

INSPECTION REPORT

**HIGH WYCOMBE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
COMBINED SCHOOL**

High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110463

Headteacher: Mr S Adams

Reporting inspector: Mrs L Woods
21079

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 October 2001

Inspection number: 196750

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Loakes Road
High Wycombe
Buckinghamshire

Postcode: HP11 2JU

Telephone number: 01494 524220

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Mordaunt

Date of previous inspection: 19 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs L Woods 21079	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Science Music	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs H Barter 9052	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr W Gale 21317	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Geography History	
Mr M Wehrmeyer 15015	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

High Wycombe Church of England School is situated to the south of the town centre and draws its pupils from a wide area. Currently there are 239 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11, with some of the youngest children attending school part-time. Thirty-nine per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly from African Caribbean families. Around 12 per cent of these pupils are learning English as an additional language, which is high compared with the national average. Eight per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, although as there is no cooked meals service in the local education authority area, the actual percentage is likely to be higher. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is broadly average, but this percentage is growing. Twelve pupils are at Stage 3 and above of the Code of Practice¹ for the identification of such pupils and three have Statements of Special Educational Need.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. It meets fully its aim to '*Open the doors to opportunity*' for the pupils, and provides a rich and varied education. Standards appear to be declining in the infants, but this is due to the increasing proportion of less able pupils joining the school and the increasing percentage of pupils learning English as an additional language. Effective strategies are in place to address the need to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. Standards in the juniors have been consistently good over the past few years. The school has experienced a considerable turnover in teaching staff, and those new to the school have quickly adopted an equal determination to raise standards. Teaching is sound overall, and good in many lessons. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the school, with the invaluable support of his deputy. Governors are equally committed to the school, although their strategic role in its management needs developing. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' personal development, their understanding of the effect of their actions and their respect for others are very good.
- Pupils love coming to school and attendance is very good.
- Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The contribution of the community to the school and the effectiveness of links with parents are very good.
- Procedures for monitoring, assessing and supporting pupils' academic and personal development are very good.
- Leadership by the headteacher, with the invaluable support of his deputy, is very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics in the infants, and aspects of English, mathematics and science in the juniors.
- Provision for and standards in information and communication technology.
- The role of the governing body in the strategic management of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues raised by the previous inspection in May 1997. Comprehensive and detailed assessment procedures are in place, and these are used well to track and monitor progress by individual pupils and year groups. Detailed schemes of work are in place in all subjects. The quality of teaching has been maintained, which is a credit to the staff, half of whom are new to the school this term. Whilst standards appear to have declined in the infants since the time of the previous inspection, this is due to the changing nature of the school's population, and assessment clearly shows the progress made by each group of pupils. The location of the school makes it necessary for parents collecting children at the end of the day to park in the playground, but the school has significantly improved the quality of its grounds and improved safety procedures when cars are on site.

¹ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.

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	
English	A	A	A	A
Mathematics	B	C	A	A
Science	A	C	A	B

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

The table shows pupils achieved very pleasing results in the 2001 tests for 11-year-olds. Standards in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average compared with all schools and similar schools, with nearly half of the pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. The school sets realistic and challenging targets for each group of pupils and is realistic about the levels of attainment of pupils currently in Year 6, who are not expected to match the previous year's high standards.

Results in the tests for seven-year-old pupils, however, appear to be declining. In 2001, standards in reading and mathematics were well below the national average and results obtained by similar schools. In writing, standards were below the national average, although well below average compared with similar schools. The school population, however, includes increasing numbers of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, many of whom are learning English as an additional language, and the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also increasing. The school is well aware of the challenges this presents. Intensive strategies to raise standards in literacy and numeracy paid off well last year, and pupils exceeded both the school's realistic and its challenging targets for attainment in the tests.

The level of attainment when children begin school in reception varies each year. For current children, these are average, according to the assessments made when they first start school. Important aspects of their development, however, are consistently below average, particularly in relation to their reading and writing skills. At this stage in the year, standards are appropriate for children's ages in relation to the stepping stones for learning in the Early Years curriculum, in all six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage.²

Inspection findings show pupils are on course to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the Year 6, although standards in spelling and handwriting, in problem solving in mathematics and in pupils' ability to conduct scientific investigations are below average. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are appropriate for pupils' ages. Standards in information and communication technology are below average. This is the result of inadequate resources for the subject and for its use across the curriculum.

² The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also include: knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. Stepping stones identify the stages of development within the areas of learning in the Early Years curriculum from nursery to the end of the reception year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to do well, enthusiastic and involved in all they are doing, and are happy and confident in the classroom and around the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils respond positively to teachers' expectations and most pupils behave well in and around the school, although occasionally there is some restless behaviour in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work well together and show a high level of mutual respect for one another. They have a very clear understanding of how their actions impact on others, and respond very well to the increasing opportunities for taking responsibility in the school.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and almost all arrive promptly.

Pupils' personal development and relationships, their awareness of the impact of their actions on others and their attendance are all strengths of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching makes a substantial contribution to the positive attitudes pupils have towards school. This is all credit to the staff, nearly half of whom are new to the school since September. Of the 53 sessions seen, over half were good or very good, with very few less effective lessons seen. In these, organisational issues, rather than lack of subject knowledge, resulted in the pace of learning being slow. Half of the very good lessons seen were taught by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and their example acts as a very good role model for all teaching staff. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, except in information and communication technology, where it is less secure. All teachers have strengths in different subjects, which the school plans to maximise on in the future. The expertise of a learning support assistant in first aid, for example, is used to very good effect with pupils in Year 6 and the quality of learning is very good as a result. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and adapted them appropriately to meet its particular needs. Teaching in English and mathematics is sound and teachers place a high emphasis on pupils' acquiring the basic skills in literacy and numeracy in their determination to raise standards. Pupils make steady progress in gaining these as a result.

Teachers work hard to include all pupils in class activities and have high expectations of behaviour and application, which are met successfully in almost all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are encouraged effectively to make a full contribution to class discussions. Teachers value all pupils' work and are quick to praise them, which encourages further effort. Learning support assistants provide good, direct support, particularly in literacy and numeracy sessions, through knowing individual pupils well and having a good understanding of their particular difficulties. Small groups of pupils, who need additional guidance in literacy, are taught well by learning support assistants and by the special educational needs co-ordinator. The specialist teacher for pupils learning English as an additional language provides effective support, but too much of her time is spent with the older pupils, when it is those in the youngest classes who need the most input.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides an interesting and varied curriculum, which meets statutory requirements and is significantly enriched by additional activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The increasing proportion of these pupils in the school is managed well and work provided in class is generally appropriate for their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound. The school works successfully to include these pupils in lessons. The specialist teacher provides effective support, but too little of this is directed towards the youngest pupils who are just starting school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, and is very good for their personal, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school takes effective care of pupils in its charge. Procedures for assessing and monitoring their academic and personal progress are very good.

The school works effectively in partnership with parents, who in their turn appreciate all it does for their children. The enrichment of the curriculum, through involvement of the community and provision of extra-curricular activities, is a strength, as are procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Whilst the curriculum for information and communication technology meets statutory requirements within the planning, deficiencies in resources prevent the subject from being taught effectively.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides dynamic, committed leadership, with invaluable support from the deputy headteacher. Co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have detailed plans to improve their areas of responsibility, but most are new to their roles and have not had time to implement these.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors are deeply committed to the school and share a strong intention to improve their strategic involvement in the management of the school. The vast majority of governors are new and bring a good level of expertise to their roles, but these are at an early stage of development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school self-evaluation file and improvement plan are comprehensive and detailed documents, which provide a clear analysis of areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes effective use of all specific grants and plans its budget carefully. All resources, both human and material, are used well for the benefit of the pupils.

The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers, who are supported effectively by dedicated and well-qualified learning support assistants. The accommodation is spacious, although somewhat limited in outside areas for physical education. Resources are satisfactory in most subjects; they are good in music, but inadequate for information and communication technology. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and governors are determined to improve their role in supporting his work. The school applies the principles of best value in all its decisions and regularly consults all interested parties to determine areas for development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Twenty-one parents attended the meeting with inspectors, and 53 per cent of questionnaires were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Parents appreciate the high expectations and good teaching which help their children to make good progress. They feel that their children are helped to be mature and responsible and are pleased that they like coming to school.	About 10 per cent of the parents who returned questionnaires had some criticisms about the amount of homework provided, the information received about their children's progress, the way that the school works closely with them and the range of extra-curricular activities provided.

Inspectors fully support parents' positive views about the school. The inspection team finds that there is a satisfactory amount of homework provided, which is suitable for the age range of the pupils and which is used appropriately in lessons. There is no evidence that the school does not work closely with parents, particularly as nearly all parents say how easy it is for them to speak to staff or the headteacher about their concerns. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities on offer, many of which staff run during lunchtimes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most children join the reception class in September, although the youngest children attend school part time to begin with, and some start school in the spring term. Their attainment when they begin school varies each year, as assessed within the first few weeks of school. For the current group of children, this is average. In important aspects of their development, attainment is consistently below average, particularly in relation to reading and writing skills. Children receive a sound start to their education and make steady progress in developing and improving their skills. At this stage in the year, standards are appropriate for children's ages, in relation to the stepping stones for learning in the Early Years curriculum, in all six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage.
2. Results in the standard assessment tasks for seven-year-old pupils appear to be declining. In 2001, standards in reading and mathematics were well below the national average and results obtained by similar schools. In writing, standards were below the national average, and well below average compared with similar schools. The school population, however, is changing in line with population changes within the locality. Increasing numbers of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds are joining the school, many of whom are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is also increasing. The school is well aware of the challenges this presents. Detailed and comprehensive tracking of pupils throughout the school identifies their progress by gender, background and by age. In the group of pupils taking the tests in 2001, for example, 34 per cent had identified special educational needs, 49 per cent were from minority ethnic backgrounds and 40 per cent had summer birthdays. Intensive strategies to raise standards in literacy and numeracy last year paid off well, and pupils exceeded both the school's realistic and its challenging targets for attainment in the tests.
3. These successful strategies continue to be implemented and pupils make steady progress in English and mathematics in the infant classes. Current standards, however, indicate that attainment is likely to be below average in these subjects by the end of Year 2. Standards in science are on course to be average, which is an improvement on the teacher assessment in 2001, where attainment was below the national average. Standards in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education are appropriate for pupils' ages. In information and communication technology, standards are below average, as a result of lack of access to appropriate hardware to support development both in the subject and in its use across the curriculum.
4. Pupils achieved very pleasing results in the 2001 tests for 11-year-olds. Standards in English, mathematics and science were well above the national average. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Nearly half of the pupils reached the higher Level 5 in all three subjects. The school is realistic about the levels of attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 and does not expect to match the previous year's high standards. Through its effective analysis of pupils' attainment and progress, it has set realistic and challenging targets for pupils to achieve. Inspection findings show pupils are on course to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of the year, although standards in spelling and handwriting, in problem solving in mathematics and in pupils' ability to conduct scientific investigations are below average. In art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are

appropriate for pupils' ages. As in the infant classes, standards in information and communication technology are below average.

5. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the infants and in the juniors. The small number of pupils with more complex behavioural difficulties make the least progress. Pupils with language and more general learning difficulties benefit from the good efforts class teachers make to include them in all activities. Learning support assistants are well deployed to help pupils to understand teachers' explanations and to support them when reading books and worksheets. This further promotes pupils' inclusion in lessons and helps them to make progress towards the targets in their individual education plans (IEPs). When learning support assistants are available to support pupils, there is a clear focus on the targets in the IEPs, which enables pupils to make good progress. Especially in the infants, specific support for the development of better literacy skills is having a significant impact on pupils' reading ability. Teachers' planning does not always take account of IEPs, which can result in pupils making less progress when learning support assistants are not available, especially if the reading material is too difficult for them. However, teachers are quick to respond to pupils' difficulty and make good efforts to support them within class.
6. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors. In the infants, the school has not yet been able to respond fully to the increasing variety of background and language development of pupils. Specialist teaching tends to be concentrated at the end of the infants or in the juniors and many of the youngest pupils struggle to come to terms with guidance in English. In the juniors, pupils make much better progress, partly because they have become more used to school routines, but also because teachers are better able to provide support for pupils who have a better command of the basics of English. A considerable amount of specialist support is concentrated in Year 6 and the results achieved by pupils are good. They can communicate effectively in English, explaining their ideas and opinions. The progress in developing their reading skills is particularly notable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Since the last inspection, pupils have maintained their positive attitudes to school life and to their learning. Pupils work well together and have good relationships with each other and with adults. There is very good support for all pupils which enables them to make very good progress in their personal development.
8. Nearly all parents say that their children like coming to school. Most feel that children's behaviour is good and has improved as a result of the good systems put in place. They say that pupils are considerate and caring towards others and have good relationships with staff.
9. Pupils' attendance is very good and this means that there is hardly any disruption to their education. Attendance levels have remained well above average since the last inspection and there are few unauthorised absences. Pupils are keen to come to school and most of them arrive in good time for registration. However, there are a few pupils who are regularly late for school and who are being closely monitored.
10. Pupils' attitudes to school mean that most are keen to do well. They are enthusiastic and involved in what they are doing and are happy and confident in the classroom and around the school. There is a positive atmosphere, which encourages pupils to work and behave well. In lessons, they concentrate on their work and listen well to their teacher. They are keen to participate in discussions and to answer questions. They are confident and enjoy giving their opinions both to the class and to their discussion partners. For example,

junior pupils in a geography lesson talked enthusiastically about their parents' daily lives when comparing them to daily life in an Indian village. In some lessons, however, pupils are passive and do not readily engage themselves in what is going on. They are amenable and patient, but are too easily prepared to have things done for them rather than carrying out their own activities or investigations. On the whole, however, most pupils show good levels of personal motivation to improve and this contributes well to their success.

11. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy being part of all class activities and respond well to the prompts from teachers and learning support assistants. The majority are very willing to make contributions to discussions in class and listen to other pupils' comments. They have good relationships with teachers and learning support assistants, which provides them with greater confidence, particularly when engaged in tasks such as writing, which they find difficult. Pupils' self-esteem is reinforced effectively by frequent praise from staff, which is helping them to overcome a reluctance to tackle activities in which they are likely to fail.
12. Pupils with English as an additional language in the infants listen carefully and try hard to carry out instructions. Their concentration sometimes waivers when they are unsure of what they are supposed to be doing, but there are good responses to reminders from teachers and learning support assistants. Some are reluctant to speak during whole-class sessions because of the limitations in their English skills, but all pupils will try to answer when asked questions by name. Despite the language difficulties, pupils are socially well included and are developing close friendships with other members of the class. They enjoy being at school and look forward to the range of activities that take place during the day. Several pupils are more lively and talkative during break and lunchtime than in lessons.
13. In the juniors, pupils with English as an additional language rapidly become confident members of the class group. Good levels of support from learning support assistants and the specialist teacher encourage them to develop speaking skills in English which are close to the levels achieved by others in the class. They have a good understanding of what other pupils are saying, which, particularly towards the end of the key stage, enables them to engage in regular dialogue with other members of the class without the need for adult intervention.
14. Pupils behave well in school and in lessons. They are clear about the expected standards of behaviour and follow the school and class rules. Although there is some occasional restless behaviour in lessons, most of the time pupils are quiet and attentive, respond well to instructions and are calm and positive about what they are doing. Outside the classroom, pupils are happy and lively. They play enthusiastically with small equipment and footballs, and some enjoy singing and dancing together. There were no incidences of anti-social behaviour observed during the inspection. A few older junior pupils have more significant behaviour problems and are being supported well by the school. However, there have been fixed-term exclusions for two of these pupils in the last year.
15. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development and relationships. They respond well to the increasing opportunities for taking responsibility in the classroom and around the school, particularly in their roles on the school council. As a result, pupils grow in confidence. This is an inclusive school, which values pupils' backgrounds and this is evident in the way that all pupils listen to each other and to their opinions. Pupils show very good respect for others' feelings, values and beliefs. Infant pupils listen carefully when discussing possible solutions to help people who are worried and junior pupils are learning to debate and accept others' opinions when holding a class meeting.

In discussion with pupils, they say that they love coming to school as they have lots of friends and enjoy their work and the activities provided. They say that they are all treated as equals and get on well with each other. The community atmosphere commented on by parents is evident throughout the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. In the 53 sessions seen during the inspection, teaching was very good in six, good in 25 and satisfactory in 19, with only three unsatisfactory lessons seen. This maintains the picture found by the previous inspection and is all credit to the teachers, nearly half of whom are new to the school this term, and one who is new to teaching, settling into its routines and establishing good relationships with the pupils and each other.
17. The key issue from the previous report, to improve the quality of teaching by providing well-structured schemes of work, has been addressed fully and almost all lessons are planned well. Clear objectives to be achieved during the session are shared effectively with pupils and teachers make detailed notes of their success or otherwise in achieving these on their planning. Future lessons are adjusted accordingly and as a result pupils make steady gains in their knowledge and understanding in different subjects.
18. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was good in over half of sessions seen, and was never less than satisfactory. The teacher plans detailed activities for each session, closely linked to the curriculum for the early years. She and the learning support assistant are adept at involving the children in discussions, encouraging them effectively to think and talk about what they are doing. Focused literacy and numeracy sessions are particularly effective, with both adults working in close partnership to ensure all children are fully included in the activities. As a result, learning in these sessions is good; children grow in confidence and make steady progress in gaining knowledge and basic skills. The wide range of activities provided in each session ensures that children are able to engage in purposeful learning throughout the day. However, the number of children and range of activities means that there are periods when children are working without direct adult involvement. At this stage in the year, when their attention spans are short, this means that some children drift between activities and do not take full advantage of the opportunities available.
19. In the infants, teaching was good and very good in nearly three-quarters of lessons, with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. In the juniors, just over half of lessons were judged good or very good, although a small number were less effective. Half of the very good lessons seen were taught by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, and their example acts as a very good role model for all teaching staff.
20. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and adapted them appropriately to meet its particular needs. Teaching of basic skills is thorough and pupils make steady progress in these as a result. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, except in information and communication technology, where it is less secure. All teachers have strengths in different subjects and the school has effective plans to share these skills for the benefit of pupils. The expertise of a learning support assistant in first aid, for example, is used to very good effect in a lesson with Year 6 pupils, and the session is thoughtful and productive. A good lesson in design and technology in Year 4 makes close links with science and develops pupils' independence well as they investigate switches.
21. Most lessons are structured well, with a good balance between discussion and practical activity, with useful time at the end to draw together results and achievements. In good and very good lessons, teachers actively include all pupils in discussing, brain-storming

and sharing their opinions, so that lively debate ensues and everyone is clear about what they are expected to do. In a very good personal and social education lesson, for example, pupils in Year 5 conducted a lively class debate under the teacher's expert guidance, and made significant gains in their understanding of formal debate and associated vocabulary. In the small number of less successful lessons, the planning was sound, but the pace of the lesson was slow. Pupils were not completely clear about what they were expected to do and little learning took place as a result.

22. Teachers make good use of resources, such as mini whiteboards in literacy and numeracy lessons, to enable pupils to record their thoughts and answers during whole-class sessions. This ensures all pupils are fully involved in the session. In many lessons, teachers effectively encourage pupils to discuss their work with each other, and a lively buzz of relevant conversation characterises these sessions. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and hard work; relationships are good and most pupils respond positively to these expectations. Learning support assistants provide invaluable support for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language to ensure they are fully involved in active learning. In a numeracy session in Year 1, for example, the assistant took a group of such pupils on a shape walk and encouraged a very good discussion on appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
23. Teachers have a good awareness of the need to include all pupils in class activities and they work hard to ensure that those with special educational needs can make contributions to class discussions, group work and displays. Teachers value pupils' work and are quick to praise them, which encourages further effort. Learning support assistants know individual pupils well and have a good understanding of their learning difficulties, which enables them to provide good, direct support particularly in literacy and numeracy sessions. Small groups of pupils, who need additional guidance in literacy, are taught well by learning support assistants and by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
24. Teachers' planning for special educational needs is variable. Teachers are aware of the need to set work which is suitable for all levels of ability, but they sometimes find it difficult to provide work which is sufficiently accessible for pupils to tackle independently. Teachers are quick to compensate for this and will spend considerable time supporting pupils and explaining what is expected of them, but it does make pupils more dependent on adult support. Where learning support assistants are available in class, they are well deployed to meet particular needs and teachers' planning includes thorough arrangements for the best use of adult support.
25. Pupils benefit from the clear instructions provided by teachers and by the frequent reference to guidance on boards and flip-charts. The well-established class routines assist pupils' learning by providing them with a consistent structure in which they have confidence. Teachers' and learning support assistants' occasional reprimands are well considered and help pupils to develop their self-discipline. Pupils' work is checked and marked during most lessons, providing them with immediate guidance on their efforts and helping them to recognise their mistakes. Well-organised arrangements for assessment provide teachers with a good idea of the standards pupils are achieving.
26. The specialist teacher for pupils with English as an additional language is effective in support of those with less pronounced difficulties in English. The teacher has a good knowledge of how to raise ethnic minority achievement and has acted upon guidance from a consultant. In collaboration with class teachers and learning support assistants, the specialist teacher has developed effective means for encouraging pupils to be enthusiastic about developing their skills in English, whilst also valuing their experience gained from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Class teachers are aware of the need to

make their language clear and to avoid expressions that might not have a clear meaning. Their teaching strategies usually work well in the juniors, by which time pupils usually have mastered the basics and are increasingly confident in their use of English. Techniques are much less effective in the infants, where there are more pronounced language difficulties and pupils are more easily confused. As a result, some pupils have yet to distinguish clearly between their first language and English and will use both in the same sentence.

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

27. The school has responded to the findings in the previous report in a determined manner and developed a good curriculum, which includes all statutory requirements. It has introduced structured planning schemes for all subjects, based sensibly on national guidelines, and has increased its provision of extra-curricular activities and programme of visits and visitors. This aspect is very good. A wide range of relevant activities covers a broad range of pupils' interests, and enriches and broadens their experiences significantly. The school has strengthened its already good planning for personal, social and health education by adding an effective structured programme for teaching citizenship. Teachers and support staff alike make a good contribution to these activities; a learning support assistant, for example, runs the first aid course.
28. The curriculum in reception is based securely on the guidance for the Foundation Stage. Detailed planning ensures full coverage of all six areas of learning over the course of the year. Whole-class sessions each day focus on a specific area of learning, with close attention being paid to developing children's literacy and numeracy skills. A wide range of different activities are provided in each session, linked effectively to half-termly topics. However, currently the same activities run each day for a week, which can result in some imbalance in the curriculum in the short term. During the inspection week, for example, there were no mathematical development activities in the *plan, do and review* cycle, beyond the focused whole-class sessions.
29. The school works hard to make the infant and junior curriculum relevant. Teachers' short term planning identifies activities in groups for pupils' different levels of ability. The school identifies high achieving pupils, but some of the work set for them does not offer sufficient challenge. Similarly, the work for the lowest ability pupils is at times too difficult for them.
30. There are clear targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), with a clear focus on key areas such as language and literacy. For the few pupils with statements of special educational needs, IEPs meet the requirements of the statement. Most of the additional support for these pupils is undertaken within class, which allows them to have access to the full curriculum offered. Specialist support from therapists, especially speech and language, is in short supply within the local education authority and this restricts the progress of pupils with complex language difficulties.
31. The school meets its aim of providing equal opportunities for all of its pupils. There are good arrangements for social inclusion, with pupils encouraged to feel they are fully part of classes and can take part in all activities. Careful thought is given to the balance of groups to ensure that good relationships develop between pupils of different abilities and backgrounds. There are good arrangements to enable pupils to appreciate the variety of their cultural backgrounds, with, for instance, work on St Vincent within English, geography and history. Pupils are also involved in local studies focusing on how High Wycombe has become a more multi-cultural environment in recent decades.

32. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies is effective in developing pupils' basic skills and enabling them to make progress at an appropriate pace. The school monitors the performance of boys and girls and takes action when significant differences emerge. Some staff interpret the strategies in quite a rigid way so that the lessons are technically competent, but lose part of the intended fun and vibrancy.
33. The curriculum for information and communication technology, however, does not preserve the balance found in other subjects. Resources are limited and this results in an unsatisfactory range of activities, which is inhibiting pupils' progress in the subject.
34. The school has developed many strong links with the local community and uses the local environment effectively as a source of study. The community's support of school events and teaching adds considerably to the richness of pupils' experience. Visits to centres of interest widen the pupils' horizons, as for instance the Year 5 trip to the Tate Modern Gallery, which gave them a new insight into modern art. The school has good relationships with neighbouring schools. It is beginning to forge links with local nurseries and its good preparation for pupils' entry into the upper schools helps them settle quickly into secondary education.
35. The school provides very well for pupils' personal development. The provision for their moral, social and cultural development has strengthened further since the last inspection and has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school. Parents say that the school teaches their children to have good values within a supportive, caring community.
36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and is central to the school's work. Assemblies provide suitable opportunities for pupils to understand themselves, their relationships to each other and to recognise their own and others' achievements. The sharing of a weekly target in assembly reinforces this; for example, when considering 'Are you a person others want to choose?' infant pupils are able to talk about their own qualities such as being a good friend. Displays around the school also promote pupils' awareness of themselves. They consider what is inside their heads in a display on 'Imagination' and celebrate their cultural heritage when signing their names on a Caribbean display. Opportunities for spiritual development in lessons are less well planned, although the use of group sessions known as circle time helps pupils to reflect on their lives and the impact of their actions on others.
37. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. They are clearly taught to distinguish between right and wrong, exploring moral issues through assemblies and planned circle time in the classroom. There is a very good behaviour policy, which encompasses a positive approach to behaviour management and which is consistently followed. Pupils are taught to think of others in the world who might not be as fortunate as themselves. They show their concern for others' welfare by raising money to support charities such as Unicef and Telemed. They consider the earth's resources when thinking about recycling. The school has a very strong caring ethos and promotes a socially inclusive community in which pupils learn how to care and show concern for others.
38. The school council, known as *Our Word*, is very active and provides pupils with many opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, either as councillors or within classes where pupils make good suggestions to take forward for discussion. The teaching of citizenship has an increasing focus in the curriculum and is being taught well through planned lessons for personal, social and health education. Pupils are being taught to hold meetings, to debate issues with one another and to make decisions and compromises. The 'house' and 'praise point' systems are strong and give pupils a feeling of identity and a shared sense of purpose when working towards earning rewards.

39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. They are provided with many opportunities to understand their own and other cultures in geography, music, and art; for example, studying Chembakolli in India. Pupils are able to participate in local cultural events, such as the annual High Wycombe schools' music festival and the Caribbean Carnival, and in national initiatives such as *Black History Month*. They celebrate festivals such as Harvest and Sukkot. They visit places of interest as part of their work, for example, Sulgrave Manor and Verulamium. The school teaches pupils well about other religions, cultures and beliefs and positively celebrates the varied backgrounds from which pupils in the school come; for example, through the current displays on St Vincent. The school is socially and culturally inclusive and teaches pupils to value and respect all faiths and beliefs. It prepares them very well for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school continues to care well for its pupils and this has a very positive impact on their lives at school. The overall quality of educational and personal support and guidance provided for pupils is good, with particular strengths in the monitoring of their academic performance and personal development.
41. Parents appreciate the pastoral care that is provided for their children. They feel that they can speak to the school if they have any concerns. They are very positive about the school's strategies for improving behaviour and say that the reward systems work well. Overall, they feel that the school is a more ordered place under the guidance of the new headteacher and that their children are happy.
42. The school has good arrangements for ensuring that pupils and staff work in a safe and secure place. A comprehensive health and safety audit has been carried out and those responsible ensure that regular checks and risk assessments are completed. The school continues to have car-parking problems, which were highlighted as a key issue at the last inspection. Although little can be done physically, the school has addressed the key issue very positively by ensuring that there are very clear guidelines for all car users and by pursuing positive initiatives such as the Safer Routes to School to persuade more parents to walk to school with their children. There are suitable arrangements in place for regular fire drills and checks of equipment.
43. All staff care well for pupils who hurt themselves, are unwell or who need medication during the school day. The provision of basic first aid knowledge for pupils in Year 6 is a very positive feature of the curriculum. The committed and enthusiastic midday supervisory staff know the pupils very well and provide good continuity of pastoral care and support over the lunchtime period. There are good procedures in place for child protection and staff are aware of how to report any concerns about a pupils' welfare. Further training is planned as there are a number of new staff in the school.
44. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are sound. The attendance levels are very good, but the school has noted an increasing problem with punctuality. It has put in place good systems to monitor this and is making good use of the educational welfare officer to try and reduce the number of pupils who arrive late in the mornings.
45. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' good behaviour. The school has made good use of the local behaviour support service in establishing its new behaviour and bullying policies and has involved pupils very well in devising the new reward systems. These are now well established, are appropriate for both the infants and juniors and are being consistently applied. There is very good support for pupils who

have individual problems with clear records kept of any incidents. Exclusion has been used appropriately for two pupils and good support put in to help these pupils to make improvement.

46. The school monitors and supports pupils' personal development very well. It helps pupils to develop maturity and confidence by discussing personal and social targets with them, rewarding them for improvements in behaviour and attitudes and celebrating their achievements and successes. Through target setting and self-evaluation in their reports, pupils are helped to understand how well they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve. The records of achievement containing pupils' reports are well kept documents and provide a clear record of academic and personal progress. There are good strategies in place to support individual pupils who are at risk of exclusion. The *Circle of Friends* and *Each-one Reach-one Programme* have provided good support for pupils who have difficulties with friendship or who have low self-esteem.
47. Assessment in the reception class is good. The teacher makes a detailed baseline assessment of children's attainment within a few weeks of them starting school. This is repeated at the end of the year and clearly establishes the progress they have made during their time in the class. Both the teacher and her assistant make continual assessments of the children as they work. These are recorded carefully against the areas of learning and individual children to monitor their development. Children have individual targets recorded on colourful balloons, for both personal and academic development. These range from 'come in with a smiley face every day' to 'keep my legs gentle' and 'to try to read by sounding out'.
48. The school has much improved its arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and recording progress since they were a key issue in the previous inspection. This area is a developing strength of the school. The school has introduced very good procedures and record keeping in English, mathematics and science, and is extending these procedures to other subjects. This helps teachers in each year to know accurately where pupils are at so that they can plan suitable starting points for lessons. The evaluations that teachers make as a result of their lessons feed into this accurate picture of pupils' attainment. The headteacher and staff monitor these records closely to see if individual pupils are moving ahead fast enough. Where cause for concern appears, action is taken at once. The teachers set quite demanding, precise targets for pupils to work on, as a result of this very close monitoring. The school is determined to have precise control of all pupils' progress.
49. Teachers carry out termly assessments in English, mathematics and science throughout the school and mark these stringently, to find out the levels at which the pupils are working. This gives an accurate picture of individual progress and enables teachers to predict fairly precisely how they will perform in standard tests. Teachers keep samples of pupils' work in the record of achievement file, so that profiles of pupils' strengths and weaknesses are beginning to build up. The last two days in each half term are used for assessment purposes. Staff discussions are held to reach agreement on what a particular level should look like, so that teachers gain a consistent picture of standards for the school.
50. A further improvement since 1997 is the way the school studies the pupils' answers in the standard tests. The staff are able to pinpoint exactly where pupils are going wrong, for instance how they misinterpret information for problem solving in mathematics. Teachers then plan extra teaching on those points into next year's work.
51. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are reviewed regularly and new targets are developed which closely relate to the previous objectives.

Pupils and their parents are kept well informed about how well they are progressing towards meeting their targets. Where possible, additional support is provided for those pupils who make slower progress towards their targets. There are particularly good arrangements for reviewing pupils' progress towards literacy targets and the information is used to assess whether pupils need to be withdrawn from class for specific small group literacy sessions.

52. There are good arrangements for assessing the progress of pupils with English as an additional language across the curriculum, but particularly in literacy. Their level of contribution to class activities, including whole-class discussions, is also monitored and learning support assistants make notes of significant advances in their use of English. Where pupils have very low levels of skills in English, additional support is frequently available, which helps them to sustain an interest in activities. A few pupils in the infants would benefit from more regular specialist support, which might lead to a more rapid assessment of their particular language difficulties. There is good monitoring of ethnic minority achievement. All results are analysed by ethnicity and this information is used to tackle particular areas of difficulty. The headteacher and the specialist teacher provide guidance to class staff in how to support pupils and maximise their progress. The school has adjusted well to the growing range of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Since the last inspection, the school has continued to build on its partnership with parents and there are now very effective links that have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the life of the school. Parents commented at the meeting that the school is very good at communicating with them and ensuring that they are all welcomed and involved. They particularly appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and the fact that he is very visible around the school.
54. The quality of information provided for parents, overall, is good. School documentation such as the prospectus, governors' annual report to parents and the 'Welcome to School' booklet for new parents are very well presented, full of information and encourage parents to involve themselves in school life and in their children's learning. Curriculum newsletters and meetings with the class teachers at the beginning of term are very helpful to parents who wish to know what is being taught and how they may help their children. The requirements for homework are clearly stated. Pupils' end-of-year reports clearly identify what they know, understand and can do in all subjects. Although there is no specific written information about the levels at which pupils are working and the targets that have been set for their improvement, these are discussed at consultation meetings. However, some parents feel that these are rather too brief and not always as private as they might like. Teachers do make themselves available to speak to parents at other times if they have any concerns that they wish to discuss more fully.
55. Parents report that they are pleased with the support available for pupils with special educational needs. The school encourages parental involvement in interim and annual reviews and provides information about the targets in pupils' IEPs. Annual reports provide accurate information about pupils' progress. In the infants, the good arrangements for the regular loan of story sacks has encouraged parents to visit the school and support pupils' literacy at home. The school has made particular efforts to encourage the involvement of parents from ethnic minorities. During the inspection, a number of parents visited a class of Year 5 pupils to discuss their home life before moving to High Wycombe and their experiences of the local area in recent years.
56. Most parents make a good contribution to their children's learning and to the life of the school. The school is beginning to consult more closely with parents to obtain their

views. The *Evenings with the Headteacher* are a particularly good feature and give parents opportunities to raise questions about areas such as swimming provision or the multi-cultural content of library books. Nearly all parents attend consultation meetings with teachers, although the meeting with the governing body is less well supported. Parents give good support when attending weekly class assemblies, concerts and sports events. The very active Friends' Association runs fundraising and social activities and supports whole-school projects, such as the creation of the Millennium Garden and making story-sacks. There is a good team of parents who regularly help in classrooms and in the library and who help when pupils go outside school, for example, accompanying them to the Harvest Festival at the local church. The school is rightly proud of its work to ensure that parents from all the ethnic groups represented in school are equally involved and is currently developing closer links and understanding with parents from the African Caribbean community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher provides positive, dynamic leadership for the school and has a very clear vision for the direction of the school. He manages the school very well through his own enthusiasm and through enabling staff to develop their own responsibilities. The school fulfils its aim, *to open the doors to opportunity*, very well. Since his appointment, in consultation with the whole staff, he has set in place many exciting initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and raise standards. The most recent research project, *'What's in it for me?'* aims to enable pupils to become actively engaged in their learning. He has the full support of his very able deputy headteacher, staff, parents and governors, and the school achieved *Investor in People* status in December 2000. However, the high staff turnover in the school has resulted in some setback to implementing new initiatives, as staff trained in these have left the school and new staff need time to familiarise themselves with routines and responsibilities.
58. Co-ordinator roles have been enthusiastically adopted by new staff, and many have already produced detailed action plans to improve provision and standards in their areas of responsibility. These include monitoring of curriculum planning and the outcomes of pupils' work as well as shared observations of teaching. However, except in literacy and numeracy, they are at an early stage of implementation. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning through regular formal and informal classroom visits. As highly effective teachers themselves, they are in a good position to provide positive role models for their colleagues.
59. The headteacher is an experienced practitioner in the field of special educational needs and the school benefits from his substantial knowledge. The special educational needs co-ordinator is relatively inexperienced in this role, but is gaining expertise from the regular advice and support of the headteacher. She is taking full advantage of training and research opportunities. There is a good level of understanding of the statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs. Statements of special educational need are implemented and there are reliable arrangements for the writing of IEPs and reports for annual reviews. The headteacher acts as the responsible governor and other governors are dependent on his advice in their evaluation of the school's processes. This has led to additional expenditure on learning support assistants from the governors' own budget to maintain the levels of support for these pupils.
60. The headteacher is aware of the growing number of pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, many of whom have English as an additional language. The school has had substantial success in raising ethnic minority achievement, especially in the juniors, and, because of the formula operated by the local education authority, this could have led to a reduction in the amount of funding available. However, the headteacher has

successfully negotiated a continuation of the funding for the current financial year, which has enabled the level of support from the specialist teacher to be maintained, to the great benefit of the pupils. In line with the authority's guidelines, support has tended to be concentrated on groups at the end of the junior years, and there has not yet been sufficient review to judge whether additional staffing might be more effective in the early stages of the infants.

61. The governing body is deeply committed to the school. The chair of governors is a frequent visitor and she has a clear and realistic understanding of the role of governors in supporting the management of the school and in monitoring its work. All governors share a determination to improve their strategic involvement in the school, which is unsatisfactory at present. There is little monitoring of, for example, financial management or curriculum developments, and governors' understanding of the cost effectiveness of decisions and value for money of these is too dependent on reports from the headteacher. Historically, governors had been kept at arm's length and had little understanding of their role. New governors are working hard to gain understanding and develop effective committees. The governors' action plan and the governing body annual function cycle, produced by the chair of governors, provide them with clear and detailed guidance in this. Many governors are parents and they bring a good degree of expertise to their developing roles.
62. Governors have supported fully the headteacher's spending decisions and are well aware of the main priorities. The headteacher, with their agreement, has spent in excess of the school's income in the last financial year, but there are arrangements to ensure a better balance of income and expenditure in the current year. Expenditure has been subsidised by a governors' fund, which has been used well to sustain the good levels of learning support assistant support in lessons. Governors are supplied well with information about costings, linked to developments and the ongoing budget situation. Plans are well advanced to re-constitute the finance committee and to increase the level of monitoring of expenditure, as part of the governors' *annual function cycle*. Governors have not yet established formal mechanisms for evaluating the effects of the school's spending decisions and are heavily reliant on the headteacher for advice on how costs compare with similar schools.
63. Financial planning and control is good and is well matched to the educational priorities of the school. The main areas of increased expenditure, such as literacy in 2000-01 and information and communication technology in the current year, support key areas for development in the school improvement plan to raise the standards of pupils' work. The impact of increased spending on books, for instance, has been to improve pupils' enthusiasm for reading and to enable teachers to guide pupils in the acquisition of specific reading skills.
64. The school is well staffed with suitably qualified teachers and pupils benefit greatly from the high level of support staff, including qualified teachers and learning support assistants, who support their learning. Arrangements for performance management are securely in place. New staff feel very welcomed, as do the pupils from a nearby secondary school who visit on work experience. They are given ample information to enable them to settle quickly into the school's routines and this makes a positive contribution to the warm, hardworking atmosphere that pervades the school.
65. The school's accommodation is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has improved its playground areas with the help of pupils and parents. The Millennium Garden is a very attractive addition and provides a performing area, quiet garden and pond. The two libraries are well located and set out for ease of access by pupils, although they are underused. The school is currently building a computer suite, in order

to improve its facilities for information and communication technology. Classrooms are of a satisfactory size to teach the curriculum, although the two older junior classes are located up a steep staircase, which would not be accessible to pupils or staff with significant physical disabilities. The school is currently trialling the use of a public playing field for outdoor games, although it has already identified that there are difficulties with this as the surface is not satisfactory under wet and muddy conditions.

66. Overall, there are sufficient resources to support learning in most subjects. Both the resources and the separate accommodation for teaching music are good. The provision of non-fiction books has improved since the last inspection and the new books are being systematically catalogued, with invaluable parental support. The resources for teaching information and communication technology are unsatisfactory, although improvements are planned for when the new suite is built.
67. The school has continued the efficient administration identified in the last inspection. The school's office is well organised and can provide regular information about all areas of income and expenditure. Care is taken to ensure that key principles, such as considering at least three tenders for major contracts, are acted upon. Governors are beginning to recognise that comparing tenders for best value can be complex and are showing an awareness of the need to be critical of their own spending decisions. They are provided with information about income intended for specific purposes, such as grants from the Standards Fund, and they have reliable checks to ensure that these are allocated to the right areas.
68. The school undertakes detailed self-evaluation and the school improvement plan is a comprehensive document, which clearly indicates improvements to be made and how these are to be achieved. Staff, governors and parents are all invited to contribute their views to this. Detailed action and time-scales are included and targets are reviewed regularly. Together with the determination by all staff to improve the quality of learning and raise standards, the school is in a good position to improve, and it provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- continue efforts to raise standards in English and mathematics in the infants, and in handwriting and spelling in English, problem solving in mathematics and experimental and investigative work in science for junior pupils by:
 - continuing implementation of effective strategies already in place,
 - sharing good practice and teacher expertise in different subjects,
 - providing work more closely matched to pupils' abilities in lessons,
 - increasing the pace of a small minority of lessons,
 - considering increasing support for pupils learning English as an additional language in the reception and infant classes in light of changing populations,
 - implementing the role of co-ordinators fully;
(paras 2, 3, 4, 6, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 29, 58, 60, subject sections)

- raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - implementing as soon as possible the planned improvement to accommodation and resources for the subject,
 - ensuring teachers have access to good quality training to raise their confidence and understanding of effective teaching,
 - developing the management and monitoring of how the subject is taught and standards attained;
(paras 3, 4, 20, 33, 66, subject sections)

- develop the role of the governing body in the strategic managing and monitoring of the work of the school by:
 - continuing to implement the governors' comprehensive development plan,
 - taking full account of the governing body annual function cycle to ensure statutory responsibilities are met.
(paras 61, 62)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor points should be included in the governors' action plan:

- consider the balance of activities in the reception class, (18, 28, subject sections)
- ensure new staff receive training in child protection procedures, (43)
- make better use of the school libraries. (65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

53

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

47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	6	25	19	3	0	0
Percentage	0	11	47	36	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

239

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

21

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

62

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

36

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

12

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	11	13	14
	Girls	14	14	17
	Total	25	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	71 (82)	77 (82)	89 (88)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	12
	Girls	13	15	13
	Total	24	29	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	69 (82)	83 (85)	71 (88)
	National	n/a (84)	n/a (88)	n/a (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	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	15	14	15
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	33	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	94 (85)	86 (76)	97 (91)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	18	17	15
	Total	32	31	29
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91 (76)	89 (79)	83 (79)
	National	n/a (70)	n/a (72)	n/a (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	31
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	7
Indian	10
Pakistani	13
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	125
Any other minority ethnic group	13

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	431,433
Total expenditure	458,398
Expenditure per pupil	1,993
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13,474
Balance carried forward to next year	-13,491

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	231
Number of questionnaires returned	122
Percentage returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	5	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	30	60	3	3	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	48	4	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	52	12	0	6
The teaching is good.	40	52	2	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	55	10	1	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	39	3	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	44	51	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	40	48	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	36	2	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	47	4	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	59	10	0	7

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

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Children's personal, social and emotional development is appropriate for their age in relation to the stepping stones for learning in the Early Years curriculum. Most children are confident and articulate, expressing their opinions decidedly and playing happily with older pupils during playtimes. They come eagerly into school each morning and have a clear understanding of the routines of the day. Adults provide good role models and set clear expectations of behaviour. As a result, most children have a sound understanding of right and wrong and the effect of their actions on others. Staff provide a wide range of activities throughout each session and this helps children gain independence as they choose what they are going to do, identifying this by placing their names against their chosen task. Most children approach their tasks purposefully, but some have short attention spans and do not persevere with activities for very long. The number of activities means that adult involvement in each is limited, which restricts their ability to encourage children to complete one task before moving on to another. Whilst most play happily alongside each other, minor disagreements occur when children have not yet learned to share and take turns. Staff deal effectively with these incidents, reinforcing their high expectations and ensuring all children have full access to all the opportunities available.

Communication, language and literacy

70. In relation to the stepping stones for learning, standards in communication, language and literacy are appropriate for children's age. Children speak confidently about their experiences and opinions, with increasingly extensive vocabulary. They listen attentively to adults, although they do not always listen so carefully to each other. Teaching in focused literacy sessions is good. Staff read stories expressively and encourage children effectively to join in with familiar repeated phrases. The story *We're going on a Bear Hunt*, for example, was greeted enthusiastically, and children took great delight in making exciting and gory predictions about whether they would meet a bear, and what would happen if they did. The learning support assistant provided an invaluable counterpoint to the teacher during this session, assisting children learning English as an additional language to understand the story and contribute effectively to the discussion. Both adults are adept at questioning children to make them think and talk about what they are doing. As a result, children's understanding of, for example, initial letter sounds is developing well.

71. Children enjoy listening to tapes and match pictures to the sounds they hear correctly. They handle books sensibly and follow the words with their fingers carefully as they 'read' simple, repetitive sentences. None of the children is yet launched into reading, but they recognise some words, such as their names, and initial letters in their books and around the classroom. One boy recognised, for example, that the word 'what' started with the same letter as his name. Children enjoy telling stories from the pictures, guided carefully by staff in lively shared reading sessions.

72. Staff provide extensive opportunities for children to experiment with writing, linked effectively with all the areas of learning. In the baby clinic, for example, children carefully record appointments, and in the home corner they 'write' shopping lists. They consider seriously what they will write to persuade *Minky the Monkey* to follow the school rules.

Most children hold pencils correctly as they make marks and staff carefully annotate the work with the words children want to convey.

Mathematical development

73. Children's mathematical development is appropriate for their age, in relation to the stepping stones for learning. They count confidently to 10, and around a quarter of children complete simple addition accurately, such as six add three, both in their heads and using their fingers sensibly to check their answers. Teaching is good in lively shared sessions using passengers getting on to the *Big Red Bus* to help children understand numbers and improve their counting skills. The teacher makes effective use of mathematical language, such as two more, add on, to encourage children's thinking, as they show fingers on both hands and add them up. The assistant is again invaluable in supporting children who find the activity more challenging and those who are learning English as an additional language to take a full part in the session.
74. There was no specific mathematical focus within the *plan, do and review* activities during the week of the inspection, but children printing with different shapes named these accurately, and those using small construction kits counted their bricks confidently and compared the relative sizes of their models using appropriate mathematical language.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world, in relation to the stepping stones for learning, is appropriate for their age. Children talk confidently about their families and understand that babies need particular care. They bathe their 'babies' with serious concentration, and take much better care of those in the clinic following a visit from a real baby! Children using the computer handled the mouse successfully to change colour and style in a painting program, but some were not good at sharing the activity with their partner. Children using construction kits talked sensibly about their models of houses and cars and the difficulties they were encountering in building these.
76. Teaching is satisfactory. The wide range of activities available in each session means that children have extensive opportunities to explore, investigate and use their imaginations when making models. However, this wide range means that staff have limited opportunity to join in with each. As a result, children work and play for some time without effective adult intervention to encourage them to think and talk about what they are doing. When an adult is present at an activity, the quality of interaction is good and staff are adept at asking children to explain what they are doing and why. Staff make good use of the children's backgrounds to encourage their understanding of cultural diversity. A visit from a Chinese mother gave children a valuable opportunity to experiment with Chinese writing, which they tackled with creditable skill.

Physical development

77. Children's physical development is appropriate for their age, in relation to the stepping stones for learning. They move purposefully around the classroom, school and playground. Most are well co-ordinated and manage construction kits, scissors and other tools confidently to build on both large and small scale, such as colourful models for *Playmobil People*. Children understand what keeps them healthy; 'toothpaste is good for you'; and their drawings of important points are carefully annotated by staff and displayed prominently in the baby clinic. Staff encourage children effectively in their independence, for example, when changing for physical sessions, and most manage to dress and undress, and fold their clothes, independently. Teaching in whole-class sessions is good. Children thoroughly enjoyed a hall session using the parachute. The teacher set clear

expectations of behaviour and co-operation, which children followed closely as they lifted the parachute up and down, describing it as 'like a big jelly' and 'like a volcano'. The lesson developed well as new activities were introduced, and children were well co-ordinated as they ran underneath the parachute when it was their turn. Sustained physical effort was evident as they were puffing by the end of the session. Whilst it was not possible to observe a guided outdoor session, children have regular access to appropriate wheeled toys and large apparatus to develop their gross motor co-ordination skills.

Creative development

78. In relation to the stepping stones for learning, children's creative development is appropriate for their age. They sing familiar songs with gusto and recognise high and low notes in recorded music. They enjoy playing percussion instruments, although in the session seen, too few children had the opportunity to do so. Children benefit greatly from being taught by the specialist music teacher, but the session was rather subdued. Perhaps first thing on Monday morning is not the best time for this lesson. In the classroom, staff provide children with a wide range of activities to develop their creativity. In the home corner, for example, children act out household chores with great attention to detail, and care for babies in the clinic, weighing and dressing them, with serious concentration although rather roughly. Children enjoy experimenting with colour and paint. They make careful observational drawings of fruit and lively self-portraits are attractively displayed on the classroom wall. Teaching is satisfactory. Staff work effectively with groups of children, encouraging them to improve their work and think and talk about what they are doing. When an adult is present, children respond positively to this encouragement; their language develops appropriately and they work hard to complete their task. However, the range of activities means that adult intervention in each is necessarily short. When no adult is present, children tend to play alongside each other, but not with each other, to develop imaginative story-lines.

ENGLISH

79. In many year groups, pupils enter the infants with below average skills in all areas of English, but with particular weaknesses in writing. There has been a decline in the results achieved in tests at the age of seven since the last inspection. It is evident that this decline has been caused by a larger proportion of less able pupils entering the school and a significant increase in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. By the age of 11 results in national tests are above the national average. This indicates good progress through the junior years, although standards are higher in reading than in writing. The results from 2000 and 2001 show that the gap between reading and writing is narrowing.
80. The emphasis the school has placed on improving its standards in English is beginning to have an effect on standards reached by infants, and has improved some of the writing of the juniors. Standards, however, fluctuate between year groups, particularly for older pupils. Observations indicate that some groups are not likely to reach the same high standards as shown in recent test results, largely because of a higher proportion of less able pupils in these year groups.
81. By the age of seven, pupils achieve average standards in listening and reading. Standards are below average in speaking and writing. Pupils make good progress in developing their listening skills. They listen carefully during whole-class sessions and when they are receiving individual guidance. Nearly all pupils understand the questions they are asked and respond with relevant replies. Pupils, however, tend to be reluctant speakers and rarely show the extent of their understanding. Only a minority are willing to

initiate conversations. Some pupils will only speak in full sentences in the more formal situations in classrooms. Most pupils' speech is entirely in the present tense, but they show an awareness of the needs of the listener by trying to speak about events in their lives. A significant and growing number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Class teachers are aware of their needs and take care to ensure they understand. This is helping them to make good progress in developing their listening skills. They receive less support in developing their speaking skills and, as a result, their speech is less well developed. A small number of pupils continue to use their first language in the same sentence as English and have difficulty in making themselves understood.

82. The emphasis on the acquisition of basic phonic skills has improved standards of infants' reading. Teachers and learning support assistants have a good knowledge of phonics and implement the guidance in recommended strategies, such as *Progression in Phonics*, well. By seven, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make reasonable guesses at unfamiliar words. Most pupils sound out and combine the individual letter sounds of a short word confidently in order to pronounce it correctly. They find it more difficult to read words where there are complex letter combinations. Less able pupils tend to be very reliant on adult support if they are uncertain and will miss out or rush word endings when reading out loud. More able pupils, who comprise a relatively small minority in classes, describe the characters and plot in stories enthusiastically.
83. Pupils' writing is below average, but they are making satisfactory progress considering the low level of writing skills on entry to the infants. A clearer focus on the basics of writing techniques, such as practising the main elements of letter formation, is beginning to have an effect, but many pupils' writing is brief and very hard to read. A large minority are not able to maintain consistent size and spacing of letters by the age of seven. Nearly all pupils, including the most able, rely on spelling words phonetically, for example, spelling medicine, 'medsone'. There are higher standards in punctuation, with all pupils understanding the use of capitals and full stops in sentence construction. Most pupils use descriptive adjectives correctly, and the more able discuss how they try to make their writing more interesting.
84. Pupils' progress in the juniors is good. Increasingly, many pupils enter the juniors with below average literacy skills and will need to make even better progress if they are to reach the levels achieved by pupils in recent years. Some basic skills deficiencies, most notably in writing, hamper their progress and limit the results they can achieve at the age of 11 years.
85. Junior pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, although, as in the infants, their progress in listening tends to be stronger than in speaking. Pupils' knowledge of vocabulary is substantially greater than they use in their own speech. Only some of the more able pupils are enthusiastic speakers. Other pupils will respond quickly to questions, but with relatively brief replies. Teachers and learning support assistants pay particular attention to the speech of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. They are included very well in whole-class discussions and encouraged to make contributions. They are beginning to develop the ability to use Standard English and think about how they should express themselves in different situations.
86. Junior pupils make good progress in reading and have benefited from the additional resources made available to support their learning. The partially completed book banding system has helped pupils to select books of a suitable level of difficulty. Increased provision of more modern non-fiction books has increased their range of reading and

developed their enthusiasm for finding out about new ideas. In Year 6, all pupils understand the main themes of their class book, *Goodnight Mister Tom*, and look back through the book eagerly to locate passages of particular interest. The consistent focus on phonics has helped pupils to develop reliable skills in deciphering words. They read most common words accurately, although the less able are frequently able to read words accurately without being confident about their meaning. Nearly all pupils enjoy visiting the school library. They know where to locate books and the lending system that is in operation. Pupils with special educational needs find groups of books of particular interest to them, such as those about animals and adventure stories. By the age of 11, the majority of pupils also visit their local library and know about the cataloguing system. Most pupils can use the contents pages of books to find information. They do not, however, regularly use the computers in their local library to find out information about books.

87. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills. Many pupils achieve significantly higher standards in their expressive writing than in more basic areas, such as spelling and presentation. By 11, most pupils move between past and present tenses, adopting the right tense for the context. They use a good variety of adjectives and adverbs to create greater interest, and a high emphasis on teaching the use of connectives has helped to develop greater fluency. The majority of pupils use common punctuation correctly, knowing the difference between question and exclamation marks and incorporating inverted commas for speech. Although the majority have adopted a reasonable cursive writing style by 11, a significant minority still mix joined up and non-cursive writing. Most pupils make several spelling mistakes in each page of writing.
88. Teaching is satisfactory in infants and juniors and leads to satisfactory learning by pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the literacy strategy and consistently plan and implement its main elements. Learning objectives are usually explained well and, in the best lessons, there is frequent reference to them. As a result, pupils have become accustomed to the routines of class organisation in the literacy hour and are capable of listening carefully and working in groups without direct supervision. Sometimes, however, teachers' whole-class introductions lack energy and enthusiasm. Some teachers are too concerned about every element of the strategy to be able to present material in an exciting and stimulating way.
89. Teachers work hard to include pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language in whole-class work. They are encouraged to contribute to discussions and time is given for them to respond to questions. The planning for group work contains a range of activities for different levels of ability, but sometimes the work is too similar to allow the least able full access and to challenge the most able. In particular, the reading material can be too difficult for the least able and makes them more reliant on adult assistance. Behaviour is well managed in most classes, although a very small number of pupils with special educational needs sometimes do not respond to the teachers' guidance. Pupils will happily share books and other resources. Books are readily accessible in classrooms and the two libraries are well sited close to classrooms. Learning support assistants are well deployed to meet particular needs and there has been an increasing level of awareness of the regular support many pupils need in infants if they are to significantly raise their standards of work. Teachers have received specialist advice on the teaching of English as an additional language and to support ethnic minority achievement, although the over-deployment of the specialist teacher to Year 6 reduces the impact elsewhere in the school.
90. Homework is set regularly and written guidance is often provided, which helps parents to become involved in pupils' learning, especially in the development of their reading skills.

91. The school is well aware that an increasing number of pupils have difficulty with English. The series of actions included in the school improvement plan for 2000-01 have largely been completed and, in particular, the improved resources for reading have had a beneficial effect on standards. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the areas of weakness and knows that further progress is required, particularly in writing. Improvements in strategies are already under way, which should have an impact on results in the near future.

MATHEMATICS

92. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. This has had a positive impact on preparing pupils for the standard assessment tests at 11, and has improved the planning significantly since the previous inspection. Results in the standard tests have for some years closely followed the national trend, but above it. The present Year 6 has a higher proportion of pupils who have special educational needs than previous years, and is not in as strong a starting position. However, if the current strategies and teaching are maintained, the pupils are in line to achieve the standards expected for their age by the end of the year. The pupils understand number and perform simple calculations confidently, but are at an early stage of transferring this knowledge to fractions and decimals. They collect and handle data and produce and interpret simple graphs, but do not have sufficient grounding yet to understand the work on probability in the Year 6 curriculum. Pupils are beginning to discuss their ideas about how to solve problems, but are not confident enough in developing and applying their own strategies to overcome difficulties. A strength in mathematics' provision is the school's positive approach to assessment and the analysis of pupils' work. The school acts effectively on this information; for instance, the Year 5 teacher is putting in the groundwork for fractions and decimals, and the Year 6 teacher has started the early introduction of probability. So pupils are making sound progress.
93. Pupils entering Year 2 have been similarly soundly prepared by their work during the numeracy hours. They are confident with simple mental and paper calculations, for instance counting up in tens and building up to hundreds. They have a good awareness of basic two- and three-dimensional shapes. They are beginning to use mathematical language correctly, but have difficulty when trying to solve problems that involve more than one stage of thinking to reach a solution. However, because they are slow to rely on their own thinking strategies, standards are likely to be below those expected for their age by the end of the year.
94. Teaching overall is satisfactory throughout the school. In both the infants and juniors there are good and very good lessons. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers tend to present knowledge and skills to the pupils. This leads to mechanical activities and to pupils who are not fully engaged in their own learning. In the stronger lessons, teachers prepare exciting activities where pupils can try out different ways of reaching solutions. Teachers give them good opportunities to discuss their ideas. For instance, the Year 1 'talking partners' communicated very effectively, just for a brief time, but came up with many ideas, which could be followed up in the lesson. In these lessons the teachers use resources particularly well. For example, the Year 4 pupils gained a much clearer understanding of how 'pentominoes' could make open box shapes by handling and folding paper versions which the teacher had provided. The small whiteboards, which appear in many lessons, appeal to pupils because they can signal their answers quickly and rub out mistakes without fuss. These devices strengthen the challenge to pupils to think more deeply and they respond with a positive approach and a readiness to concentrate well.

95. Teachers observe closely how pupils progress in lessons. They make notes on their planning to adjust their next lessons, to give different groups work matched appropriately to their abilities. This effectively enables pupils to move forward at a suitable pace. At times, however, this arrangement does not take full account of the most and least able pupils. In some cases, the needs of the pupils for whom English is an additional language are not met satisfactorily, for instance in the group work where these pupils did not do enough focused talking using mathematical vocabulary. Last year, much of the infants' activity was on worksheets that directed pupils in what to do, which inhibited their ability to develop solutions of their own. Teachers this year are selecting activities that are more relevant, and are helping pupils to understand the meaning of text used to express number problems. This focus on literacy is useful. Numeracy skills are used in a satisfactory way in some other subjects, such as design technology and geography, but information and communication technology is underused.
96. The co-ordinator has been successful in developing an exciting new approach to mathematics. Assessment to set school targets is useful because it enables the staff to predict future outcomes. The use of assessment information to develop pupils' individual targets is also valuable because it gives pupils a greater insight into their own learning. The co-ordinator has identified the need to bring consistency to the final discussion sessions at the end of lessons in her action plan, since not all teachers refer to the level of success in achieving their lesson objectives.

SCIENCE

97. Standards in science are on course to be average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is somewhat lower than the picture found by the previous inspection. However, statistics show attainment in the subject varies year-on-year, dependent on the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language in the year group.
98. Standards in the 2001 teacher assessments in Year 2 were below average. This group of pupils, now in Year 3, has a high proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs, 34 per cent, and standards in all tested subjects were below average. There was little evidence of science in the scrutiny of Year 2 work completed last year, possibly as a result of intensive strategies to raise standards in literacy and numeracy being undertaken at the expense of other subjects. The current infant pupils are undertaking exciting scientific investigations; teaching is good and as a result pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons and make good progress.
99. All infant classes are investigating electrical circuits. Pupils understand that a circuit needs to be complete for electricity to flow, although a significant number of pupils believe it flows from both ends of the battery simultaneously. Plenty of practical equipment means that all pupils are fully engaged in predicting, then testing, whether particular circuits will cause a bulb to light up. Pupils work with serious concentration and co-operate well, investigating both the set task and their own variations. Their excitement when they try something new is celebrated by the teachers, who use individual discoveries to make effective teaching points. Teachers and learning support assistants move continuously between different groups, sorting problems and asking probing questions. This creates a buzz of lively conversation and ensures all pupils are fully included in the activity.
100. Standards in the 2001 tests for Year 6 were well above average, with 97 per cent of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 and above, and nearly half of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. The current Year 6 contains a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Whilst their results are unlikely to be as impressive as last year, they

are on course to achieve average standards by the end of the year. Junior pupils follow a carefully constructed scheme of work, which covers all aspects of the curriculum fully. Teaching is good in almost all lessons, and pupils make steady progress in gaining scientific knowledge and understanding.

101. In Year 3, for example, pupils investigate the properties of materials, exploring how much light different materials let through. They have a good understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary and discuss sensibly their predictions before beginning testing. Teaching in this lesson is satisfactory. The teacher's expectation that pupils will record their predictions before practical activity begins is appropriate, and makes a positive contribution to their literacy skills. However, pupils are very slow to complete this writing task, which results in too little practical science taking place. Additionally, too little equipment is available for all pupils to take an active part in the experiment. The class is not using data logging equipment so the opportunity to improve their information and communication technology skills is missed.
102. Pupils in Year 6 are investigating forces with great enthusiasm. They understand the concept of upthrust and engage in lively debate during practical activity and when summarising their findings at the end of the lesson. Teaching is good as both teacher and learning support assistant work effectively with all groups of pupils, asking probing questions and valuing pupils' answers. The session is well structured, with plenty of practical apparatus to ensure all pupils are fully included in discussion and investigation. As a result, pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding is sound, but their skill in undertaking practical investigations is below average for their age. This is not helped by using Newton meters that are not sufficiently sensitive to record changes when objects are placed in water. Discussion with pupils, however, shows they have had limited opportunity to participate in practical science in the past.
103. The co-ordinator is new to the school, but already has detailed plans to improve provision for and standards in the subject. Resources are generally satisfactory and are used well for practical investigations. Some of the classrooms, however, are rather crowded for these to be conducted satisfactorily.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Standards in art and design are in line with those expected for pupils' ages by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school has successfully introduced a planning scheme to teach the basic skills and techniques are taught in a logical order. This is an improvement on the planning since the previous inspection and it contributes positively to pupils' good progress. The infants have mastered colour mixing and use it to achieve the right shading for skin tones in their self-portraits. The juniors use much of their work to illustrate other subjects. Their pencil skills are controlled and detailed and are put to good use, for example, in drawings of vehicles to demonstrate movement. All pupils are fully included in lessons and art provides a good opportunity for those pupils who have special educational needs to achieve success, with work that is at times better than their peers.
105. Good teaching in art contributes to consistent progress throughout the school. Teachers plan good lessons. Most start with a clear statement of what the pupils are to learn, with suggestions on how to approach the task. In the best lessons, the teachers allow the pupils independence to follow their own ideas and overcome problems in their own way. Year 6 pupils, for instance, could select their own medium for colouring their movement pictures. Some chose paint, some smudged oil pastels and others used coloured pencils. At the end of lessons, teachers encourage pupils to evaluate what is effective and what is not. These evaluations lie at the heart of their progress. Teachers use resources well.

For example, the mirrors provided for Year 2 pupils enabled them to study their faces closely and, therefore, they include much additional detail in the self-portraits.

106. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound. Therefore, they are able to introduce pupils to the work of famous artists, to show how their techniques can help extend the pupils' work. For instance, Year 6 pupils could select between the styles of Turner, Lowry or Picasso if they wanted. The pupils, however, do not retain much knowledge about these artists. Year 4 pupils do remember their own local artist in residence and are proud of the Dreamscapes that enliven the display around the school. Year 5 pupils are still impressed by their visit to the Tate Modern gallery, which extended their ideas about still life. Events like these enrich the curriculum and stimulate pupils' interest effectively. In all lessons pupils worked with positive concentration. In some lessons, the music playing helped pupils to reflect even more calmly about their work.
107. Teachers value pupils' efforts and go to a great deal of trouble to display them in an attractive form. Some use the computer as an effective tool and the finished work gives a clear picture of Year 1 and 2 pupils' vision of their favourite places. Numeracy tends not to have a strong input in art. Pupils' literacy skills are used and developed when they talk about their results, but generally the older pupils do not know enough technical words to speak confidently about art. The new co-ordinator has included the need to develop sketchbooks as a more useful tool in her action plan, and to extend the pupils' skill in finding and using their own information and material for art projects. The plan sets out the need for a simple system of tracking progress, which would involve pupils themselves in recording and understanding the quality of their work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Standards in design and technology are in line with those expected for pupils' ages at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Satisfactory standards and sound progress have been maintained since the previous inspection. This is attributable to the enthusiastic leadership offered by the co-ordinators. The new planning scheme, based on national guidelines, provides valuable guidance for teachers in helping them to know what to teach and how to approach their lessons. The subject plays an important part in the life of the school and from the earliest years pupils develop a practical approach to solving design problems.
109. Infants achieve well. It is clear that teachers cover the full process from designing and drawing labelled plans, to making an interesting range of items, which are then evaluated. Pupils undertake projects that are relevant to other subjects they are studying and their work strengthens the learning in them. In Year 1 and 2, for example, pupils make hinged puppets, where their learning about pivot points strengthens their understanding of levers in science. Juniors also achieve well. Their fairground models involve them in an understanding of mechanisms and electric circuits, which also benefits their scientific learning.
110. In the one lesson observed (in the juniors) teaching was good. It demonstrated the important features evident in last year's work. These include good preparation and use of resources, clear explanations and good opportunities for all pupils to try out their own ideas and to judge how successful they are. The Year 4 pupils had to use their knowledge of materials and insulators to create switches to make their torches work. The pupils love this kind of challenge and respond by particularly good behaviour and effort. Teachers give close attention to pupils who have special educational needs, and for whom English is an additional language, bringing their progress up to the level of their peers.

111. The co-ordinator encourages the staff to extend pupils' literacy skills by providing them with the appropriate technical terms, and creating opportunities for writing design briefs and evaluations of their work. Pupils' numeracy skills are extended by opportunities for careful measurement and checking of angles. However, the computer is not used sufficiently to help pupils with designing and making. A point for development is involving pupils in the assessment of their own work.

GEOGRAPHY

112. By the ages of 7 and 11, standards in geography are appropriate for pupils' ages. This is similar to the picture observed at the time of the last inspection. Since that time, satisfactory improvements have been made in the subject. Very few lessons could be seen during the week of inspection, because topic organisation meant that little geography was taking place. Judgements are based on general observations, conversations with pupils and a scrutiny of their work.
113. Infants make satisfactory progress. By the age of seven, most make comparisons between the features of different localities. They can, for instance, compare the landscape at the seaside with that in High Wycombe and produce labelled diagrams to illustrate their writing. Pupils identify different types of buildings and the more able identify the important buildings in a town centre. A few pupils give reasons for the location of familiar buildings. All pupils explain the aspects they like in their home locality and express their dislike of litter and pollution.
114. Juniors also make satisfactory progress. By 11, they consider the advantages and disadvantages of the development of the 'Western Sector' in High Wycombe. Less able pupils tend to concentrate on the potential damage to the environment. The more able are aware of the economic benefits development can bring in terms of increased numbers of visitors and more employment. They balance the various factors and attempt to make a judgement on whether development should go ahead. Most pupils draw accurate sketch maps of business usage in the town centre and incorporate the results of their survey of the opinions of local traders in their writing. The majority describe the main features of the coast and use suitable geographical terminology, such as 'erosion'. All pupils give general descriptions of the main climate variations in the world and most recall examples of hotter or drier climates, by reference to the Caribbean and India.
115. There is a satisfactory range of resources for pupils' use. The provision of modern atlases in many classrooms has helped pupils to develop a good sense of the main regions of the world. Most pupils are able to identify the continents and some quickly locate countries such as St Vincent where their parents grew up. During a visit by some parents to a Year 5 class, several pupils were keen to follow the story of their lives by reference to atlases. Good displays around the school also help pupils to think about other parts of the world.

HISTORY

116. By the ages of 7 and 11, pupils' standards in history are in line with expectations for their age, which maintains the picture found by the previous inspection. In the infants, however, weaknesses in pupils' writing skills sometimes restrict their ability to record the full extent of their understanding.
117. By the age of seven, all pupils make direct comparisons with the past, especially if they are related to the experiences of their own family. They know that their parents and grandparents had different toys and describe some of their relatives' favourite toys. Some interesting artefacts brought into school by staff, parents and pupils have helped to

stimulate substantial interest in old toys, and several pupils remarked that their grandparents had 'nothing electric'. At this stage in the year, however, few can offer reasons why there were so few electrical toys in their grandparents' time. Most pupils draw a simple family tree of their living relatives correctly. The majority can match the use of toys to the age of a child, but some have difficulty in sequencing the stages of growing up. Most pupils rely on labelling of pictures or the copying of very short phrases in their written work. The most able can write a few simple sentences about the things they have learnt.

118. By 11, nearly all pupils have a firm grasp of why people in the past acted as they did. They are able to give reasons why Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings invaded England. More able pupils can give several reasons for Henry VIII's execution of Anne Boleyn, although the less able tend to emphasise his personal dislike rather than the broader historical factors. Pupils write accurate factual summaries of the lives of famous people, including Queen Victoria, George Stephenson and Florence Nightingale, although their accounts tend to be very brief on the consequences of the major actions undertaken by these personalities. The emphasis in teaching encourages pupils to develop a strong empathy for individuals, particularly children of similar ages. Pupils know about the working conditions in Victorian factories and about life in schools. They are less familiar with the benefits of industrial development in the Nineteenth Century. Evidence of work based on visits to museums, such as the Imperial War Museum, indicates that pupils are making satisfactory progress in collecting information from different types of historical sources. However, only the most able pupils are able to explain accurately the difference between a primary and a secondary source of information
119. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, in some of the sessions seen, there were notably good features. Teachers plan satisfactorily, following the general guidelines for each topic, and organise books, worksheets and other materials well. However, topics run concurrently in different year groups and the level of difficulty of the work does not always progress as much as it might, leaving more able pupils with only limited challenges. There is a tendency, for example, to spend too much time examining simple comparisons between past and present. There are good arrangements for including pupils of lower ability, those with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language, with worksheets taking into account their level of reading ability. Teachers have sufficient knowledge to speak about the main aspects of past civilisations with confidence. They discuss historical personalities with pupils and provide interesting descriptions of events, and pupils respond to this well. They enjoy learning about exciting stories and are enthusiastic about comparing children's lives in the past with their own. Teachers are less knowledgeable about the techniques which underpin the subject, such as research and enquiry, and pupils have limited opportunities to practise these skills.
120. Classes are well managed. Teachers explain the objectives of the lesson at the outset and establish good working practices. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are good and all are fully included. They listen attentively and try hard to follow information presented on the board or on overheads. Pupils are sometimes reluctant to volunteer answers, but respond promptly when asked questions by name. They enjoy handling artefacts and are enthusiastic when teachers point out significant differences between their lives and children in past times. Teachers mark work regularly and sufficient information is retained to make accurate judgements about pupils' levels of attainment. Homework is set intermittently, but there are good examples of pupils being asked to involve their parents in their research.
121. Class teachers are maintaining satisfactory levels of learning in the subject, but the lack of a co-ordinator to advise on how to make the best use of topics for the development of specific skills is hampering pupils' progress. Few new materials have been purchased in

recent years, which sometimes results in an over-reliance on worksheets. Several teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and some interesting work has been developed, such as how High Wycombe has changed in recent times.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

122. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school is below the standard expected for their age. Progress over time has been unsatisfactory and, as a result, by the end of Year 6 pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills. Many pupils can use some word-processing features and can input simple data into spreadsheets to construct graphs. They are uncertain, however, about making measurements by computer, for instance in science, and do not know how to control electronic devices with it. Requirements for ICT have become more demanding since the more positive findings of the previous inspection. At the end of the infants, pupils can use the computer for drawing and colouring for artistic purposes, but are not sufficiently competent in word-processing skills.
123. Only two lessons were observed, in the juniors. One displayed the difficulties that teachers have using just one or two classroom computers. All the pupils in a large class cannot easily see the small computer screen. Some become restless as a result, and it becomes difficult for the teacher to manage them while explaining technical points to the others. When this occurs the teaching is unsatisfactory and the progress of all pupils is delayed. In a similar lesson, the teacher was able to establish better watching and listening conditions. The pupils gained the necessary introductory information to enable them to work independently in pairs, entering data. They discussed the task of how to share out £20.00 for a class party sensibly and used the computer effectively to record their decisions. Teaching of this kind is satisfactory. However the progress pupils make depends on how regularly their turn comes to use the computer. Teachers use class rotas to ensure equal turns for all pupils. During the week of the inspection, however, computers lay idle for much of the time, which suggests that pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to use them.
124. This is linked to the teachers' lack of confidence and expertise in using them. A programme of in-service training has started and is beginning to overcome this weakness. However, the main thrust of this training is not due to start until the summer term next year, when the school's computer suite is finished. The school's action plan is geared to this date. In the meantime, the potential for the computer to be used widely to support learning in other subjects is not exploited. Although there are occasions when the computer is in use during literacy and numeracy hours, there is no consistent planning to make sure it is included in every session. This means that pupils' ICT skills are not satisfactorily developed across the curriculum. When pupils who have special educational needs use the computer they are usually well supported by an adult. The school does not, however, use computers as a specific support for these pupils. The school does not have software to support those pupils who at present have difficulty in speaking English.
125. Planning for ICT has improved since the previous inspection and a structured scheme helps teachers with the progressive development of pupils' skills. However, the present resources are not satisfactory to enable teachers to get through the work fast enough, nor to allow pupils to use the latest technology. The school does not have an interactive whiteboard or data projector, which would give pupils a large view of teachers' demonstrations. New assessment systems are being introduced, but are not to be operated by the pupils themselves, to develop independence in the older pupils.

MUSIC

126. Pupils' standards in music are average by the ages of 7 and 11, which maintains the picture found by the previous inspection. Specialist teaching throughout the school by the enthusiastic co-ordinator ensures that pupils' appreciation of music and their knowledge and skills in the subject are developed systematically, through the comprehensive scheme of work she has developed. Teaching is good overall, and pupils' enthusiastic participation is evident even through the classroom walls! All pupils are fully included in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are sympathetically helped to play instruments and to co-operate with the class as a whole. Those learning English as an additional language take an active part in lessons, and all pupils enjoy singing and listening to music from the wide range of cultures represented in the school population. In a minority of lessons, however, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to join in practical music making, which results in some restlessness and inattention.
127. Throughout the school, pupils sing tunefully, although this is rather subdued in some assemblies. At the Harvest Festival service, by contrast, the singing was enthusiastic and joyful, creating an effective atmosphere. Pupils accompany their singing with appropriate actions and percussion instruments. Despite extensive practice, however, many of the younger pupils find it difficult to maintain the beat using these; for example, when accompanying *My Pal Bill*, in Year 3. Older pupils compose their own music competently. In Year 6, pupils listen appreciatively to their recorded *Jungle Jingles* and suggest ways these could be improved. Pupils chosen to demonstrate, select instruments to represent the scary jungle effectively. Their spontaneous composition shows pupils have a good understanding of the use of instruments to create a particular effect.
128. The separate music room is well equipped with an extensive range of instruments, and the school is eagerly anticipating the arrival of steel drums in the near future. The music curriculum is enriched significantly by a wide range of well-attended music clubs, including choir, band and recorder groups, which are open to all junior pupils. All pupils learn to play the recorder and tuition in a wide range of instruments, such as brass, classical guitar, woodwind, strings and piano, provides a valuable additional dimension to the school's music. Pupils' efforts are celebrated and shared in assemblies and in class lessons, such as the mini orchestra in Year 6, which included around half of the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Standards in physical education are likely to be those expected for the pupils' age by the end of both the infants and the juniors. In 2001 85 per cent of Year 6 pupils achieved the 25 metres swimming distance; the remaining pupils achieved the 10 metres award. Provision for physical education has improved since the previous inspection, with the adoption of the national guidance as a basis for the school's planning. This means that a structured programme is in place for gymnastics and dance as well as for games. Pupils make sound progress overall, and pupils who have special educational needs have good opportunities to achieve success.
130. The infants are agile. They run about the hall using space safely. They dodge and weave in simple ball games and see the need for rules to make the playing fair. However, they are not used to discussing their activities and modifying them in the light of what works well and what does not. Overall, teaching in the infants is satisfactory, and often good. Teachers are alert to potential hazards and train pupils well in safety aspects. They teach pupils about health aspects also, and make sure that each lesson begins with a warm up and ends with a cooling down session. They plan their lessons with a strong structure, where simple basic skills, such as rolling a ball, are introduced

first. Then these are developed into more complex skills, where pupils have to work together in the roles of bowler, fielder and keeper. The pupils enjoy the challenge of these activities and, although excited, they behave well and try hard. Teachers do not, however, give enough opportunities in the lessons for pupils to talk about what they are doing and to think up further strategies and improvements of their own.

131. The picture in the juniors is not as clear. Only one games lesson was observed, at the nearest large open space which involves a 10-minute walk while carrying equipment. The large size of the open space makes class management difficult, and the teacher's expertise in selecting and directing activities in these conditions was insecure. The co-ordinator is aware of these problems and is looking at specific staff training to overcome them. Planning and lesson evaluations for other physical education activities show that these problems do not occur in the school hall. A large number of extra-curricular activities, and coaching by the specialists the school can bring in, support the standards in physical education. Teachers assess pupils' performance well, during the course of a lesson, and adjust their input accordingly. They have started to use a simple recording format to note longer-term progress. Part of the co-ordinator's action plan is to share opportunities for swimming, to bring younger pupils into the teaching programme.