national test results to evaluate progress and to help in creating the subject sets. Pupils' work is sampled and their levels of attainment are evaluated in meetings but this rarely involves staff outside the year group and is not effective in moderating the standards consistently across the whole school.

69. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Their procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and for setting targets for teachers are good and have made a difference to the quality of teaching in some cases.

70. The governing body has a suitable structure of committees and a high level of commitment to the school. Governors know what is going on through the reports they receive from the headteacher and co-ordinators. They also gather a lot of information from the visits they make to the school, and some of the reports of these presented to the full governing body, are very perceptive in their analysis and evaluation. The curriculum 'trails' they carry out through the school are a good source of information although these insights are not always shared with the relevant co-ordinator. There have been improvements to strategic planning; for example, the school improvement plan is better than at the time of the last inspection. It is set out in a clear format and contains more detail but the monitoring and evaluation criteria still lack the sharpness that would allow the school to be clear about what is being evaluated and when it has successfully achieved its goal.

71. The school's budget is managed efficiently, and is monitored regularly by the finance committee of the governing body. Subject co-ordinators provide information on their subject's requirements, including training needs and report back on these at intervals to the governing body. There are clear links made between school improvement planning and financial planning and secure procedures in place to ensure good value for money, including the comparison of performance with other similar schools.

72. The teachers are suitably qualified to meet the needs of the curriculum. There is a good system of induction for teachers new to the school, and effective support for newly qualified teachers through training and mentoring. Performance management is well established in the school although, with staff changes and absences, this is not operating at as frequent a level as it was previously. Teaching assistants are generally effective and, in most lessons, provide good support for the teachers and pupils.

73. The school building is spacious and has good outdoor facilities such as the school field, environmental area and a well-used swimming pool. The computer suite provides good opportunities for whole class teaching, but has some limitations in its design. However, there are some areas of weakness. The current library arrangements are unsatisfactory. This is within the computer suite and, with the heavy use this gets, there is little opportunity for pupils to carry out any personal research or investigation. There is no secure outdoor area for pupils in the Reception class, which limits the opportunities for free access to a wider range of large apparatus and equipment.

74. Resources for most subjects are satisfactory, and are good for information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. Resources for the library and art are unsatisfactory.

75. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is enthusiastic, but has a number of other key roles in the school, all of which are demanding. She provides a satisfactory level of leadership and management within the constraints of time. She is aware of what needs improvement and has begun to address a range of issues contained in an action plan to develop provision. The school has started to implement the revised Code of Practice for special educational needs and has begun a revision of its policy. Staff have received some useful training to prepare them for this. Governors are involved in provision, but do not formally monitor the effects of the policy and of funding on the progress of pupils. They do not systematically analyse trends in pupils' progress to determine the success of their policy. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is aware that there is insufficient required information in the Annual Report to parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to further raise achievement in the school, governors, the headteacher and staff should:

1. Continue to improve standards in mathematics and science, as outlined in the school improvement plan and by:

- ensuring that pupils have planned opportunities for using and applying number;
- ensuring that scientific enquiry is taught through the contexts outlined in the science programme of study;
- increasing the time allocation for the teaching of science;
- raising some teachers' expectations and level of challenge in lessons;
- improving some teachers' subject knowledge;
- improving the use of assessments to inform teachers' planning; and
- improving the quality of pupils' individual educational plans.

(paragraphs 4,5,7,9,8,9,10,14,23,36,37,54,55,114,115,117,118,122,123,124,126,127)

2. Continue to improve the management of the curriculum, as outlined in the school improvement plan and by:

- ensuring subject co-ordinators monitor and evaluate standards and quality of teaching and learning throughout the school; and
- reviewing and developing the recently adopted Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work to take account of the development of skills.

(paragraphs 133,153 refer)

3. Continue to improve the quality of the school improvement plan by:

- writing more specific success criteria which relate more to the outcomes for pupils' learning and how the impact is to be measured.

(paragraph 70)

4. Build upon the support and interest of parents by:

- providing regular information on what is being taught in the classroom and how parents can help at home;
- providing more formal opportunities for parents to meet teachers in the autumn and spring terms; and
- ensuring that annual reports on progress provide, for all subjects, details of what pupils know and can do.

(paragraphs 63,64,65,75)

5. Improve the accommodation by:

- upgrading the library in Years 3 to 6; and
- providing a secure play area for Foundation Stage children.

(paragraphs 39,51,74,97)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Continuing the improvements in writing in Years 1 and 2. (paragraphs 4,5,105,108,109)
- Ensuring that the whole school health and safety risk assessment is carried out in the near future and that all adults in the school have a good understanding of child protection procedures. (paragraph 53)
- Improving the standards of art, in Years 3 to 6. (paragraphs 11,74,129,131)
- Improving the standards of history in Years 1 and 2. (paragraphs 6,147,152)
- Improve the range of pupils' reading. (paragraphs 105,108)
- Improve assessments in the foundation subjects. (paragraphs 5,54,55)

- Ensure that pupils are not withdrawn from classes at inappropriate times. (paragraphs 127,166,175)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

72

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

37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	23	35	2	0	0
Percentage	2.8	13.9	31.9	48.6	2.8	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	365
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	54

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	21

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	32	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	23	24
	Girls	29	26	29
	Total	47	49	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (85)	79 (89)	85 (89)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	23	21
	Girls	28	28	29
	Total	47	51	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (85)	82 (89)	81 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	34	27	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	22	30
	Girls	22	17	23
	Total	46	39	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (68)	64 (71)	87 (78)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	86 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (59)	n/a (75)	n/a (64)
	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	17
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	4
Indian	11
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	284
Any other minority ethnic group	20

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)	14.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	256

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	705,504
Total expenditure	698,964
Expenditure per pupil	1,859
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,705
Balance carried forward to next year	18,245

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.0
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	336
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45.5	52.5	1.9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43.6	54.4	1.9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29.7	66.3	1.9	0	1.9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19.8	54.4	21.8	3.9	0
The teaching is good.	21.8	76.2	1.9	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	16.8	51.5	27.7	3.9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42.6	45.5	11.9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	27.7	70.2	2.9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	17.8	67.3	14.8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	39.6	55.4	0.9	0	3.9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	16.8	82.2	0.9	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5.9	50.5	19.8	11.9	11.9

NB. Percentages may not total 100 as they are rounded to the first decimal point.

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

77. The satisfactory to good standards reached by the under-fives at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, and, in some areas, improved upon. The new Foundation department is well established and the high standard of teaching and learning in all the Early Learning Goals is having a positive effect on children's learning.

78. Under Reading Local Education Authority's guidelines, children are admitted to full-time education at the beginning of the term in which they become five. The school gave careful consideration to the most effective way of organising a second reception class at the beginning of the summer term. Whilst some turbulence was experienced this was kept to a minimum.

79. Most of the children have already attended one of the local nursery schools. There is good liaison between the school and these establishments, and the process is further enhanced by home visits made just before children start school. Every effort is made to ensure that the transition is easy and stress-free. Good relationships exist between the teachers and the parents.

80. The results of initial tests administered shortly after entry confirm that many children start school with poorly developed social skills and difficulties with speaking and listening. By the time they are ready to start Year 1, most attain all the Early Learning Goals. This is achieved through the provision of a full and interesting curriculum, good teaching in all areas of learning and a close observation of individual development. The children respond very well to the stimulating environment, caring atmosphere and high expectations of good behaviour. They achieve a good start to their school lives, which parents fully appreciate.

Personal and Social Development

81. There is a good atmosphere in the Foundation department and children achieve well to attain average standards. Classroom routines are well structured and children move from one activity to another with the minimum of fuss. During discussions, the children are tolerant of each other, listening to contributions and freely offering their own. Behaviour, in the classroom and around the school, is very good indeed. Children work and play together and are beginning to co-operate. They take turns and show consideration. This was well illustrated in the play area developed as a Victorian classroom. Each individual was aware of the rules and role-play closely mirrored the example set for them by their teachers and assistants.

82. Emphasis is rightly placed on developing independence. When changing for physical development, the older children could manage without any help at all and the new entrants were already following their example by only seeking help when absolutely necessary. In the physical development lessons, the teachers were consistent in their use of sanctions, not only for safety reasons, but to indicate that children should take turns, listen carefully and treat others with consideration. When a sanction was applied, each individual accepted it without hesitation.

83. The teachers have created a calm, secure environment in which children are valued as individuals. Clear guidelines are evident and high expectations of behaviour. Relationships are founded on the basis of moderation and respect, qualities which set the tone for this Foundation year. Children concentrate and persevere with their activities and are eager to explore new learning with confidence. They are very well prepared to enter Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

84. The initial tests reveal that many children start school with an inability to listen for sustained periods of time and to communicate effectively. To remedy this, the curriculum has a rich language element. The topic approach enables the staff to introduce language, in particular speaking and

listening, into every part of the school day. During the inspection, all the evidence confirmed that standards are at least those expected by the end of the Foundation year.

85. Good listening skills were particularly noticeable. During every lesson, children, with the exception of some of the new entrants, listened carefully and quietly to everything the teacher or the assistant said and responded quickly and eagerly when the opportunity occurred to do so. This confirmed that good teaching has made a significant difference in a short time.

86. Communication skills are also developing well. One of the classroom play areas had been turned into a doctor's and dentist's surgery, complete with telephone and appointment book. The children visited a real one nearby to see how it worked. Through careful management and provision, the teachers helped the children to re-enact different situations, using appropriate language and social skills.

87. To prepare children for Year 1, a modified literacy hour has been introduced. 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' was the key text for one lesson and the children read the story with the teacher who reinforced their understanding of fruit and other food which the caterpillar ate. In the parallel class, children were using non-fiction books as part of their topic on mini-beasts. From a selection of books, they chose different insects to draw and name in their zigzag books, subsequently showing and describing their work to the rest of the class. The children can identify significant features of a book, for example, the title and author, and they enjoy a good story, whether it is read to them, or they are reading or recalling it themselves. The teaching assistants are used very effectively in small group to support this process. They work with children who re-tell and tape well-known stories. The assistants are very skilled at recording individual progress or difficulty in the observation book.

88. A good understanding of phonics has been developed through effective word, sentence and text level work, using a variety of sources in the classroom. This is started as soon as a child is judged ready and it follows a well-established process. All children develop pencil control through practising writing patterns and letter formation. They take pride in their work and enjoy sharing it with adults and the rest of the class.

89. The standard of reading is similar to that found in most schools. The attractive classrooms contain a variety of good books to interest and stimulate. Reading books are introduced at the appropriate time and children are keen to share them with visiting adults. Good liaison exists between the school and the parents who support their children very well indeed.

Mathematical development

90. Scrutiny of work confirms that the process of learning is both systematic and developmental. Concepts are introduced, practised and extended in a logical, regular way. Children count up to 20 and work with numbers up to ten confidently. Older children can identify missing numbers up to 20 and insert them in correctly. Children achieve average standards. The teachers have a fund of rhymes and songs which successfully reinforce number. The children know them all and join in happily. They can estimate the number of cubes on a plate and become steadily more accurate as their confidence grows. Small groups working with two dice can count the dots, add them together and write down the answer. As part of their clocks topic they are introduced to night and day and begin to sequence events, for example, getting up, having breakfast and going to school.

91. Teachers make good use of every opportunity to practise counting and number recognition. During the caterpillar story, it gradually ate an increasing number of different things. As the story progressed, the teacher produced all these from a bag and they were counted out which was an effective way to reinforce basic skills.

92. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. Teachers use correct vocabulary from the outset and all activities build on the child's understanding at that time. Effective assessment techniques enable the teacher and her assistant to monitor individual progress and structure future

work accordingly. The work is well planned and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, most pupils are ready to commence the National Curriculum.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. Most of the work in the Foundation Stage is planned under this area of development. Using a topic approach, the teachers aim to involve the children in a range of activities which cover all areas of learning. The scrutiny confirms that these topics are broad and varied, ranging from babies and growing up, to frost, ice, water and snow. The children conduct experiments, such as watching an 'iceberg' floating in water and finding out what happens as it melts. Conversely, they observe rainwater evaporating in the playground. They make a rainmaker and test the waterproofing of raincoats.

94. During the inspection, the children were learning about mini-beasts and were searching the school grounds for them and using reference books to find out what they were. They learned about the life cycle of the butterfly and made a circular cardboard cut-out, which illustrated the process very well.

95. A visitor came in to talk about life as a child in the Second World War. The children were fascinated to hear about shelters, school, evacuation and particularly, the rationing of sweets. They listened very closely and asked sensible questions.

96. Planning the children's work is highly effective. The structure allows teachers to implement the topic in her own way and the assessment procedures confirm how much has been achieved.

Physical development

97. Whereas the physical development of children under instruction in the hall is very good, the lack of facilities and equipment outside is a serious hindrance to their overall development. Schools are recommended to create a suitable outside area for children in the Foundation Stage in which they can use large play equipment and climb suitable frames. This is an important handicap for the teachers who have, nevertheless, tried to meet part of the need by appealing to parents for donations of small play equipment, only then having to store it in an unsuitable building which is constantly vandalised.

98. In the hall, children use equipment very well indeed. They are fully aware of safety aspects and use available space to good effect. Opportunities exist for children to make choices and develop their independence, using the climbing frames and beams to build confidence and exercise their bodies. They balance well, travelling up and down surfaces and in and out of different obstacles. Teachers use individuals to demonstrate good examples such as pushing or pulling one's body down a bench. Standards are average.

99. The very good behaviour of children during this activity was of particular note. Every minute was spent profitably and when individual children allowed their exuberance to get the better of them, a quiet word of admonition was sufficient to calm him or her down.

Creative activities

100. The visitor is immediately impressed by the quality of display in the foundation area, most of which derives from children's own work. Although music was not observed during the inspection, scrutiny of work confirms that it is an important part of their lives. Children sing tunefully to the guitar, know the words of a number of well-known songs and accompany them with actions.

101. Children use a variety of media in their artwork and are confident and happy mixing paints and building models. They can glue and cut unaided. As part of their 'Rain' topic, they explore different ways of expressing their thoughts, for example, sponge prints representing the sea, painting on wet

paper and using wet chalk.

102. The children find creative activities a good way in which to explore feelings. They are encouraged to think about the colours in spring and how happy and cheerful they make everyone feel. Awe and wonder were observed when children looked at the patterns and colours on butterfly's wings.

103. The Early Learning Goals are well met in this area of study. Children are stimulated by the exciting environment in which they work and in the many imaginative ways devised by the teachers to broaden their experience.

ENGLISH

104. Statistics summarising attainment in English indicate that pupils attain below the national average at the end of Year 2, aged seven, and above average at the end of Year 6, aged eleven. In Year 6, pupils attain well above the average of other similar schools. Over the last two years, there has been a good improvement in the attainment of those leaving the school but the performance of Year 2 pupils in national tests has remained below average. At this age too, the most recent statistics show a discrepancy between standards of reading between boys and girls, boys being the lower attainers.

105. Findings from the inspection indicate that overall standards are average although this masks rising standards in reading in the Year 1 and 2 classes, for boys particularly, and well above average standards in writing in Year 6. Older pupils talk confidently to their class group and pupils throughout the school listen well. Pupils in the Year 1 and 2 classes speak with a limited vocabulary and this influences the quality of their writing. A range of strategies put in place by the school since the last inspection have resulted in raising standards for those leaving the school at eleven. They have not made a significant impact on standards at the age of seven, although indications from lesson observations indicate that improvements have been made. A significant shortcoming in the school's improvements since the last inspection is the lack of a library for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. This was heavily criticised at the time of the previous inspection and, since then, the situation has deteriorated. A small collection of books is shelved along one wall of the technology suite and is plainly inadequate. There is a small attractive library for pupils in Years 1 and 2 but this has a limited range of books. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have identified the library provision as a weakness. This shortcoming is helped in part by regular book collections from the library loan service.

106. When pupils enter Year 1, most have attained the Early Learning Goals set for pupils of their age. However, their vocabulary remains limited and, for many of them, the ability to hear sounds within words is still a challenge. By the time they are seven years old, work in lessons demonstrates that satisfactory progress has been made and they are attaining near to, or at, average levels for pupils of their age. Writing is still below average, with too few pupils acquiring the skills to attain average or above levels of attainment. Satisfactory skills of written English are mastered between the ages of seven and eleven and a good proportion of pupils achieve beyond this. Standards of handwriting are good throughout the school.

107. Opportunities for speaking and listening arise during work in many subjects. Throughout the school pupils listen well and, by Year 2 and beyond, they speak confidently in lessons and are keen to contribute their ideas. By the time they are in Years 5 and 6, they listen intently, answer clearly and give thoughtful responses to teachers' questions. They discuss ideas with each other and give opinions. This is a satisfactory picture. Younger pupils have opportunities for acting out games and stories and all pupils have the opportunity to participate in the annual school productions. Theatre groups are regular visitors to the school and pupils consequently enjoy the experience that this brings.

108. Reading is average throughout the school and no evidence of differing attainment between boys and girls aged seven was evident. Pupils decode unknown words with skill, either guessing from the general sense of the passage or using their knowledge of sounds of letters or patterns within

words. The majority of pupils have a basic competence in reading skills and they are keen to share it. Good readers use expression to emphasise the meaning of the text and read fluently. They read a little more widely than the other pupils and can offer opinions about a story plot, its characters, and other books that they have enjoyed. They confidently skim the pages to decide whether or not they might enjoy the book. However, all pupils' range of reading is limited. Few read poetry or books for information, nor can they locate them from the shelves in the infant library. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils demonstrate an understanding of various texts. In lessons they select the main points and can express preferences. Again, they do not read widely and, unless they visit a local library, have little experience of how books are arranged for ease of reference. The Internet is used increasingly in school to search for information, and teachers bring reference books into the classroom for pupils to use.

109. By the age of seven, pupils write down what they want to say. Most are just beginning to punctuate their work and some common words are spelt correctly. Good attempts at more difficult words are made using their knowledge of the sounds of letters and groups of letters. They write in simple sentences in a clear joined style. They write about what they have been doing and what happens next in well-known stories but, in general, the range of writing for different purposes is very limited. Much of the work offered for scrutiny consisted of worksheets to practise handwriting and spelling skills. Few opportunities for more extended writing are evident. Overall, the standard of work is what is expected of pupils of this age: the variation in sentence construction and word choices is below average whilst handwriting is above. Pupils in Year 6 write appropriately for a range of purposes, words are chosen adventurously for effect and ideas are sustained and developed. A biographical piece about Guy Fawkes, a diary of an evacuee, emotive journalistic reporting on the death of the Queen Mother and the creation of a form using the appropriate official language demonstrate the good range of writing styles accomplished. More able pupils write with conviction and imagination, creating tension and atmosphere from their choice of words. One pupil wrote, "The shimmering, cold sun was setting as dusk approached," and another opens with, "It was Halloween and under the pale moonlight the church clock began to chime twelve...from their grizzly graves, the ghostly dead rose up like smoke, each one clutching a party invitation." Such good quality and range of writing is an improvement on standards at the time of the last inspection when there were insufficient opportunities to develop a range of styles for different purposes. Good handwriting is of a fluent, joined and legible style.

110. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Within this overall judgement, very good teaching was observed in Year 6, and good teaching in Years 3 and 4. Although uniformly sound, the teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is characterised by lack of challenge and so all pupils, but particularly those who are more able, do not always do as well as they might. This contrasts sharply with the approach for those over seven years old and where, particularly in the good and very good lessons, all pupils are urged to attempt that bit more. Such high expectations result in good quality work. The school has appropriately adopted the national scheme for literacy, which means that lessons build well upon what pupils have learned previously and, for the most part, pupils make steady progress. Lessons have clear objectives so pupils know what they are learning and what they should achieve. The suggested structure of lessons supports weaker teaching and ensures a satisfactory pace of learning through a range of different activities. Satisfactory lessons do not deal as well as the better ones with the summary section of the lesson. Whilst a review of what each ability group within the class has learned offers good opportunity for public speaking and careful listening, it does nothing to reinforce or develop further learning. In a very good lesson observed in Year 6, the teacher made effective use of this time to double check that pupils could list a good proportion of the techniques employed by poets that she had been teaching. Those forgotten were reinforced with further examples until pupils were sure and, by this time, all were clear what they had just learned.

111. An innovation in Years 1 and 2 provides pupils with twice weekly additional teaching sessions in the sounds of letters and groups of letters in our language, as well as familiar spelling patterns.

Pupils are grouped according to their attainment for these sessions and, because teaching relates closely to their needs, they make good progress which is already evident in their reading skills. The teaching of basic skills, and the attention given to them, is sound overall. Weaknesses relate to the general monitoring of reading progress for the older pupils and for the younger, in an otherwise meticulous plan, the lack of attention to the variety of reading matter selected. Throughout the school, teachers have not sufficiently incorporated the use of information and communication technology into their literacy lessons.

112. In literacy lessons, pupils with special educational needs are well supported during group and individual work, either by the teacher, an assistant or through the standard of work they are given to attempt. This means they make appropriate progress. In some lessons, not enough use is made of the assistant's time during whole class teaching sessions. Good practice observed involved note taking for the teacher, supporting pupils by rephrasing questions for them and giving them confidence, or sitting beside those who needed prompts to refocus their attention. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. This is because teachers are aware of their difficulties and have been given good strategies for helping them by the visiting specialist teacher. This teacher keeps a careful watch on their progress and, once each week during literacy sessions, withdraws pupils in the early stages of English acquisition for more specific help.

113. Two members of staff manage English in the lower and upper parts of the school. This division of labour is a satisfactory arrangement and means that each co-ordinator concentrates on the priorities appropriate for younger and older pupils. However, it also presents difficulties in maintaining a clear overview of teaching and learning throughout the school and a vision for the development of the subject. Both have expertise to offer in the subject and one, currently on maternity leave but shortly to return, is a leading literacy teacher. Teachers have the resources they need to teach literacy lessons and the school has, for example, a good range of large format books, dictionaries and group reading books for use during lessons. The range of individual reading books for Years 1 and 2 is well organised so that pupils can find what they need but the collection contains insufficient poetry and non-fiction books. Too few children make use of the small information library and know how to locate a book on a specific topic. The school makes effective use of the book collections from the library loan service for fiction and non-fiction texts. However, the library facility for older pupils is poor and does not assist the development of pupils' research skills, widen their general knowledge or promote a love of literature.

MATHEMATICS

114. Since the last inspection, standards in mathematics have fallen, and are now below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 attaining average standards is close to the national average, but too few pupils achieve at the higher levels for their age. This is the same judgement as the standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests in 2001. Pupils have satisfactory skills in numeracy, but do not have enough experience of using and applying mathematics over a range of activities, which limits their understanding of some aspects of mathematics. This is reflected in the relatively low number of pupils who attain the higher levels by the time they are seven and 11. Although most pupils achieve appropriate levels, the higher attainers are not achieving their capabilities and in, much of the school, teachers do not expect enough of these pupils. There was no noticeable difference in the performance of girls and boys.

115. In Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100, count accurately in twos, fives and tens, can read time to the half-hour and measure to the nearest centimetre. These are at the expected level for pupils of this age, but few go beyond this. Much of this is due to the teachers' over reliance on photocopied worksheets, and also the setting arrangement for pupils in Year 1 and 2, which are not sufficiently effective. Even within the sets, there is a wide spread of ability that is not always effectively catered for. Too often, teachers use the setting as the means of differentiating the work, rather than analysing and identifying the needs of the pupils in the group sufficiently carefully. Whilst

sound provision is made for pupils of lower attainment, the work is not sufficiently differentiated to extend the thinking of the higher attainers, as they do not carry out the sort of investigations necessary to broaden their understanding and allow them to make good progress.

116. The more recent change from setting to whole-class teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 has given teachers greater opportunities to develop and extend mathematics teaching. However, it has also meant that teachers have had to rethink their working methods. In Year 6, pupils have good recall of tables and number bonds, which enables them to use their numeracy skills effectively, and they can apply this to calculation of squares and square roots of numbers. Whilst the higher attainers are able, for example, to divide numbers by two digits, or reduce fractions to their lowest form, these are some of the few examples where they are working beyond what is normally expected for pupils of this age.

117. Throughout the school, there is insufficient use of mathematical investigations to develop pupils' understanding, reinforce what they already know, and allow them to apply this to new situations. While in lessons, teachers do question pupils on how they have arrived at an answer there is little evidence in pupils' books that shows them developing their own strategies. Aspects of mathematics such as handling data or working with shapes or measurement are, with a few exceptions, set at the same level for all pupils in the group. This does not give teachers a sufficiently clear picture of what the pupils can achieve. In some classes, the teachers control the learning and the rate of progress too closely, and there are too few opportunities for pupils to use mathematics to solve real-life problems.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but there are marked variations particularly in Years 1 and 2. The best teaching is seen in the higher sets through much of the school, although, even here, the pupils are not always fully extended. In Year 6, the pace of learning is better. Teaching in Year 6 is good, and often very good. A lesson on recording data and producing graphs from this was very effective and pupils had a clear understanding of their work. A particularly strong feature is the feedback that pupils receive on their work, which identifies areas of weakness and corrects pupils' misunderstandings. This is supplemented by the good quality questions asked by the teacher and the insistence that pupils respond in full sentences to show that they have understood. This is giving pupils great confidence to tackle their areas of weakness.

119. The pace of learning for pupils in the lower sets, particularly in Year 1 and 2, is often too slow and they make limited progress. At times, teachers spend more time than is necessary with the pupils sitting on the carpet and do not give enough opportunities for pupils to use and develop a range of approaches. Work in lessons and the worksheets show that, for many of these pupils, the demands made are too low. There is an overuse of photocopied worksheets, often the same for all pupils. Many of these do not sufficiently stretch the pupils who often finish them very quickly, and have little of real value to go on to. These also limit the pupils' ability to think for themselves, or to set out their own work in a way that gives them a greater understanding, for example, of place value.

120. Teachers are familiar with and secure in the use of the National Numeracy Strategy, which most apply well. However, there is little use of information and communication technology to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills, other than, for example, the use of spreadsheets, which is part of the information and communication technology scheme of work. There is evidence of pupils using mathematics to help their learning in other subjects, for example, drawing graphs in science and geography.

121. The changes to the management and co-ordination have reduced the effectiveness of the subject and there is no clear direction at present. The monitoring of standards and the quality of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator is unsatisfactory. Insufficient work has been done on firming up a whole school scheme for recording and tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. Standards have fallen since the previous inspection and generally the subject is not as effective as it has been in the past. There is a lack of consistency across the school and the level of challenge for many pupils is an issue.

SCIENCE

122. In Year 2, standards are well below average. The previous inspection reported that pupils' attainment in science in Key Stage 1 was 'above expectations'. This level of attainment has not been maintained, partly because there is insufficient challenge for pupils to make good progress and partly because too little time is allocated to the subject. In the year 2001 end of key stage assessments, teachers recorded well below national average attainment, and few pupils reached the next higher level. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve satisfactory levels for their abilities. No significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls or of pupils from minority ethnic groups were observed.

123. Pupils achieve below average standards in Year 6. The previous inspection noted that attainment was, 'in line with national expectations'. The same reasons for this decline in standards apply as for Year 2. In the test results for 2001, overall attainment was below the national average, and the proportion of pupils who reached the next higher level was also below. Compared with similar schools, overall attainment was also well below the average. However, although test results are below national averages, there has been a steady improvement since 1997. When judged in comparison with their assessment results at the age of seven, pupils' performance by the age of eleven is average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well for their abilities and make satisfactory progress, particularly where they have specific support. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils from minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress and achieve well as do those with English as an additional language because teachers are aware of their needs.

124. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The previous report described teaching as 'mainly good'. Lack of challenge for pupils to acquire understanding appropriate to their differing capabilities and limited time for science teaching are the main reasons for this change. These factors have resulted in a lack of breadth and depth in all aspects of the science curriculum and particularly in investigative work. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, but the quality and quantity of pupils' recorded work in Years 1 and 2 were very variable. In Year 2, pupils acquire knowledge, but their investigative and recording skills are not sufficiently developed for them to have a good understanding of the subject. For example, in a satisfactory Year 2 lesson, instead of looking at and discussing actual examples, pupils classified living and non-living things simply by cutting out pictures and sticking them onto paper under two headings. They were, however, keen to do the tasks and most worked well and with good concentration. In this lesson, pupils were set time targets to complete the task which ensured that they worked at a good pace. In another Year 2 lesson, pupils learned that living things could be classified by observable criteria such as number of legs or method of movement. Higher attaining pupils found this relatively easy, but those of average ability became confused because they had insufficient guidance about how this could be achieved. No teaching was seen in Year 1. However, analysis of pupils' work indicates that, although they make some gains in knowledge, understanding is more limited because they lack well-developed skills of investigation and recording. As with Year 2, there is too much work that relies on work sheets, colouring and copying instead of pupils' own first hand observation, investigation and recording. In addition to living things, pupils have worked on materials and their properties and physical process in science, but in each of these areas, there is a lack of breadth and depth in what they

125. In Years 3 to 6, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, it is variable and generally better in Year 6. The previous report described teaching as ranging, 'from good to unsatisfactory'. Unsatisfactory teaching was not seen in this inspection. However, there are a number of issues arising from the scrutiny of pupils' work which relate to the quality of teaching. A lack of challenge for pupils to develop good scientific understanding through rigorous and systematic investigation and limitations in the breadth and depth of study restrict their progress and hence their attainment. Furthermore, some work is not well matched to pupils' capabilities, particularly those who

are higher attaining and this means that they do not do as well as they should. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher made very effective use of questioning to help pupils develop their understanding of the effects of tobacco and harmful substances on the human body. Related issues such as freedom of choice and risk were sensitively explored. Pupils were well managed and maintained a good level of concentration, but there was too little time allowed for them to raise their own questions. In a satisfactory Year 5 lesson, the teacher presented appropriate knowledge clearly and gave very detailed explanations and illustration about the internal structure of flowers. This held pupils' interest but, for some, the subsequent task, to examine and draw the flowers, had less attraction. Pupils took too long to settle to the assignment and a few worked too slowly to make satisfactory progress.

126. Analysis of pupils' work in Year 5 shows a generally satisfactory emphasis on investigative work, but teachers' expectations of what they should achieve with respect to presentation and quality of work are too variable. No teaching was seen in Year 4, but analysis of pupils' work indicates that they have acquired knowledge, but at too superficial a level. Teachers' expectations of what pupils could do are not high enough and because of this, their recorded work lacks rigour and clarity in presentation. In Year 3, pupils have experienced a limited variety of work. Too much use is made of worksheets and of colouring and not enough emphasis is given to first hand investigative work. Again, teachers' expectations about the quality of recorded work are not high enough to ensure that pupils learn to work with scientific thoroughness. In the one lesson seen in Year 3, pupils responded well to discussion on balanced and healthy diets. They were eager to contribute their own ideas and worked well at the task that followed, to illustrate the foods necessary to create a balanced meal. Most showed a sound understanding of the task and were able to explain what they had learned. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have also studied physical processes and materials and their properties, but in restricted range and depth.

127. The school has a scheme of work for science but a major weakness is that too little time is allocated to the subject. This is the reason why pupils' experience and understanding of science lack both breadth and depth. In some classes, in Years 1 and 2, pupils are withdrawn from science lessons in order to receive additional support in literacy. Furthermore, the co-ordinator does not monitor curriculum planning in all year groups and, therefore, she cannot know whether teachers plan their teaching effectively. Overall, assessment of pupils' work is not well structured. This means that the curriculum cannot be effectively developed because there is insufficient information available about what pupils can or cannot do and what needs to be done to improve matters. Because the co-ordinator has no time allocated to monitor teaching and does not systematically check pupils' work, she is not in a good position to identify priorities for development. This means that there is insufficient focus on the need to raise the standards of attainment for all pupils, particularly those who are higher attaining. Leadership and management are, therefore, unsatisfactory although there is an action plan to develop some aspects of provision. There are some links in the subject with numeracy, but these are not well developed and little use is made of information and communication technology to aid pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

128. The attainment of seven-year-olds is average. Pupils are able to draw to an acceptable standard and they are beginning to develop aesthetic taste and use this to judge what they like and dislike. Pupils have experience of colour mixing and they are able to use paintbrushes and tools appropriately. The pupils have had extensive experience of collage work and most are confident in using materials to communicate their ideas. In using natural materials for printing patterns, pupils were confident in commenting on differences in others' work, and in suggesting ways of improving their own work.

129. The attainment of eleven-year-olds is below that expected for their age. Standards have declined since the time of the last inspection. This is especially the case for drawing. Examples of observational drawings are often disappointing. In many cases, there are few features seen in their

drawings and proportions in their drawings are weak. There was some appropriate work seen in one Year 6 classroom where pupils produced some drawings showing perspective. The school is at an early stage of implementing national guidance for art and skills such as drawing are not taught in a systematic way throughout the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in exploring and developing ideas and in evaluating work but unsatisfactory progress in the development of drawing skills and painting techniques.

130. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils get off to a satisfactory start in Year 1, where the teacher provides well planned opportunities for them to draw, paint, make collages and work with textiles. In some classes in Years 1 and 2, pupils have sketchbooks which they use to practise the skills of drawing and designing. These books are effective and help the pupils in evaluating their work in order to improve. In the lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, good features included clear explanations by the teacher, so that pupils knew exactly what was expected of them, and skilful questioning about texture and colour which challenged pupils to find ways of improving their work. The teachers in these classes are led by the co-ordinator who has good subject knowledge. This support helps to ensure that teachers interpret the scheme of work appropriately and that pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 and 2.

131. In Years 3 to 6 teachers continue to use the national guidance as the scheme of work. This provides a useful framework for teaching and learning but the scheme lacks the detail required to help teachers plan for the teaching of skills and progressively more challenging tasks and to overcome any insecurity in teaching. In two lessons seen in the parallel classes in Year 3, the teachers planned a very interesting sequence of lessons based on the paintings of a selection of artists which portrayed relationships between two people. Pupils studied the paintings and then using a camera photographed similar compositions using themselves as subjects. In the lesson seen, pupils were drawing their own pictures to depict a relationship between two people. Whilst pupils made progress in relation to the idea studied and in particular to the relative size of figures, their work lacked the finer detail expected and, for some pupils, drawing was immature. Pupils appeared to have limited experience of using colour washes and over painting to represent different qualities such as smoothness of skin.

132. The school has limited resources to support art in the classroom. There are few books in the library showing the work of other artists and resources in the classroom are very basic. Artwork from a range of cultures is very limited. Information and communication technology is used effectively to support work in this area.

133. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership in the subject for Years 1 and 2 but has a limited impact in Years 3 to 6. At present, the co-ordinator monitors pupils' work informally by talking to other teachers and looking at work on display.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. It was not possible to observe any teaching in design and technology during the inspection. Judgements are, therefore, based on a scrutiny of planning, work already completed and discussions with teachers and pupils. This indicates that standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are average, which is a similar judgement to that made by the previous inspection.

135. By the age of 11, the principles of design, making and evaluation are well established and pupils have participated in food technology projects. In discussion with Year 6 pupils, it was very clear they had worked through the process regularly and had a good recall of specific projects and lessons. The most recent of these involved designing and making a pair of slippers. They described the process through from an initial plan, to trial and error during making, and the final evaluation. Design and technology interests them and they use the process in other subjects. Their history topic about World War 2 introduced them to shelters. They wanted to know how different structures would protect the occupant and were encouraged to build a few examples for themselves. The principles of design and technology were once again followed and the product tested under 'war' conditions, bombs of

different sizes and weights were dropped on them.

136. Food technology projects were evident during the inspection, Year 3 made sandwiches, and large displays based on favourite foods and healthy eating. Year 5, meanwhile, had completed an investigation about bread. They had found different varieties and arranged a survey to test consumer preference.

137. During discussions with pupils, their enthusiasm and interest for the subject were very apparent. They made reference to their plans and could explain why they had to be modified. The displays around the school demonstrate a painstaking approach and pride in the finished product.

138. In Year 1, pupils had created a 'Moving Picture' display. Starting with a pair of scissors, they were introduced to levers and then to pivots, which allow objects to move in a particular way. Using these principles, the pupils then made simple models of people and animals, with moving parts, and strengthened the body with a pipe cleaner. This was a good example of pupils working through a unit of work from the national guidelines in a logical, clear manner.

139. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is never less than satisfactory throughout the school and is sometimes good. The rate of progress for pupils, including those with special educational needs, is also satisfactory in all year groups.

140. The school does not have a co-ordinator for design and technology and, consequently, the subject lacks direction. All the planning derives from national guidelines, which provide a sound basis for development, but there is no systematic monitoring of standards of teaching and learning and very little liaison between year groups and departments. Important aspects such as an on-going assessment of individual progress are neglected.

141. The school has an adequate supply of resources to meet the needs of the National Curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

142. Standards in geography are average in Years 2 and 6 and have been maintained since the school's last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are good but these are not supported by their developing geographical skills. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school although pupils' progress in geographical skills is unsatisfactory. Judgements are based on the observation of four lessons and discussions with pupils during that time, the scrutiny of pupils' work both in their books and on display around the school, and discussions with staff. There is some excellent individual achievement in Year 6 where a buzz of enthusiasm and interest for a local environmental issue is evident. Pupils show good understanding of how people affect a place by what they do and why views on the issue may differ. They demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of places in Britain and abroad, and use appropriate terminology to describe them. Similarly, by the age of seven, pupils know about where they live and also places that are very different from their own. They know about the remoteness of Scottish island life and how different life would be if they lived in a Mexican village. Pupils listen well and speak confidently when responding to questions. Throughout the school, they make satisfactory use of a range of sources of information such as books, pictures and maps provided by their teachers. Fieldwork skills are not well developed, particularly in Years 3 to 6.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers have some good resources at their disposal, which helps to bring the subject alive. A common feature is the good links that teachers make between geography and other subjects. This is an effective use of time and pupils learn well because they are able to make more sense of their learning. They use skills of reading to find information from books or the Internet, compose questions or write notes, and deduce information from graphs. There are also a good number of visits arranged so that pupils can see at first hand what they have been learning about in the classroom and so that they are better able to understand and remember. For example, studies of coastlines in geography also link with poetry writing in Year 6 and good subject knowledge shines through the text such as "...sandbars blocking

estuaries...", and "Towering cliffs look upon the desolate sea, While the estuary attracts wildlife." Similar work on rivers is evident in Year 5. Learning from both these classroom-based studies is supplemented by visits.

144. Two shortcomings mar this otherwise good picture and concern the attention of teachers to the development of skills within the subject and the lack of challenge for those who could achieve more. For example, too often, what pupils are asked to do becomes a literacy challenge rather than a geographical one. "Write three sentences about ...", does not sufficiently extend the pupils' geographic skills or challenge the more capable pupils adequately. However, a good teaching technique seen during the inspection allowed pupils to use small white boards for temporary jottings and time for discussion with a partner. In this way, their joint efforts were offered rather than an individual permanent record where the emphasis was on presentation and literary accuracy.

145. Skills of investigation are focused upon to the exclusion of other geographical skills such as map reading and fieldwork techniques. Very well planned visits, including a stay in South Wales for Year 6 pupils, also lack an emphasis on geographical skills. Used more to reinforce classroom-based learning, opportunities are missed to develop further pupils' practical geographic skills. Teachers use questioning techniques to good effect in order to extend their pupils' thinking but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to formulate questions of a geographical nature for themselves. As a consequence of this, and the lack of satisfactory library facilities in the school, pupils do not do enough research of their own and, again, the more able among them are insufficiently challenged to attain a high enough level. Also, no more is expected of them in lessons because activities are usually set for the whole class. Those with special educational needs or limited English language receive help so that they can participate.

146. The lack of a clear progression of skills through the school is associated with the internal organisation and the school has recently moved away from a wide topic-based approach to more precise and specific units of study. This is a good development but, at the present time, the school has focused upon the subject matter that needs to be covered rather than the skills which need to be regularly practised and systematically built up as pupils move from year to year. Pupils' work tends to be monitored across year groups and within three organisational departments, which does not ensure steady progress through the school. The co-ordinator has good expertise to offer but works part-time and does not teach the subject herself.

HISTORY

147. Standards in history are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. This judgement represents a decline in standards since the last inspection when they were judged to be generally above national expectations at the end of both key stages.

148. Due to timetabling difficulties, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 1 and 2 and only two lessons in Years 3 to 6. The judgement takes into account an analysis of pupils' work and displays, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils. Pupils with special

149. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory. In the Year 4 observed lessons, standards were never less than good. Pupils were finding out about Ancient Egypt and, in particular, the after-life. Preparing a body for mummification appealed to youthful minds and pupils were intrigued to learn about canopic jars, which stored body organs, and, more particularly, the method of removing the brain. As part of the planning process, the teachers subsequently linked this work with art. Pupils produced mummies out of mod rock and wrote their names and messages in the hieroglyphic alphabet within a cartouche.

150. Year 6 had completed just one history topic during the year, a study based on World War 2. In discussion with pupils, it was clear they had enjoyed this, and were able to talk at length about the various topic strands and research into, for example, the shelters built to protect the population. In design and technology, they had built their own shelters, testing them for durability by dropping 'bombs'

of various sizes and weights. The amount of work in their books was limited and ranged from a map of Europe to descriptions of the preparation for war, the evacuation and rationing.

151. Evidence confirming early development of research skills was available in the Year 3 scrutiny of work based on Invaders and Settlers. Pupils had studied the ancient tribes of England, in particular the Celts and Boudicca's revolt. Useful links with the English curriculum were evident in, for example, letters written by the pupils in the guise of Roman soldiers serving in England.

152. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is unsatisfactory. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirmed little in the way of detailed study, but gave evidence of superficial coverage of, for example, Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. The small amount of work, comprised a few worksheets, badly coloured in. A Year 2 display included writing based on the life of Florence Nightingale

153. The subject co-ordinator is a very experienced teacher with a historical background. His knowledge of the immediate area is extensive, as confirmed by the visits pupils make to a number of historical sites, for example, Highclere Castle for the Egyptian exhibition and Windsor Castle. A history policy has been produced, supported by units of work from the national guidelines. Monitoring of standards of teaching and learning are, however, under-developed. The co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to observe any teaching and assessments procedures are weak. Year groups share in the planning of topics and these are discussed between departments. The history curriculum is adequately resourced but the co-ordinator is currently improving the number and quality of historical artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

154. The majority of pupils achieve well and have made good progress since the development of the computer suite. An appropriate amount of time is given to teaching pupils the skills they need. The pupils with special educational needs make sound progress, and it is only their lower level of English skill, for example, in reading instructions, that prevents them from making the same good progress as other pupils. The standards have improved considerably. Although they remain below the average for 11-year-olds, pupils in Year 6 are developing their skills rapidly from a low starting point, and show great confidence in tackling new topics.

155. In Year 2, and in all other year groups, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. This is the result of good teaching and good support from teaching assistants. The pupils are able to open the program they need and can navigate their way around the screen well using the tool bar. Most are able to use particular keys to move the cursor around their work, delete words and spaces, and change lower case letters to upper case. Where some pupils have difficulty, particularly the lower attainers, it is where the text used requires too high a level of literacy skill. Whilst they can carry out the keyboard instructions well, their language skills are such that they do not always recognise, for example, where to put a capital letter or full stop.

156. The pupils in Year 6 have sound keyboard skills, although many rely too heavily on using the mouse pointer rather than the keyboard at times, which makes their working less efficient, especially where there are two pupils working together. Working with a screen 'turtle', pupils are able to give a series of directions to control its movement on the screen and create shapes using a formula. Most pupils can do this successfully and recognise which parts of their instruction they have to change to alter the size, or create a mirror image. Those pupils being introduced to programs used to control other events, such as a traffic light sequence, are learning effectively to write their own programs for this.

157. The pupils in Year 5 show sound skills, for example, when working with spreadsheets. They record and calculate the cost of different elements of a family holiday, and are able to use the functions on the toolbar to calculate totals. They can explain what they need to do, amend individual items in the list to arrive at a given budget figure, enter this new data and recalculate the totals. In Year 4, pupils produce their own bar graphs using data they have entered.

158. The quality of teaching and learning is good, particularly those basic skills that pupils need. Teachers have sound skills and high expectations, and are secure in the support and advice they offer to pupils as they work. Good attention is paid to safety aspects of working with computers. For example, when pupils in Year 4 were using the Internet, the teacher stressed the school's clear code of practice for Internet use before they logged on to any web site. The use of 'hyperlinks' that allow pupils to move between web pages is taught well. The co-ordinator is particularly skilful, and provides a good model for other staff. Where the teaching is less effective is in the provision for the higher attaining pupils who, at times, have to follow the same worksheets as the rest of the class. This does not always recognise their abilities and prevents them from making even better progress. However, teachers recognise the skills they have and make effective use of them when pairing pupils for the different tasks.

159. The curriculum has been well designed to give full coverage of all of the necessary programmes of study for pupils at each age throughout the school. There is a suitable amount of time given to developing information and communication technology skills, which is now enabling pupils to make good progress. For many, this is from a low level, as until last year, the school lacked the necessary facilities.

160. There is a well-planned syllabus of topics and skills for teachers to follow, which allows pupils to build on their experiences as they move through the school. This is enabling pupils to develop their skills effectively. However, other than following the scheme of work, there is no whole-school system for teachers to record pupils' progress and the skills they acquire. This prevents them from identifying more closely what pupils are able to do, and taking their learning on at a faster rate. Teachers do not make the enough use of information and communication technology to support the teaching of other subjects. Whilst the level of software available in the school is limited, teachers do plan where they can use it most effectively, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This also prevents those who need the extra practice from consolidating their skills, and the higher attainers from taking theirs further.

161. Resources for the subject are now good, but the computer suite has some limitations. With the way it is designed, not all pupils are able to see the teacher clearly; neither can the teacher see all of the pupils, especially when giving instructions from the front. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in addressing the key issue relating to this subject.

MUSIC

162. The attainment of pupils in Year 2 is broadly average. The previous inspection reported that attainment was, 'below national expectations at the end of both key stages'. The finding of this inspection, therefore, is that there has been a satisfactory improvement in pupils' overall attainment in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' overall achievement, including those with special educational needs was satisfactory in the two lessons seen and no differences were observed in the attainment of boys and girls. In Year 2, the majority of pupils showed a good understanding of how a range of sounds produced by percussion instruments could be organised into a composition characterised by a steady pulse.

163. No judgement can be made about standards in Year 6 because it was not possible to see any teaching. The previous inspection judged attainment to be the same as for Key Stage 1, 'below national expectations'. Pupils' attainment in lessons seen in Years 3 and 4 was similar to that found in most schools.

164. The previous report described teaching as 'satisfactory or good in equal measure'. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory throughout the school. In the Year 2 lesson seen, the quality of teaching and learning was good as was the rate of progress made by pupils. The lesson seen was well presented to stimulate pupils' imaginative ideas. They responded enthusiastically when asked to use different percussion instruments to suggest the various sounds of 'weather'. A good discussion was

developed as pupils explained the sounds they had created and the teacher helped them to refine their ideas by sensitive suggestions. Appropriate vocabulary was introduced, for example, 'timbre' to explain the quality of sound produced by different instruments. This helped pupils to develop ideas for a simple 'Weather' composition that they then recorded. Their pleasure and delight at hearing their piece of music were very clear and were well expressed by the many broad smiles that appeared. The previous inspection judged singing to be a weakness; it has improved. In a Years 1 and 2 singing practice, pupils sang with an appropriate emphasis upon the 'shape' of the songs and kept well to the rhythms. They varied the volume of their singing as necessary, although there was a tendency toward some 'shouting' when an increase in volume was required. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils took part with good concentration and listened well as they learned the different effects that various percussion instruments could create. The teacher had high expectations of the pupils, provided a good challenge for them to learn and asked appropriate questions to extend their understanding of musical effects. Because of this, they made good progress in the acquisition of musical knowledge and the use of simple skills to play the instruments.

165. The quality of teaching and learning in the lessons observed in Year 3 and Year 4 was good overall. In a satisfactory Year 4 lesson, there was appropriate pace, and the pupils knew what to do, but they did not show a great enthusiasm for the activities. They sang with satisfactory expression and with an appropriate sense of rhythm and tempo. Some parts of the song they learned were difficult, but most made a satisfactory effort to learn the words and fit them to the rhythm. In Year 3, two classes were grouped together. This was a good lesson because it was well presented by a very enthusiastic teacher. Good explanations and clear directions helped pupils learn a new song 'Wimaweh'. This ensured a good concentrated response by them. The teacher provided a very clear explanation and visual illustration of how the sequence of the music was structured which enabled pupils to develop the skill of singing it in two parts. Simple musical notation was introduced to help them vary the volume of their singing where appropriate. This met with a good response and effective 'reading' by pupils of the diagrammatic outline of the song that the teacher had created. Because the teaching was effective, pupils made a good creative effort although, toward the end of the lesson, a few became less attentive.

166. The school has a broad and balanced scheme of work that ensures all pupils have full access to the music curriculum. They take part in productions at different times of the year such as at Christmas. Spiritual and cultural education is enhanced through music heard and sung by pupils in assemblies. A choir has been established and attracts 60 to 80 pupils in Years 3 to 6. Some use is made of information and communication technology in the teaching of music, but this is at an early stage of development. Assessment is unsatisfactory because no coherent system is established. There is a separate co-ordinator for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6. Both are relatively new to the post and together provide satisfactory leadership. This shared role is effective because both are enthusiastic and have a clear understanding of priorities for further development. These priorities are written into an action plan and, therefore, progress in the development of the subject can be assessed regularly. However, teaching of the subject is not monitored and this is a weakness because the co-ordinators cannot know the effectiveness of curriculum provision and teaching. The subject meets statutory requirements and this is an improvement upon the previous inspection because then requirements were not met.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

167. Due to the teaching programme for the summer term, and timetabling, all of the physical education observed was swimming in Years 1 and 2. Therefore, the main judgements are made on this aspect of the curriculum.

168. Pupils' attainment has been maintained since the last inspection. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average. The school has its own teaching pool and, because of this, pupils are introduced to swimming from an early age. This gives them great confidence in water and they make good

progress in developing the necessary skills. Younger pupils are able to propel themselves across the pool with the aid of armbands and floats on their front or their backs with great confidence. Higher attainers are able to swim unaided across the pool. By the time they are 11, records and assessments show that most pupils attain the expected standards for pupils of this age, and many go well beyond this and attain very high standards. This can be seen in the regular success the school achieves in local swimming competitions.

169. The quality of teaching and learning in Year 1 and 2 is good. The teaching programme provides a good introduction to water safety and water confidence. Teachers use a wide range of activities to develop pupils' skills and modify these as conditions dictate. Pupils are managed well and are supported and encouraged to try the full range of activities. They respond well to this and with clear, direct instruction, improve their leg action in particular and are able to put their face into the water to create a more streamlined shape. Pupils respond well to the sensitive teaching, behave very well and show good attitudes. They are aware of the dangers of water and pay close attention to directions from their teacher.

170. The curriculum overall is broad and balanced and covers all aspects of physical education across the year in a carefully planned programme. Good use is made of specialist coaching in a range of sports, including tennis and Tag rugby to improve pupils' skills and give additional support for teachers. Many pupils take part in the after school sports clubs run by teachers or outside coaches, for sports such as football, hockey and netball, which are open to both boys and girls. In all aspects of the curriculum, great emphasis is placed on teamwork and collaboration. As a result, pupils' moral development is good, and along with the games competitions played against other schools, develops their social skills well.

171. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinators who have prepared a good policy and scheme of work. Standards are monitored through the activities, for example, in Years 3 to 6, a carousel of activities enables the co-ordinator to assess pupils' skills. For the pupils in Year 1 and 2, there is a sports day with a range of non-competitive activities. Here, pupils attempt a range of different activities with standards set for them and their achievements are recorded. Both of these are effective methods of making judgements on standards, but do not give a clear view of the way in which pupils develop their skills in a range of sports over time. Resources for the subject are good, and the swimming pool on site is a very good facility.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

172. In Years 2 and 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for both learning about religion and learning from religion. The school has a supportive ethos which encourages pupils to respect the opinions of others. Religious education and collective worship make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language are well involved in lessons and make satisfactory progress, especially when they receive well-targeted support in lessons.

173. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Pupils have confidence in expressing their opinions and they listen well to the opinions of others. This helps pupils to be involved well with lesson activities and they are beginning to understand that events can be seen from another perspective. In a Year 2 lesson, led by the co-ordinator, the quality of discussion was of a high level as pupils made comparisons between a cathedral and synagogue. The pupils knew and understood that artefacts symbolise key beliefs in religions. They recognised the importance of the mezuzah and Torah to the Jews and the cross and fish to Christians. Some of the higher attaining pupils understand that people can communicate their beliefs in different ways. The analysis of work revealed that the good quality discussion and understanding that pupils have is not always captured in the work set. Teachers often rely upon low-level worksheets from a commercial scheme. In one lesson observed pupils took,

on average, two minutes to complete the task of identifying those objects found in a synagogue and fifteen minutes to colour in the pictures.

174. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Analysis of pupils' work shows that, in Year 6, pupils have a sound awareness of some of the major world religions. Pupils questioned were able to describe the key beliefs and teaching of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. They understand how people express their identity and their religious faith through outward symbols and compare their knowledge of religions studied. Pupils spoke confidently about their research into creation stories and the ways in which religious beliefs, ideas and feelings can be expressed in a variety of forms. A strength of the teaching and learning in religious education is the sensitivity and respect that teachers and pupils show towards the feelings, beliefs and opinions of others. Pupils' listening and speaking skills are developed well in informal discussions, which are a strong feature in both key stages. The lesson observed was good. However, the analysis of pupils' work suggests a more variable picture. In some classes, there is an over emphasis on the comprehension type exercise where pupils are simply answering low level questions. In other classes, the work set is at a more challenging level and often involves giving presentations or offering differing perspectives.

175. In some classes in Years 1 and 2, some pupils are withdrawn from religious education lessons in order to have additional support in literacy. This is unsatisfactory. Good use is made of the internet in Year 6 to support pupils in finding out about artefacts in Judaism. The subject is led by two members of staff who are enthusiastic and committed to the development of the subject. The scheme of work, which was produced to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus has been identified by the co-ordinators as being in need of further revision to take account of issues identified through scrutiny of work and analysis of planning. The scheme of work does not build sufficiently on the good practice that exists in the development of the skills. Monitoring has been effective in analysing coverage and standards in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 and 4 but not in Years 5 and 6. Evidence from inspection reveals that there is too much repetition of work and uneven time allocated to the subject in different classes. In Year 5, for example, one class has covered an extensive programme from the units of work in the syllabus, whilst the other class has covered very little.