

INSPECTION REPORT

Seer Green CE Combined School

Seer Green, Beaconsfield

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110458

Headteacher: Mrs Olwyn Summers

Reporting inspector: Dr Colin Lee
21854

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 6th December 2001

Inspection number: 196879

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:	School Lane Seer Green Beaconsfield Buckinghamshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Hilary O'Flanagan
Date of previous inspection:	17 th March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21854	Dr C Lee	Registered inspector	Science Physical education English as an additional language	The characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
19693	Mrs S Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Music Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	
22352	Mrs F Gaywood	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils Equal opportunities Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Seer Green Church of England, Voluntary Aided, Combined School is smaller than the average primary school. There are 179 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 11. This is fewer than at the time of the last inspection when the school also included pupils in Year 7. Pupils are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds that are above average overall, and no pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. Six per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language, a higher than average percentage, but very few pupils are at an early stage of learning the English language and, those that are, receive support from a parent-volunteer. A range of mainly European languages are spoken by these pupils, the commonest being French. Twenty-two per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is slightly below the national average. One per cent of pupils has a statement of special educational needs and this is also below average. The special needs cover a wide spectrum of learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties but, of the 14 pupils with more significant needs, eight have dyslexia. There are a significant number of pupils who either join or leave the school during a school year, most usually as a result of their parents changing employment. This turnover is typically around 12 per cent. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is above average overall. The school has experienced a large turnover of teaching staff with all, except two, being appointed in the last two years. A separate Diocesan team has carried out the inspection of collective worship and religious education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The headteacher's very good leadership and the very consistent, good teaching throughout the school are increasing the school's effectiveness and raising standards. Seer Green is a good school, playing an important role in the community and attending well to all aspects of pupils' development. Standards are above average and improving. In relation to their past attainment, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. At present, the school provides satisfactory value for money, although there is good evidence that the school has the capacity to rapidly achieve better than this.

What the school does well

- Standards achieved by pupils at the ages of five, seven, and eleven are above average.
- Music is a significant strength of the school, with very high quality of provision resulting in high standards and good progress achieved by all pupils.
- Pupils' good attitudes, their very good all-round personal development, and the high quality of relationships reflect the very good provision for their moral and social development.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Good curriculum provision for the children in the Foundation Stage¹ and pupils in Key Stages 1² and 2³ promotes the good progress they make.
- There is a very good partnership with parents.
- Very good leadership by the headteacher and the support of a very good governing body provide very effective management of the school.

What could be improved

- Teachers' use of day-to-day assessment does not inform their short-term planning sufficiently.
- More widespread use of data analysis and teachers' assessment is needed to ensure that any weaknesses or variations in standards are addressed.
- More consistency is required in provision for the more able pupils.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators requires further development.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of children in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since that time, a series of temporary acting headteachers led the school until the present headteacher was appointed in May 2000. The satisfactory overall improvement since the last inspection has, in reality, been achieved in the short time since the present headteacher's appointment. As a result

¹ The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

² Key Stage 1 caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

³ Key Stage 2 caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

of her leadership, and the support and co-operation she has received from staff and the governing body, many of the weaknesses highlighted in the previous report have been resolved successfully, although some are only able to be addressed now that staffing levels are stable. Good improvement has occurred in information and communication technology through staff training, resource improvement, and curriculum development. This has raised pupils' standards throughout the school. The limitations in curriculum planning have been overcome with the creation of consistent practices for the short-, medium- and long-term planning for pupils' learning opportunities. The standards being achieved by more able pupils continue to need attention in order that their needs are met in all subjects and by all teachers. Suitable staff are now in place to enable the role of subject co-ordinators to undergo rapid development. Compared with judgements made at the last inspection, improvement is evident in several significant aspects of the school's work. Standards have risen in art and design and physical education and music continues to go from strength to strength. Other areas showing good improvement are pupils' attitudes, the provision for their personal development and the quality of teaching. The inspection team is confident about the school's capacity for further improvement.

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 ⁴
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	A	B
Mathematics	B	A	B	C
Science	A	A	C	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

During the last five years, there have been many fluctuations in the school's results in the annual National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds. The overall trend has been below that which has occurred nationally. In 2001, the significant proportion of boys with special educational needs, in the group taking the tests, had the effect of lowering the results in mathematics and science when compared with the previous year. By contrast, English improved well due to particularly good performance in the tests by girls. The achievements of the more able pupils were shown by the percentages gaining the higher-than-expected Level 5 and, when compared with schools nationally, these were well above average in English, above average in mathematics, and average in science. In relation to the targets set for percentages of pupils gaining the expected Level 4, only that for science was achieved. These targets are based on careful predictions that take account of pupils' prior attainment and data such as percentages of pupils with special educational needs. The governing body sets targets at two levels: realistic, and challenging. The pupils currently in Year 6 are in line to achieve midway between the two and their work is above average in English, mathematics and science. No significant differences between boys and girls are evident.

The test results for seven year olds, in 2001, continued to fluctuate, as in the past. The results in mathematics improved from the previous year but those in reading and writing fell. Compared with schools nationally, the results were well above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average in mathematics, above average in reading, and well below average in writing. In 2001 the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 showed similar variations, being well above the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. In science, the results of the teachers' assessments showed standards to be average. The work seen during the inspection was of a similar overall standard, being well above average in mathematics and reading, and average in writing and science.

In other subjects, pupils attain standards in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6, with four exceptions. Their work in art and design, music, and physical education, is above expectations, and in information and communication technology it is above expectations at the end of Year 2. Children enter the reception class with standards that are above average in communication, language and literacy skills, in mathematical development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The standards are as expected for their age in creative, physical and personal, social and emotional development. Children make good progress during the Reception year and they are in line to exceed expectations in all aspects of their work and development by the time they start Year 1.

⁴ 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils enjoy coming to school and are very eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, pupils conduct themselves well both in class and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and staff, contributing to pupils' good overall personal development
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is close to national rates and the amount of unauthorised absence is much less than in most schools.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

There is a very consistent quality of good teaching across the school. This is achieved through good planning, very good management of classes and good all-round knowledge and understanding of individual subjects and of how pupils learn. All teachers work very well with support staff and use a wide range of resources that stimulate pupils' learning very successfully. English is taught well overall at Key Stages 1 and 2 and the basic skills of literacy are consolidated well across the whole curriculum. The teaching of basic numeracy skills, and mathematics as a whole, is good at key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teaching is generally matched well to the needs of pupils of all abilities, with the exception of the more able pupils, for whom provision is more varied. Where challenging learning activities are planned and introduced at the right time, the more able pupils achieve very good standards. Good teaching of basic skills in most subjects prepares pupils well for their future learning. All teachers assess satisfactorily what pupils have learned at the ends of units of work but do not always do this sufficiently on a day-to-day basis, which limits the effectiveness of planning for different abilities in the next stage of learning. At all stages, pupils work hard and their very good pace of working results in production of a good volume of work in lessons and over time. They maintain good levels of concentration and interest in their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress, overall, and often achieve a good rate of learning in individual lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A good, broad and balanced range of learning opportunities, enhanced well by educational visits, is provided for children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory overall and the Code of Practice is implemented fully. There is early identification of pupils' needs, good liaison with parents, and regular reviews of pupils' progress towards the targets that are set for them. The targets are not, however, specific enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. No specific provision is necessary, other than that required by the very few pupils at an early stage of learning the English language, who are assisted by a parent-volunteer and a classroom assistant.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with a strong emphasis on, and very good provision for pupils' moral and social development that encourages respect for others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community providing good support and guidance and attending well to all aspects of pupils' welfare. Satisfactory procedures have been developed for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and these are guiding curriculum planning satisfactorily.

Parents play a very important role in the life of the school and a strong partnership exists. The school works hard to promote its links with parents, providing a very good variety of information and involving parents very well in their children's education.

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 very good leadership and receives good support from staff in their roles as subject co-ordinators, but these roles need to be developed further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors provide constructive guidance and have a very clear vision of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory self-evaluation procedures, and analysis of relevant data, enable the school to identify priorities, set itself targets, and pursue effective courses of action for future improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of physical and human resources and there is efficient management of the limited finances available.

The school applies the principles of achieving best value, through comparison, challenge, consultation and competition, well. The standards achieved are now analysed and regularly compared with the school's previous results, and with those of similar schools. Accommodation is satisfactory, and staffing levels and learning resources are both good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Children's good progress. • Children's good behaviour. • The good standard of teaching. • The information provided about their children's progress. • How the school deals with their questions or problems. • The school has high expectations of pupils. • The way the school works closely with parents. • The high quality of leadership and management. • How children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The homework set for pupils. • The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors endorse all the positive views of parents and, in the inspection team's judgement, the parents' concerns are unfounded. The type and amount of homework set for pupils are suitable and consistent with the school's policy. The school will, however, be increasing the monitoring by senior management to ensure that all classes maintain regularity in the provision of homework. The programme of extra-curricular activities occasionally fluctuates in relation to changes in staff. The present provision of musical and sporting activities, supervised by both teachers and parents, is of very high quality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children enter the reception class their attainment overall is above average. They have good early reading skills, but less well developed writing skills. Children's mathematical understanding is strong. Their personal and social skills are secure, and their creative and physical development is as expected for their age. Children of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. A significant proportion of children currently in the reception class are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals⁵ in all areas of development by the time they start Year 1.
2. The school's results in National Curriculum tests, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, have fluctuated during the past five years, but the overall picture has been of standards well above national averages. Compared with all other schools, in 2001, pupils' results remained well above average in reading and mathematics, but a sharp fall in writing resulted in only average standards. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work in science showed standards to be average. Compared with similar schools, standards in reading were above average, those in writing were well below average, and in mathematics standards were well above average. The percentages of pupils who reached the higher-than-expected Level 3 improved on the previous year in reading and mathematics, but fell in writing. These percentages were well above national averages in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. Certain characteristics of the year group, such as the higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs, and the significant number of the group who were born in the summer, mean that there were many good achievements in the tests. However, there were obvious weaknesses in writing that have received prompt attention, and teachers' expectations are now higher, requiring pupils to work harder, although it is too early in the year to see any noticeable improvement. The work seen during the inspection of the pupils currently in Year 2 is close to the standard achieved by their predecessors in the tests in 2001. Standards in reading and mathematics are well above average, while those in writing and science are average.
3. In the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, results from 1997 to 2001 show considerable fluctuation and the overall trend has been below the national trend. In 2001, adverse circumstances affecting the Year 6 class, including changes to their teacher, which, together with the fact that a significant number of pupils had special educational needs, made an impact on the test results of the class as a whole. The targets set for these pupils, in terms of the percentages achieving the expected Level 4 or above, were not achieved in English or mathematics. In 2001, compared with all schools, the results were well above average in English, above average in mathematics, and average in science. Compared with similar schools, results in English were above average, those for mathematics were average, and science was below average. These same comparisons also apply to the percentages of pupils reaching the higher Level 5. A significant feature of the test results in 2001 was the different performance levels of girls and boys. There were far more boys than girls with special educational needs and this resulted in a drop in boys' standards, overall, when compared with the previous year. However, the attainment of the pupils currently in Year 6 does not show any significant differences between boys and girls in any subject.
4. The school uses all the information available about pupils' attainment in the past, including a thorough analysis of pupils' performance in tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, to arrive at its predictions and to set targets for pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the age of eleven. The governing body sets targets at two levels for English, mathematics and science: realistic and challenging. The work of the pupils currently in Year 6 suggests that they are on track to exceed the realistic targets. Their work in English, mathematics, and science, is of above-average standard and this represents satisfactory levels of achievement from the time when they took the tests at the age of seven.

⁵ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

5. The standards seen during the inspection show several differences from the judgements made of work seen during the last inspection. At that time the standard of pupils' work was judged to be above average in English, mathematics, and science, at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Since then, improvements have occurred in reading at both key stages and in mathematics at Key Stage 1. In contrast, standards in writing and science at Key Stage 1 are not as high. The period since the last inspection has seen many changes of teachers, and there has often been instability in staffing arrangements that has led to short-term cover by supply teachers and a change to job-share arrangements in several classes. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have been more affected by this instability than younger pupils and it is to the credit of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, in particular, that many are able to achieve standards that consistently reflect their potential. During the last eighteen months, the headteacher has worked hard with teachers to increase their level of expectation of what pupils can achieve and to establish common approaches to planning for the short-, medium- and long-term. These developments, plus appointments of good, new teachers are finally creating a stability in staffing which are starting to have a positive effect on standards overall. An aspiration to very high standards is a notable objective of the headteacher and the governing body and the staff now at the school show a sharing of this commitment and a capacity to achieve it.
6. Arrangements for specialist work for pupils with special educational needs are currently being changed due to absence of the co-ordinator and specialist support staff. These pupils are still managing to maintain satisfactory progress in relation to the individual education plans set out for them, due to the good attention paid to their needs by class teachers. The pupils learn well, as a result of their positive attitudes, but their targets are insufficiently well defined, being too vague to help teachers to plan for pupils to learn in a clear step-by-step progression. The rate of progress will not increase until weaknesses in diagnosis of learning difficulties can be addressed. Pupils with English as an additional language progress satisfactorily. Most are past the early stages of learning the language, but the few still in these early stages are supported well by their classmates and, in one case, by a parent-volunteer. The more able pupils are generally achieving satisfactorily in the National Curriculum tests but, within lessons, many are capable of higher standards across much of the curriculum and are held back, to varying degrees, by the quality of teachers' planning of appropriate learning opportunities. All too frequently, these pupils are unnecessarily required to complete the same work as pupils of average ability before progressing to worksheets or learning activities that have any real challenge for them. This points to insufficient ongoing assessment of these pupils' specific needs.
7. Beyond the core subjects of English, mathematics, and science, standards across the curriculum attained by pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 are at least in line with expectations. Overall, the picture is of improving standards. Whereas, at the time of the last inspection, only music, among the other subjects, was above expectations, standards now exceed expectations in art, music, and physical education, at the end of both key stages. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology are also above expectations. Music is an impressive strength of the school and pupils of all abilities achieve a very high standard in lessons, in several age groups, who are taught by the highly skilled music co-ordinator.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils' attitudes to school are very good and have improved since the last inspection when they were good. The vast majority of parents say that their children like school. The pupils' enthusiasm for learning has a very positive impact on their progress.
9. The personal and social development of children in the reception class is good. Staff build on the firm foundations of the Seer Green Nursery. Children grow in confidence within a totally secure learning environment. Very secure relationships between adults and children make a significant contribution towards children's enjoyment of school, their high standards of behaviour, and very good levels of independence.
10. The enthusiasm for learning was very evident in a Year 5 science lesson, when the pupils investigated the size of parachutes and how quickly they fell to the ground. The pupils were very excited about the experiment, but they listened attentively to the teacher and were eager to answer her questions. They thought carefully about their predictions, using the correct scientific vocabulary. They settled quickly to their tasks and concentrated well. They worked independently

and in silence when they were asked to write up the experiment. The pupils take great pleasure in participating in school productions, and the various musical and sports activities.

11. Pupils with special educational needs contribute well in lessons, and are successful in joining in, often because of the very good support they have from classroom assistants. Specialised literacy support is particularly effective in enabling pupils to 'have a go'. Other pupils are very tolerant, on the whole, and demonstrate mature attitudes towards pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with English as an additional language display the same positive attitudes as their classmates.
12. The behaviour of the pupils is good, and there have been no exclusions during the past school year. Parents are generally impressed by the pupils' behaviour, especially when they are on school trips. The school operates as a happy and harmonious community and this has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. The pupils know that the adults working in school expect good behaviour and the pupils nearly always behave well. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, a few parents expressed concern at the implications for the school of its growing reputation for successfully meeting the special needs of pupils with significant behavioural difficulties. Some parents felt that such pupils place disproportionate demands on teachers' time and adversely affect the atmosphere in classrooms. Inspection evidence confirms that teachers have worked hard and successfully to ensure that such pupils meet the high expectations of good behaviour, with the result that there is now, rarely, any inappropriate behaviour by any pupils. Occasionally, some pupils chat to each other, when they are supposed to be writing, and a few become restless when required to sit still for some time. The pupils in Year 5 behaved particularly well during the week of the inspection, and responded very well to the expectations of the four different teachers who taught them. Pupils behave sensibly during lunch, and play well together in the playground. They show respect for property and take particular care of the lunchtime play equipment. The behaviour of pupils during collective worship is exemplary and this helps to create a suitable atmosphere for worship and reflection. The pupils are very good role models for the children in the nursery, who regularly join them for assembly. The pupils say that the rare incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with effectively.
13. The pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. There is a high level of mutual respect between the pupils and adults working in the school. This has a very positive impact on lessons and around the school. In most classes, the pupils are confident in expressing their ideas and feelings without fear of ridicule. They support each other and work particularly well in groups. There is good mutual support among pupils with English as an additional language, most of whom are good English speakers but, just occasionally, need help with new vocabulary. However, they are as likely to be assisted by any pupil, as by one who speaks their first language. Pupils enjoy celebrating one another's successes and often break into spontaneous applause during lessons. The pupils show great confidence and maturity when they play musical instruments in assembly, and the high-quality performance of the younger pupils in the Nativity play was very moving. Pupils are keen to take responsibility and enjoy helping in the classrooms and around the school. Older pupils are milk monitors and librarians. Members of the school council have brought about improvements in school life, for example, through raising funds for play equipment. The school council is currently restricted to pupils in Year 6 and there is a need to consider the possibility of younger pupils having representation and the consequent increase in responsibility that this would bring.
14. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory, but has declined since the last inspection when it was very good. The absence rate of 7.2 per cent for 2000/01 was well above the national average. During that school year, a number of travellers' families registered their children at the school, but these pupils were not in school for considerable lengths of time. On the advice of outside agencies, these absences were marked as authorised, and this accounts for the sudden decline in the attendance rates. If these attendance records are taken out of the calculations, attendance rates are in line with national averages. There were no unauthorised absences. The vast majority of parents bring their children to school on time and the school day begins promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranges from excellent to satisfactory. Of the 47 lessons observed, 32 per cent were very good or better and this included an excellent music lesson seen in Year 5. A further 42 per cent of teaching was good, and 26 per cent was satisfactory. There is a high level of consistency throughout the school, both in terms of teachers' strengths and their comparative weaknesses. The significant number of supply teachers present during the inspection maintained the good standard of teaching. This consistency ensures that the progress in pupils' learning is sustained during the absence of the usual class teachers. Consistency is also maintained in the two job-share classes, where excellent collaboration and similarities in teaching styles provide security for the pupils and smooth transition from working with one teacher to the other. This overall picture is a significant improvement compared with the last inspection, although there has been almost a complete change in teaching staff in the last two years. The improved monitoring of the quality of teaching by senior management and the headteacher's clear expectations of high quality teaching have had good impact. With the overcoming of the significant instability of staffing arrangements that has hindered school improvement until recently, the standards being achieved by pupils are starting to rise as a result of the permanence of new teachers and the good qualities they are displaying.
16. At the Foundation Stage, the overall quality of teaching and learning is good. The teaching of children's early reading and writing skills is very good. The teaching and support staff are of high calibre. They have a secure knowledge of this age group and work closely together to ensure a good balance of well-structured, interesting activities. Children's work is attractively displayed. Planning relates well to the six areas of learning, group work is well organised, and non-teaching staff provide a high level of good quality support. However, the aims of individual lessons are sometimes too broad. The purpose of some activities is not always defined clearly enough. As a result, tasks occasionally do not match the needs of more able children.
17. There is a very high degree of similarity in the strengths of individual teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2. All, for example, have a good breadth of knowledge and understanding of all subjects in the curriculum. It is also a feature of much of the very good teaching that it occurs when teachers are teaching the subject that they co-ordinate across the school. This has a beneficial effect on pupils' learning, resulting in very good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding in the course of a lesson. This was particularly evident in an excellent music lesson in Year 5 and very good lessons in physical education in Year 5, design and technology and science in Year 3, art and design in Year 2, and information and communication technology in Year 6. In all these lessons pupils' learning was promoted very successfully through expert instruction in basic skills, combined with stimulating learning activities that captured pupils' imaginations and interest and were matched well to pupils' different abilities and needs. This ensured that all pupils were challenged to work at a level that was right for them. Where teaching is less successful, being satisfactory because the majority of pupils are achieving satisfactory gains in their learning, a weakness is evident in the planning of such lessons. The learning that is intended in the lesson is stated in teachers' planning, but is not always specific enough, and there is insufficient attention paid to what is to be done or learned by different groups of pupils, other than those with special educational needs. More able pupils are frequently asked to do the same task as pupils of average ability, whether they need to do this task or not. Consequently, although tasks to extend the more able pupils are often planned, they are either not demanding enough, or pupils have insufficient time to complete them. This is often the result of insufficient attention by teachers to ongoing assessment of the learning achieved by different groups during a lesson. This limits teachers' awareness of the precise needs of different pupils in the next lesson.
18. Teachers take satisfactory account of pupils with special educational needs in their planning. However, the individual education plans are not yet explicit enough to support the pupils fully in this process. Teachers offer as much support as they can, often very successfully, for example, by good questioning and setting group-work tasks at an appropriate level and these pupils are supported well by the classroom assistants. A new arrangement is being tested at present, where teachers separate lesson plans for classroom assistants, that include the aims of activities and work to be completed, and the assistants make a note of any problems or good learning, during group-work sessions. This combination of planning and ongoing assessment is proving to be a

success and is having a positive impact both on pupils' learning, and in addressing pupils' individual needs, through, for example, modification of materials, and flexibility of support.

19. The system of provision for pupils with special educational needs allows for withdrawal sessions, usually once a week, in appropriately small groups or individually. No sessions were observed during the inspection, due to the absence of the special needs co-ordinator and the support assistant who works with the withdrawal groups. Planning, individual education plans, and paperwork, show that there is no support for pupils with problems in mathematics and other work is insufficiently focused, lacking detail of the clear manageable steps that pupils need. Recent training has enabled teachers and classroom support assistants to start identification of pupils' learning difficulties in mathematics. Support for pupils with special educational needs is now much more available and successful than at the time of the last inspection, when such pupils were rarely mentioned and the school was not supporting them well. This is a significant improvement.
20. The comparatively recent adoption of a whole-school approach to behaviour management known as 'assertive discipline' is very quickly having a significant impact. All teachers manage their classes very well and pupils are not only absolutely clear about the expectations, but strive successfully to achieve these expectations. There is, consequently, a very purposeful atmosphere for learning in all classrooms that is evident at all ages in pupils' good levels of interest and concentration, a good pace of working and, when required, a conscientious attitude to independent work. These qualities are shown by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, the more able, and those with English as an additional language, resulting in good progress made by pupils in their learning during lessons. With teaching staff, as a whole, now maintaining this consistency in their methods, a stronger foundation for good progress by pupils over time is now in place.
21. Throughout the school, the relationships between pupils and adults in the classroom are very good. Teachers make good use of support staff to provide additional instruction and guidance for pupils. The classroom assistants and the many parent volunteers are briefed thoroughly, and the quality of their guidance to pupils is good. These staff and volunteers have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and to the progress that they make in lessons.
22. Throughout the school the teaching of basic literacy skills is good. Teachers are implementing the National Literacy Strategy very effectively by generally providing a good range of activities that are generally matched well to the needs of groups of pupils of different abilities. Teachers are successful at using lessons in subjects other than English to develop pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills. The National Numeracy Strategy is also implemented well. Teachers are confident and promote number work strongly. Teachers have a good overall knowledge of information and communication technology, but they are not yet using this sufficiently to plan appropriate learning opportunities to support pupils' learning in other subjects.
23. Some parents have expressed concern about homework provision but inspectors do not share this concern. Provision is in line with the expectations set out in the homework policy. It is regular and relates well to what is being taught and learned in class lessons. In addition to literacy and numeracy tasks, pupils in Key Stage 2 are given occasional work in most other subjects that ensures a good variety in what is being done at home.

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

Learning opportunities

24. The school provides a broad, balanced programme, which meets well the needs of the National Curriculum and the Early Learning Goals for children in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is enriched by the good quality of learning opportunities that are provided. Educational visits and visitors with specialist expertise are used to good effect in all subjects. However, learning in geography, at both key stages, is not a consistently continuous process, as the gaps in time between the teaching of units of work can be up to two terms apart. This has a negative effect on progress in pupils' learning and the standards that they are able to achieve.

25. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the curriculum and other opportunities, and arrangements for them comply with the Code of Practice. The needs of these pupils are now recognised at an early stage, but their individual education plans are not yet focused sufficiently well. Academic or behavioural targets are set, but no targets are made for their learning in mathematics. Plans are now drawn up termly, instead of only twice a year. They are reviewed, updated and revised regularly, and agreed with parents. The quality of provision is satisfactory and improving. The curriculum is, similarly, fully accessible to all pupils with English as an additional language. No particular considerations are necessary for these pupils, as there are good, informal support systems, within classes, that overcome any rare uncertainty or misunderstanding by pupils.
26. Curricular provision for children in the reception class is good. It is well matched to the six areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage and learning is fun. There is a good balance between free choice activities to develop children's independence and the tasks that need adult support to develop children's specific skills.
27. The school has successfully introduced the literacy and numeracy strategies and there has been a useful review of the literacy strategy that has modified the overall provision for English to accommodate the needs of different age groups. This means that the weekly programme for English is a combination of literacy hours, based on the strategy, combined with specific lessons on comprehension or creative writing. Although pupils' basic numeracy skills are developed well, some other aspects of mathematics, such as data handling, and an understanding of shape and space, are not given sufficient attention and this has a direct, negative impact on standards. In other subjects, the school has given careful consideration to the planning and schemes of work, and has adopted national guidance where it is appropriate. There has, thus, been significant improvement in the medium- and long-term planning of the curriculum, since the last inspection, establishing a consistency that was previously missing. The result is an enhanced curriculum, which has improved standards and expectations in art and design, design and technology, and information and communication technology. Music and art and design are particular strengths, and add greatly to the social, spiritual and cultural education of the pupils. The present status of information and communication technology is much improved since the time of the previous inspection, when skills were not well taught and the equipment was of poor quality. The curriculum for design and technology has been improved well, with the inclusion of a planned programme of focused, practical tasks, which build up pupils' skills and techniques. The design process itself has also been upgraded and pupils achieve more than before. Generally, there has been a keen awareness, recently, of the need to review, refine, and evaluate the curriculum and the new staff is committed to the task of raising standards. They achieve this by working well as a team, and through a growing understanding of what impact their actions have on the learning of the pupils.

Pupils' personal development

28. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is similar to the judgement at the time of the last inspection.
29. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good with some very good features. The governors have reflected on the school's mission statement and short, key phrases from this statement are displayed prominently around the school. This provides constant reinforcement of spiritual and other values as a part of everyday life in the school. Acts of worship are planned and led well. They are rooted in the Christian ethos of the school and make important contributions to pupils' spiritual development. Visiting speakers, such as the curate, and a Christian youth worker, are able to build on the pupils' considerable knowledge of Christianity, and encourage pupils to reflect on themes, such as Advent, and 'Looking after God's World'. The music, especially that played by the pupils, and singing, helps to create a good atmosphere for worship. During World Prayer Day, the pupils were invited to join the local prayer group for a time of reflection.
30. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. The school has a clear commitment to its values, which pervade all aspects of school life. The school places strong emphasis on the pupils treating each other with care and respect and on helping them to develop their moral understanding. The ethos

of good behaviour is promoted consistently throughout the school. Pupils and adults working in the school provide good role models.

31. The provision for pupils' social development is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was good. It has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. The teachers use Circle Time⁶ successfully for developing whole-class discussions. In a session seen in Year 3, for example, the teacher encouraged pupils to talk about what they were good at, and then asked the pupils to pick out the special qualities of two of their classmates. This raised the self-esteem of the pupils, particularly the two who were given a written list of their qualities. Issues such as bullying are also explored through Circle Time. There are very good opportunities for pupils to perform in assemblies and school productions, which enable the pupils to gain in confidence and independence. The school offers older pupils an appropriate range of opportunities to take responsibility, through becoming librarians, monitors, team captains or members of the school council. The school encourages pupils to think of others through donating gifts and raising money for various charities.
32. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils' knowledge of their own culture is developed appropriately throughout the curriculum, for example, in art, history and music. The school provides few opportunities for pupils to learn about Britain as a multi-cultural society, but there are some beneficial insights into other cultures. When pupils who come from other countries join the school, the families are encouraged to talk to their classmates about their different experiences. The pupils have explored aboriginal art and have connections with a school in Uganda. A display of Diwali supported the teaching on Hinduism.
33. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. There is a sound policy in place and an appropriate programme for all year groups, which covers a range of personal and social issues such as relationships and safety. Circle Time has been established successfully throughout the school and issues such as 'showing your feelings' are discussed by pupils, with sensitivity. The newly appointed co-ordinator has yet to establish assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

Extra-curricular activities

34. The school provides good opportunities for extra curricular activities. Pupils with a love of music are able to join an impressive number of groups, including the orchestra, wind band, and 'stringies'. The choir invites all members of the school community, including parents, to sing for enjoyment. There is appropriate after-school provision for sporting activities, such as football, cricket and rounders. Parents run clubs for netball and dance. However, the range of extra-curricular activities is limited to music and sport, and some pupils said they would appreciate other clubs to support their interests in science, art, and computers.

The school's links with the community

35. The school's partnership with the community is very good and these links have a positive impact on the pupils' academic and personal development. The partnership with the local church is particularly strong. The curate is a regular visitor in school and leads some acts of worship. The Church is used for services and the parents' prayer group offered pupils good opportunities for prayer and reflection during World Prayer Day at the school. There are good links with local and national businesses, which enrich the curriculum, for example in science and physical education. Visitors to school, such as theatre groups, and a history workshop, deepen pupils' knowledge. The school arranges a good range of visits out of school, for example, to the fire station and a sculpture trail.
36. The school has developed good links with its partner institutions. The school works very closely with the adjacent nursery school to share good practice and encourage a seamless transition into the reception class. The nursery pupils regularly attend assembly and understand the standards of

⁶ Circle Time is an activity where pupils are able to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

behaviour that the school expects. The school has developed beneficial links with the local secondary school and pupils in Year 6 are invited to a science morning, which aids their transition.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school provides good educational and personal support for its pupils. The school fulfils its mission *'to provide a happy and caring community'*. There is a high level of care and concern amongst the staff, who know the pupils well and value them. A pupil in Year 2 said that the best thing about school was the teachers *'because they are very, very kind'*. Classroom assistants and lunchtime supervisors also make valuable contributions in caring for the pupils. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. The teachers encourage the pupils to share their experiences and feelings, for example, during Circle Time. The pupils respond well to these opportunities, and there is a sense of trust and openness between staff and pupils. The class teachers make valuable comments on the pupils' personal development in pupils' annual reports.
38. The school has good procedures to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school has appropriate procedures for child protection. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and carries out her duties effectively. She has received relevant training and staff are aware of basic procedures.
39. Overall, the school pays good attention to health and safety. The deputy headteacher and a governor make termly checks of the premises but do not have formalised procedures for carrying out risk assessments. The school has appropriate systems in place for reporting hazards and testing electrical equipment. Road safety is a high priority amongst staff and parents. The pupils are taught basic skills through the *'Footsteps'* programme and are encouraged to walk to school using the *'Crocodile Trail'* or the *'Park and Walk'* scheme, both of which promote pupils' health and safety.
40. The school's provision for first aid is good. Three members of staff are qualified in first aid and others have received basic training. Pupils who are ill or injured received good care and attention, and the school keeps parents well informed. The pupils are treated in a well-equipped medical room and good records are kept of accidents.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers are marked correctly and attendance data is analysed. The office staff make early contact with home if they do not know why a pupil is absent. There are good links with the educational welfare officer when pupils' attendance is a cause for concern.
42. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. This is not a highly regimented community, but one where there is an ethos of mutual respect and high expectations of good behaviour. Nearly all pupils and staff are very good role models. There is a clear assertive discipline policy, which emphasises rewarding good behaviour. Rewards are very effective and pupils enjoy receiving team points and certificates. Individual educational plans are used well to target the behavioural problems some pupils are experiencing. Teachers remind pupils frequently of what the target is and of how they should work towards it. Support staff are very good at helping with this process. Details of incidents are noted and parents are informed at an early stage. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Midday supervisors are vigilant in their monitoring of any anti-social behaviour and class teachers discuss bullying during Circle Time. A small number of parents, whose children have been bullied at other schools, are pleased that they feel safe and secure at Seer Green.

Assessment procedures

43. At the time of the previous inspection many assessment procedures were in place and pupils' progress was carefully monitored. However, work did not always match pupils' ability because teachers did not use day-to day assessment sufficiently well to plan future work. The quality of marking was inconsistent and did not always guide pupils to improve their work. The current provision presents a similar picture of strengths and weaknesses. High staff turnover has taken its toll on assessment and, for some time, little progress was made. In very recent times, however, since the appointment of the new headteacher, the school has made impressive progress and tight procedures for monitoring standards and progress have been reintroduced.

44. The school is, currently, much better placed to identify the needs of individual pupils from its analysis of assessment. Procedures for establishing children's stage of development on entry to the school are used effectively to plan work that matches their needs. Numerous initiatives to measure progress, including assessment in some subjects other than English, mathematics and science are in place. Results of National Curriculum tests are analysed effectively and information is starting to be used to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement with greater accuracy. Current procedures focus totally on the school's commitment to raising standards, but have not been in place long enough for their effectiveness to be judged.
45. The structure for assessment is by no means consistent or cohesive and much work remains to be done, particularly when pupils in some classes have had their progress adversely affected by a period of considerable instability.
46. The headteacher is very aware that teachers' day-to-day assessments are still an area for further development. Although teachers evaluate their daily lessons, some comments are too vague. They do not always relate sufficiently to the progress made by individual pupils or groups of different abilities. Daily planning includes opportunities for assessment but, once again, these activities often lack precision. As a result, more able pupils do not always receive work that matches their ability. Teachers have not yet developed a clear enough understanding of the purpose or importance of day-to-day assessment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The parents' views of the school are very positive. After a period of staff changes, parents now have renewed confidence in the school and particularly in the headteacher. They feel that teaching is good and that they are kept well informed of how their children are getting on. Parents say that their children like school, they are expected to work hard, and they are making good progress. They feel that the school works closely with them and they value the way in which staff are willing to discuss parents' concerns. They are pleased with the standards of behaviour and that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
48. The school's links with parents and carers are very good and the staff and governors have worked hard to restore parents' faith in school. Parents value the school's 'open door' policy and feel welcome in school. The school regularly seeks parents' views, through questionnaires, and responds to their suggestions and concerns. The home-school reading records are an effective means of communication between parents and staff. Partnership with parents in the reception class is very good. The school builds very effectively on its strong links with Seer Green Nursery to ensure children have a smooth transition into school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed and are aware of their children's inclusion on the register. They are included in the review process and the school works closely with them.
49. The quality of information, which the school provides for parents, is very good. New parents receive good information through visits and meetings. The governors' annual report and prospectus are informative but do not contain all the information they should. Regular newsletters give details of future events and celebrate the schools successes. Parents appreciate the helpful information sessions on the numeracy strategy and secondary school selection procedures. The school also invites parents to a beneficial meeting at the beginning of the year where staff give helpful information about routines and topics. Throughout the year, the school gives parents, including those who live away from their children, very good information about how their children are getting on. The pupils' annual reports give parents very good information about their children's progress. They also provide parents with useful details about the level at which their children are working and how they can improve their work. Parents are invited to meet with staff each term, and these consultations give parents good opportunities to discuss their children's progress.
50. The impact of the parents' involvement in the work of the school is very good. Parent-governors are very supportive and help to shape the school's future. The Parent-Teacher Association raises considerable funds to enhance educational provision as well as organising social events. There is strong concern that a significant proportion of the funds has to be spent on very basic educational materials and equipment. All parents have signed the home-school agreement and there is a high level of attendance at parents' evenings. Parents are very involved in road safety initiatives, such

as cycling awareness and the 'Crocodile Trail'. The parents support special events well, such as school productions, and are willing to lend a hand, for example, by giving the school a spring clean.

51. The parents' contribution to their children's learning at school and at home is very good. The school values the help offered by a considerable number of parents who assist in the classroom and on school visits. The vast majority of parents are interested in their children's education and many parents support their children with homework which has a beneficial impact on the pupils' progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff

52. The school's recent history has been dominated by disruption at senior management level that has included a succession of four different headteachers since the last inspection. Since her appointment in May 2000, the headteacher's drive and determination have been instrumental in securing improvement in many aspects of the school's work. The limited attention paid by her predecessors to the weaknesses highlighted by the last inspection determined the priorities for action. However, her initial evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses prompted additional action to rectify issues such as low staff morale and high staff turnover as well as parental dissatisfaction. Her very good leadership has transformed the school and, with the strong support of the governing body, she has re-established the good effect of the school on pupils' achievements.
53. Viewed collectively, the headteacher, governing body, and key staff, provide good overall leadership and management of the school. The effectiveness of the senior management team and of subject co-ordination has, until now, been limited by the many changes in personnel. Recent staffing appointments have established a good foundation for effective middle management. It is, however, essential that each member of the new senior management team demonstrates a shared commitment to school improvement and an ability to work as an efficient decision-making body.
54. The clarity of the headteacher's priorities for school improvement is the driving force behind the very good, purposeful leadership that has moulded teaching and non-teaching staff into a well-integrated, very effective team with a strong sense of purpose and very good working relationships. This enables the school's relevant aims and values to be integrated very well in all its work. All staff show high levels of concern for pupils' welfare. There is, thus, a very positive ethos that reflects the school's commitment to creating a caring environment for all pupils in which they are helped to achieve improving standards in their academic and personal development.
55. Many staff, including part-time teachers, have very recently taken on responsibilities as subject co-ordinators. Many already fulfil their responsibilities very successfully, for example, in music, art and design, and design and technology. The school improvement plan identifies priorities for three-year periods, with clear action plans for each priority area. The current plan began before many of the co-ordinators were in post, and it is now appropriate to review the action planning, in the light of the constructive reviews that several co-ordinators have carried out of the present provision for their subjects. There is, currently, no formal review of a single year's achievements in either the school improvement plan, as a whole, or in individual areas. With such reviews already being initiated in some subjects, it is appropriate to establish a requirement for detailed planning and review for single years while still maintaining the longer-term three-year plan. Co-ordinators are not generally yet sufficiently involved in monitoring standards or teaching in their subjects, but the current school improvement plan identifies this as a priority. Co-ordinators now need guidance on methods of monitoring and evaluating in order that standardised procedures and clear expectations are established.
56. The special needs co-ordinator was absent at the time of the inspection. The paperwork is well organised, efficient and detailed, and the action plan includes the need to review in light of the proposed new Code of Practice. The co-ordinator has undergone training in dyslexia, because of the high frequency of this problem in the school. She has recently reorganised the writing of the individual educational plans and the frequency with which they are updated, and pupils are now identified earlier. This is having a positive effect on pupils with special educational needs, however,

the plans are not yet specific enough in relation to how pupils will improve, and there are no targets for those having difficulties with mathematics, even though the school, in recent years, has had lower results in that subject than in English or science.

57. Leadership and management show good improvement since the time of the last inspection and a marked contrast to the well-documented weaknesses that developed prior to the present headteacher's appointment. The school has been led very successfully and very quickly to its present position where staff work conscientiously towards shared goals, pupils have pride in their school and work hard to maintain a good sense of order, and standards in both academic and personal development are rising.

The Governing Body

58. At the time of the previous inspection, the governing body was judged to be fulfilling all its statutory responsibilities, but improvement was needed in its monitoring of the curriculum. Present personnel constitute a very good governing body that plays a major role in shaping the direction of the school. It has, thus, achieved very good improvement since the last inspection.
59. The school's overall management is strengthened by the very good working relationships that the headteacher has quickly developed with the chairperson and with the governing body as a whole. The dedication and commitment of both the chair and vice-chair of the governing body are exemplary and have been an invaluable source of support for the headteacher during her time at the school. The governing body provides very good support for the work of the school and individual members visit the school to assist in a variety of ways. Through their visits and liaison with co-ordinators, governors are very familiar with the school's working methods. There is very thorough monitoring of the school's developments by the governing body, through visits and the reports received from teaching staff. The headteacher consults widely about proposed improvements, seeking the contributions of all staff and governors, and developments proceed with the commitment of all concerned. The governing body, through its own consultation processes, such as an annual survey of parental opinion, and through its own very detailed strategic plan, is having a strong influence on school improvement. The governing body has carefully monitored the action plan that followed the last inspection and parents have been regularly informed of progress with that action plan. Governors compare the school's results with national averages and with those for similar schools. A desire for high standards and improvement is central. These instruments enable the governing body to have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

The school's monitoring and evaluation of its performance

60. The school has satisfactory systems for monitoring and evaluating its own performance. This is as a result of the headteacher's successful introduction of a range of procedures for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum, the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is monitored effectively, resulting in refinements of teachers' skills that, in turn, have had a good impact on standards of pupils' work. Much progress has been made in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and this work, although needing further emphasis in relation to the achievements of more able pupils across the whole curriculum, is contributing to rising standards. Standards of pupils' work are also monitored effectively, through thorough analyses of National Curriculum assessment test papers each year. These highlight strengths, weaknesses, and trends, and, when the data indicates areas for concern, such as the fall in writing standards, the school is quick to act. More staff now need to be involved in this process. The monitoring of pupils' work is also a regular feature of the work of the senior management team. There are clear plans to extend the responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation to subject co-ordinators, with time set aside for them to be released periodically from classroom duties in order to observe in other classrooms or scrutinise samples of pupils' work. The arrangements for performance management that have recently been adopted are setting clear targets for teachers to work towards within their own professional development. Overall, the monitoring of teaching and learning have improved significantly since the last inspection, and the systems for the involvement of all staff, which are now in place, are a very good foundation for further improvement.

The strategic use of resources, including finance, staffing, accommodation and learning resources

61. Governors are meeting their responsibilities in relation to budget setting, but are in a situation where it is only possible to balance the current budget by using money from the School Fund. The newly appointed finance committee currently evaluates the cost-effectiveness of major spending decisions satisfactorily through the reports of the headteacher. It is not, however, carrying out such evaluations with sufficient independence, since the departure of governors with specialist expertise in financial management. The school makes appropriate use of its financial resources. Effective budgeting and management of resources have enabled the school to make considerable improvements to the accommodation and the learning environment, for example, by supplementing finance from the National Grid for Learning in order to create an information and communication technology suite. Special grants are used appropriately, for example to support pupils with special educational needs. The local education authority finance office provides the school with appropriate information to enable the budget to be monitored and the school's administrative officer carries this out very efficiently. The school successfully applies best value procedures to all its financial transactions. Procedures for the day-to-day financial control and management of the school budget, including spending on individual subjects, and other monies, such as petty cash and school dinner money, are satisfactory. Recommendations from a recent auditor's report have been implemented fully.
62. Overall, the staff have a satisfactory range of qualifications and experience to teach the curriculum. Posts involving job-sharing work well, as the teachers share their expertise and each teaches in their specialist areas, for instance in music and design technology. The school has managed to find high-quality supply teachers to cover for a teacher on maternity leave. Experienced support staff work effectively alongside teachers. The lunchtime assistants maintain a happy and orderly atmosphere at lunchtime. The office staff are welcoming and efficient.
63. The accommodation is satisfactory, is used efficiently, and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The building is welcoming and enhanced by colourful displays. It is in good decorative order and is well maintained. The caretaker and cleaners work hard to achieve good standards of cleanliness. Some of the classrooms are cramped, especially for practical work. The school makes good use of specialist accommodation for music and information and communication technology. The school does not have its own hall, but uses the adjacent Jubilee Hall, which is shared with various community groups. The lack of storage space in the hall results in the school having insufficient apparatus for gymnastics. The playground, attractive grounds, and environmental area, provide good opportunities for physical education and science activities. Outdoor play provision for the children in the reception class is inadequate. The separate play area is too small to allow children enough opportunity to use large apparatus or to develop their physical skills.
64. The range and quality of equipment and materials to support teaching are generally good and are used well to stimulate pupils' learning. At the time of the last inspection, these aspects were satisfactory. The provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly with the well-equipped new computer suite. Resources are also good for English, science, music, design and technology, and art and design. The lack of large play equipment for the children in the Foundation Stage limits the opportunities for them to develop their physical skills. The library is well stocked and spacious, but is tucked away at the end of the building. It is used during lesson time, but is not open during lunchtimes.

The principles of best value

65. The school applies the principles of comparison, challenge, consultation and competition well. Standards are now regularly compared with previous results, and with those of similar schools, through thorough monitoring of pupils' performance. The drive for improving standards creates a culture of challenge that is seen at all levels. Individual pupils work towards clear targets in their learning, and both realistic and challenging targets are set for pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Additionally, through school improvement planning, and the governors' strategic plan, the school encompasses short-term priorities within a wider, challenging vision. Parents and the local community are consulted widely and kept fully involved in school development. Being in an area with a falling school-age population, the school is very aware

of the inevitable competition between schools. It responds by remaining true to its mission statement, and strong in its belief that it is now well equipped to secure the improved standards and all-round development of its pupils that are the determinants of successful competition.

66. The funding allocated to the school is similar to that given to many other primary schools. Standards are above average and improving. In relation to their past attainment, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. At present, the school provides satisfactory value for money, however, there is good evidence to show that it has the capacity to rapidly improve on this.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to improve the standards of work and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher, and staff should:

- Raise standards further by:
 - making more frequent use of day-to-day assessment of pupils' learning in planning the next stage in their learning, (*paragraphs 17, 100 and 111*);
 - ensuring whole-school consistency in provision for more able pupils, (*paragraphs 6, 16, 17, 94, 104, 115 and 133*);
 - making more widespread use of data analysis and teachers' assessments to ensure that any weaknesses, or variations in standards, are addressed, (*paragraph 58*).

- Develop the role of subject co-ordinators by:
 - clarifying their responsibilities;
 - providing appropriate guidance to standardise procedures for sampling pupils' work and observing teaching, (*paragraphs 33, 46, 55, 101, 103, 110, 118, 139 and 156*).

Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- develop provision for multi-cultural education, by addressing weaknesses in pupils' understanding of cultural life in Britain, (*paragraph 32*);
- formalise arrangements for risk assessment, (*paragraph 39*);
- when finance permits, develop facilities for outdoor play for children in the Foundation Stage, (*paragraphs 64, 69 and 89*);
- review the long-term planning of geography in order to reduce the time interval between topics, (*paragraphs 24 and 130*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

47

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

34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	20	12	0	0	0
Percentage	2	30	42	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		179
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		33

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.4

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	17	10	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*	-	-	-
	Girls*	-	-	-
	Total	22	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (100)	89 (97)	93 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*	-	-	-
	Girls*	-	-	-
	Total	24	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	93 (100)	93 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

*The number of boys and girls taking the tests has been omitted from the table, as there were ten or fewer girls in the year group.

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	12	19	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	18	16	18
	Total	26	24	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84(83)	77(87)	90(96)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	10
	Girls	18	16	18
	Total	28	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93(77)	87(86)	90(86)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	168
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	25.5

Education support staff: YR –Y6

Total number of education support staff	2.6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	80

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	343,383
Total expenditure	349,052
Expenditure per pupil	1,754
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5,669
Balance carried forward to next year	5,303

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	179
Number of questionnaires returned	67
Percentage of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	37	3	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	42	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	60	3	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	39	10	1	0
The teaching is good.	58	40	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	48	6	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	49	4	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	42	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	48	13	0	6

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

68. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The school has maintained the good standards found at the time the school was last inspected. Much work has been done to ensure the successful implementation of the new curriculum for children of this age. Strong links with Seer Green Nursery, praised in the previous inspection, have been maintained and continue to provide children with a good start. Both teaching and support staff, have high expectations of work and behaviour. They are well informed, and clear about what needs to be improved.
69. Only one area of provision has not shown enough improvement. Outdoor play facilities for the reception class are inadequate. Although there is a separate play area, it is too small and children do not have enough opportunity to use large apparatus in order to develop physical skills further.
70. The commitment of high quality staff, and the good standards of teaching, make a strong contribution towards ensuring all reception age children achieve well.

Personal, social and emotional development

71. The teaching of personal development is good. Staff build, very effectively, on the secure foundations of the nursery class. All of the current reception class are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals before they move into Year 1.
72. Children enter the school at various stages of development. Some are confident in class discussions, others need reassurance, and a few still prefer to work alone. All children quickly become aware that they are part of a caring community. They know their ideas are valued, they get on well together, and show genuine care and consideration for each other. There is a feeling of mutual respect. Routines are well established, and independence is developed very effectively at every opportunity. During the inspection, one child confidently reminded the teacher that she had forgotten to go through the day's list of activities, written on the board. Children behave very well and are often seen to be totally absorbed in their activities. As a result, boys and girls, of all abilities, make good progress.
73. In a good activity, related to developing listening skills on a journey around school, children demonstrated a high level of independence as they put on their coats. They chatted excitedly with each other, listened very well, and were fully at ease with adult visitors. Their discussions were full of humour and anticipation, as children guessed the sounds coming from places, such as the school office and the Jubilee Hall. One child stated, with great confidence, that she had definitely heard nothing. Another flung his arms in the air and cheered enthusiastically when he guessed correctly. Assemblies promote children's positive attitudes towards each other very effectively, and establish a sense of community.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Children enter the reception class with good speaking and listening skills, and well-developed early reading skills. However, although adequate, their writing skills are not as well developed. Very high quality teaching and support enables children, of all abilities, to achieve equally well and make swift progress. Activities are challenging and interesting. There is much humour, excitement and enthusiasm. More than half of the current class is on track to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1.
75. Children's speaking and listening skills develop well. Teaching and support staff, target questions at individual children very effectively. They encourage children to answer in as much detail as possible, and children respond by using vocabulary well. In a very good literacy lesson, for example, children with special educational needs talked through their answers beforehand, with support staff, as they tried to guess the writing on the baked bean tin label. They then had enough

confidence to put up their hands, talk in front of the whole class and participate fully in the oral part of the lesson.

76. Most of the children love books. In discussion, one very able child displayed considerable knowledge as he talked about the purpose of the contents page and index, before reading his information book about cats. He worked out unfamiliar words, using a range of strategies, and was already a very competent early reader. Children, of all abilities, are convinced that they can read, on a very simple level. One child, for example, pretended to read the story of 'The Red Pig'. She substituted her own version of events and provided an entertaining, convincing and accurate account of the story. Another commented that she knew how to read the word 'chocolate', because it was stored in her head.
77. Children are at various stages of development with their writing skills. A few write short sentences unaided, whilst most copy the teacher's writing. One more able child wrote a simple story with full stops and capital letters. All have good opportunities to experiment with their writing in the 'Office' or when writing letters to Santa, before they visit his classroom grotto. Evidence taken from children's previous work, reveals that the teacher develops their writing skills effectively through topics, such as the recent science work on tasting. Children used adjectives, such as juicy and sour. Work is carefully marked and shows that the teacher talks with children about ways it might be improved.

Mathematical development

78. Most children enter the reception class with a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary. They are familiar with shapes, such as circles and squares. Most are confident with numbers and count to ten, and often far beyond. The quality of teaching is good, resulting in children's good progress. Children with special educational needs receive well-targeted support, particularly in group activities, and succeed well. Staff take every opportunity to promote the use of mathematical vocabulary effectively. Children receive a rich variety of interesting activities, which are very appropriate to their needs.
79. In a good lesson on sorting objects, the key words of short, taller and tallest, were introduced in a way that aided children's understanding very successfully. Children, of all abilities, showed surprisingly few signs of confusion. More able children were very clear about short and shorter, whilst other children sorted their teddies into height order with confidence. However, evidence taken from examples of children's previous work highlights an occasional weakness in provision for more able children. Workbook-based activities do not always provide enough challenge for mathematically talented children.
80. Most of the children current in reception, are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals before they reach Year 1, and about a half are capable of exceeding them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81. Through good teaching, children make good progress and develop a clear understanding of the world around them. Lessons include periods of time for children to use an adequate range of equipment, tools and materials, including construction toys. One boy, for example, completed a challenging 'Thomas the Tank Engine' jigsaw puzzle, unaided. His delight was clear for all to see.
82. Activities are purposeful, and are frequently linked to topic themes effectively. Recent work about Bonfire Night was linked well to issues about pet safety. Children develop an increasing understanding of the similarities and differences between babies and children, in their topic about people.
83. In a lesson linked to the topic on the sense of sound, children displayed a good breadth of knowledge. Many knew the five senses, and one child informed the class that the tape-recorded sound was a rooster crowing. In a discussion about reading books, children, of all abilities, knew the names of the animals in their stories. One mistook a lion for a tiger, but then promptly stated that the next picture was of a panther, followed by a cheetah.

84. Children develop secure independent computer skills. They click on the mouse with increasing skill, and great excitement. They create portraits on the computer when comparing differences between faces. They generate house designs, and display a good knowledge of pattern, in the work on where they live.
85. The vast majority of children are on course to reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1. They have a good knowledge of the world in which they live. A significant proportion are in line to exceed the Early Learning Goals.

Physical development

86. The children's physical development is similar to that of others, of this age, on entry to school. The quality of teaching is good, and children, of all abilities, make good progress. Most exceed the Early Learning Goals. Their understanding of healthy lifestyles is secure, for example, many bring fruit, rather than crisps, for their playtime snack, and drink fruit juice or milk.
87. In a physical education lesson, children changed, independently, at the start and end of the lesson. They understood how space should be used. The teacher had high expectations. She provided an interesting variety of activities to develop their ball skills, and children responded by demonstrating good levels of control and agility, when moving in a confined space. The concluding games were fun and they brought a very effective lesson to a positive, successful end.
88. Children handle pencils competently, and use scissors with a good degree of skill. They measure accurately, and cut paper for wrapping their Christmas presents with reasonable precision. They use glue spreaders with care and control.
89. Although children have access to a separate outdoor play area, with some equipment, they are unable to develop skills through structured play because the space is too small to permit the use of any large apparatus and there is no soft landing area. To compensate, children have supervised opportunities to use climbing equipment provided for older pupils.

Creative development

90. Children enter the school with adequately developed creative skills. In the reception class, they quickly improve their creative development because the teaching is good.
91. Children know a good range of songs and rhymes. In addition to their classroom singing activities, children are immediately involved in whole-school music assemblies and high quality productions, such as 'The Whoops—a—Daisy Angel'. They learn how to appreciate a wide range of music, from an early age, and, during the inspection, many could be seen expressing enjoyment of the jazz music as they entered the hall for assembly. The school's commitment towards high quality music is totally inclusive, and its youngest children have already developed a love of music. The children's singing is tuneful and full of life. Attractive displays celebrate children's other creative talents. Good quality autumn leaf prints, advent calendars, and birthday graphs, demonstrate good development of the children's creative skills. The careful balance of free choice, and more formal tasks, ensures children make good progress. By the time the children reach Year 1, most achieve, and many exceed, the Early Learning Goals.

ENGLISH

92. In the National Curriculum tests, in 2001, pupils' results, at the end of Key Stage 1, were well above the national average in reading, and in line with the national average in writing. A greater than usual proportion reached the higher Level 3 in reading, but no pupil achieved this level in writing. The school has analysed the reasons for this comparatively poor performance in writing and has identified aspects of teaching that need improving. Inspection findings show that pupils' overall attainment in English, at the end of this key stage, is above average, but writing is still no better than average, because the range of work is generally still too narrow.
93. Results in the National Curriculum tests, in 2001, at the end of Key Stage 2, were well above the national average, and a much larger proportion of pupils than usual reached the higher Level 5. In

comparison with similar schools, pupils' results were above average. The pupils currently in Year 6, are continuing to maintain the school's good standards, and their work is above average overall.

94. There are some differences between different groups of pupils, in terms of how well they are achieving in relation to their past attainment. Pupils with English as an additional language, for example, are making satisfactory progress, and pupils with special educational needs are now supported more systematically, than at the time of the last inspection. These pupils make good progress throughout the school, when compared with their prior attainment, because the work set for them is generally appropriate. They receive good support from the classroom assistants, and particularly effective specialist literacy support, which focuses on small groups and individuals. This enhances their learning and raises standards. The school's clear analysis of results indicated that this was an area upon which to concentrate efforts, and the inspection findings confirm that the school's efforts have had a positive impact. More able pupils make reasonable progress, but the range of work set is too narrow and they have insufficient opportunities to evaluate their own, and others' work, critically, for improvement. The work for these pupils is often planned from too low a level, and not refined sufficiently to extend their thinking, to the extent of which they are capable.
95. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are well above those expected for their age. Pupils' confidence in speaking and expressing their ideas develops well as they move through the school, and many good opportunities are planned to ensure the use of speaking and listening skills across the curriculum, for example, in art, music and history. During the inspection, a very good example of this was noted, as pupils in Key Stage 1 performed in their nativity play. They spoke well, demonstrating a mature understanding, and spoke with confidence. Pupils' opinions are sought and valued, and everyone is expected to listen carefully to teachers, and to each other. They use technical language with increasing accuracy, and gain self-assurance, because the teacher frequently informs them that they will 'get better at it'. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils become very articulate and many express themselves in a very mature way, and use technical language appropriately, because they are exposed to it from their earliest days in school. All pupils have opportunities to speak and listen effectively, because most teachers make sure that all participate. Most teachers do this sensitively and with good humour, but, occasionally, older pupils are put under too much pressure, or their contributions are undervalued.
96. Standards in reading are consistently good. The school places a strong emphasis on this skill, and parents make good contributions to their children's reading, filling in the home-school diary carefully, and fully, in the first few years. On the whole, younger pupils read well, with confidence, and with good expression. They are aware of their mistakes and have a growing set of strategies to cope with the reading, as it becomes more demanding. In a lesson in Year 2, the teacher chose a challenging text and all pupils tackled it well, especially after the teacher reminded them of the need to look carefully and think about the expression needed for meaning. After she had shown them the commas, and taught how this punctuation helps the reader, their expression was much improved and their understanding was enhanced. In Year 6, most pupils are quite independent, discerning readers, and many are able to tackle difficult texts and themes with confidence and understanding. This was demonstrated well in a session reading Dickens', 'Bleak House'. Although few were chosen to read aloud, many were able to give opinions, when asked, about the text and had good strategies for working out the possible meaning of difficult, unknown vocabulary. A very good discussion took place, for instance, about the word 'ait', meaning a small island in a river, because no one knew what it was, but they had very good, well argued, reasons for their choice of meaning.
97. Standards in writing are satisfactory in Key Stage 1, and good in Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, pupils have the ability to write well, but often the range of opportunities provided for them is rather narrow. For instance, in Key Stage 1, pupils write instructions well, but practise this skill for a quite a length of time, and older pupils, in Key Stage 2, have little opportunity to produce persuasive writing, arguments, reports, or opinion. At Key Stage 1, work is reasonably well organised and pupils use imaginative words, for example, about monsters landing in a field. They generally spell known words correctly, but many pupils do not yet use full stops consistently, and few use appropriate conjunctions to form extended sentences. Since the beginning of the year, the quality of pupils' handwriting in Key Stage 1 has improved, and their presentation is generally neat. However, some pupils have unfinished pieces of work and take an insufficient sense of pride in their written work. Appropriate targets are set for individual pupils, and displayed in the front of their

books. However, use of them is not always effective because there is insufficient, systematic checking, by the pupils and the teachers, to make sure that errors are corrected.

98. At Key Stage 2, pupils write well but in a narrow range of forms. The younger pupils in Key Stage 2 have opportunities to write reviews, for example, pupils in Year 3 produced good writing about the Key Stage 1 nativity play. Many pieces were evaluative, and sensitively written. They have also worked on writing detailed descriptions of the life cycle of butterflies. There is good use of pupils' imagination in stories that start from the same beginning, but develop into different endings. Their analysis, of how different writers have tackled the same piece of work, is good. Older pupils have studied story settings, and many wrote thoughtful and perceptive pieces because the teacher inspired them with very good choices of text, and ideas for vocabulary. Pupils achieve good standards because the teacher analyses their work from the previous day, discussing the good points and eliciting ideas from the pupils. Many pupils become obviously engrossed in their work, and enjoy the success brought about by their improved writing.
99. By Year 6, pupils frequently write lively, funny, often lengthy pieces, and make appropriate use of simile, and information-handling skills. They study Shakespeare's language in 'Twelfth Night'. They often plan writing well, but do not have a good grasp of when to start a new paragraph and do not extend their ideas. More able pupils use interesting vocabulary, but sometimes it is over-used and uncontrolled. An example of this was seen in a lesson on the use of powerful language when, whilst one or two pupils had written at length, and used complicated vocabulary in their personification of weather features, such as hail, fog and wind, they did not analyse which would be the most effective words to use. Others wrote excellent alliterative phrases, but were carried away into writing paragraphs, instead of accurate, well-defined sentences, all the more powerful in their precision. Pupils' work is generally neat and well presented, because the teachers have high expectations. Teachers' marking frequently contains comments about how to improve, but there is little evidence that this is followed up by teacher or pupil. For instance, a lengthy, blood-thirsty story is rightly deemed by the teacher to be 'rather silly', mainly because of the choice of vocabulary and crazy goings-on in the narrative, however, similar examples recur later in the book. In this way, pupils are not challenged to be critical enough and standards are not as high as they could be.
100. The quality of teaching is consistently good and is very good in some lessons. Teachers build appropriately on pupils' prior learning, and teach basic skills well. They target questions very well to gather information, support and extend pupils' thinking. Good use is made of technical language from the earliest times in school, and this ensure that pupils develop an appropriate awareness of correct terminology, for example, 'diagrams' rather than 'pictures', in particular contexts. Teachers have good expectations for what the pupils will achieve, but their planning is not always effective enough in setting a clear goal for individual lessons, or establishing how pupils' progress will be assessed. Whilst some teachers are attempting to involve pupils in the process of sharing the lesson's learning intentions, it is used inconsistently, at present, and the finishing sessions of lessons are inadequately planned to establish what pupils have learned. Thus, opportunities are lost for pupils to consider their own learning and how they might improve. Lessons have a good pace, with times to think and times to be active. Teachers manage pupils very well and have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and personal conduct. This is reflected in the good, working atmosphere in all classrooms. Classroom assistants also liaise well with teachers about work and discipline, so that behaviour management is consistent from person to person, within the classroom. In this way, pupils know what is expected of them and behavioural problems are minimised as much as possible. Literacy skills are developed well, across the curriculum, for example, in science, history, art and design, and design and technology. A very good example of this was seen where pupils in Year 2 wrote very full instructions in an English lesson, for the making of a vehicle in design and technology. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily for the development of pupils' literacy skills. Good use is made of the well-stocked school library, and pupils are encouraged to extend their reading to include non-fiction texts. Library sessions are used effectively to develop pupils' study skills and their knowledge of library classification systems.
101. The co-ordinator was absent from school at the time of the inspection. The subject file is efficiently set out and there is an appropriate action plan for development. Analyses of results have taken place and tracking systems have been set in place to monitor improvements. However, this has not yet had a significant impact on standards. The senior management team has monitored the

planning of lessons and pupils' standards but the role of co-ordinator is not developed throughout the school sufficiently well. This means that the co-ordinator often has to be re active, instead of pro active, and does not yet have a grasp of the whole situation as fully as the senior management team. The subject has achieved reasonable improvement throughout the upheavals that have taken place in the school. The undoubted ability of many of the pupils, the capabilities of the strongest teachers, coupled with a good understanding of the subject by new staff, and a shared capacity to succeed, provide a good basis for building further improvements.

MATHEMATICS

102. In the National Curriculum assessment tests, in 2001, the school's results at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above average when compared with other schools, both nationally and in similar contexts. Almost half the pupils attained the higher Level 3, compared with just over one quarter nationally. At Key Stage 2, results were not as high. They were above the national average, but average when compared with similar schools. Approximately 80 per cent of pupils attained the national expectation of Level 4, and 30 per cent attained the higher Level 5.
103. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2, pupils achieve well above average standards and make good progress, particularly in developing secure numeracy skills. Standards in Key Stage 1 have improved since the time the school was last inspected. The picture is not quite as strong in Key Stage 2, although standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Although standards are above average overall, at the end of the key stage, the rate of pupils' progress slows to satisfactory and they do not develop sufficient breadth or depth of knowledge across the whole mathematics curriculum. Standards of teaching are not quite as high in Key Stage 2, where teachers do not always provide more able pupils with work that matches their ability. Consequently, this group sometimes underachieves. In addition, evidence taken from previous work indicates a weakness in pupils' knowledge of shape, space, measures, and data handling. On the positive side, the school's emphasis on developing mental strategies and problem-solving skills has resulted in noticeable improvement by pupils of all abilities. Good quality analysis of pupils' performance has also started to play an important part in tracking progress, identifying underachievement, and setting targets for individual pupils. It is too early to assess its impact on standards, however, there has been slow progress in areas criticised the last time the school was inspected. Information and communication technology still does not play an important enough part in pupils' mathematical development. In addition, although teachers' planning and pupils' work is monitored, no one observes lessons. Consequently, no one has a clear overview of standards, or whether pupils are making progress in line with their ability.
104. At the end of Key Stage 1, the vast majority of pupils have very secure numeracy skills. The more able pupils confidently double and halve three- and sometimes four-digit numbers. Some already understand equivalence in fraction work and are developing an increasing range of strategies to solve problems. Pupils of average ability count forwards and backwards, in twos and tens, with confidence. They understand odd and even; they know how to find halves and quarters practically, and some have a secure enough grasp of the concept to work out answers in their head. Even lower-ability pupils identify patterns as they try to find a quarter of 12, 16 and 20. In a good lesson seen in Year 2, one pupil confidently announced that one hundred was half of two hundred. He then proceeded to find half of 400 and 600. When asked to find half of 500 he struggled, but finally came up with the right answer, and was very keen to explain his thought processes. Evidence taken from previous work however, reveals there is occasional over-reliance on workbook-based activities. The progress of more able pupils suffers most, particularly when they complete the same work as everyone else before moving on to more challenging activities.
105. By the end of Key Stage 2, the more able pupils have developed secure basic numeracy skills further, and apply their knowledge to problem solving in a variety of ways. They organise their work well and, in discussion, display maturity and mathematical precision in their reasoning. Several boys in the current Year 6 class demonstrated very logical thinking in their work on triangular numbers. Just under half of the pupils in Year 6 are capable of achieving higher than average standards. However, the level of work set does not always match the ability of these pupils. All too often, more able pupils at the end of the key stage find work easy, whilst less able pupils struggle and only succeed because they receive high quality support. Pupils of all abilities work out mental calculations, with reasonable speed and accuracy, and are not frightened by large numbers.

Although pupils have some opportunities to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum, this aspect of mathematics is not emphasised strongly enough and is not developed nearly as effectively as literacy skills.

106. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers in Key Stage 1 provide activities that match pupils' individual needs more accurately and use group work more effectively to promote pupils' learning. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils' rate of learning is closely linked to the quality of teaching and the disruption to pupils' progress, during the years of staffing instability, is reflected, most noticeably, in the fluctuating results at the end of Key Stage 2. In Years 1 and 3, where each class is taught by two teachers, good liaison ensures teaching approaches are consistent, and all the pupils make equal progress.
107. In a good lesson seen in Key Stage 1, on fractions, the teacher explained the work very clearly and minimised confusion. Her control was calm but firm. She targeted her questioning very accurately at all abilities and provided challenge for the more able. In response, pupils were excited by the prospect of hard work and persevered until they got their work right. Pupils with special educational needs succeeded, because the work was pitched at exactly the right level, and they had good quality support. Even in this good lesson, however, there was a missed opportunity to extend mathematically talented pupils further. In a good lesson seen in Year 3, on subtraction, the delivery was crisp and pupils responded well to the lively presentation. The classroom assistant offered high quality support and the room was a hive of activity. Pupils were proud of their achievements and presented their answers very effectively as a team, during the valuable part at the end of the lesson, when the teacher assessed their level of understanding. One pupil cheered when he got his work right. Once again, even in a lesson of this quality, there was a missed opportunity to challenge the most able further.
108. Teachers are very confident in delivering the National Numeracy Strategy. Mental calculation work forms a purposeful start to lessons and motivates pupils well. Most pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics and enjoy their work. Occasionally, the pace of introductions is a little too leisurely. By contrast, sessions at the end of lessons are used purposefully to assess each pupil's level of understanding. The language of mathematics is promoted well and, in return, pupils answer questions in an informed way. Teachers demonstrate very skilful management of pupils, and lessons are purposeful and productive. Relationships are strong and pupils are keen to contribute and do well because they know their work is valued. Homework is used effectively to support pupils' learning.
109. The quality of the presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent and results from a period of high staff turnover. Daily planning often lacks detail and does not do justice to the quality of some lessons. There are also weaknesses in the marking. Although there is evidence of some marking being used constructively to help pupils improve, other marking does little to aid pupils' progress. The school has recently introduced half-termly targets for the future development of each pupil, however, like the planning, these frequently lack precision and teachers' expectations are not always high enough. Some targets are very vague and do not focus specifically on the development of pupils' mathematical skills. In addition, in mathematics, pupils with special educational needs only have targets to develop their literacy skills, yet many need as much help with developing their numeracy skills.
110. The new co-ordinator has a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses, within the provision, and has a total commitment towards raising standards. The governor with responsibility for numeracy is well informed and supportive. Although the school is aware of the need for the co-ordinator to monitor provision, and review the storage of resources, no one, currently, has a clear enough overview of standards.
111. The, recently introduced, assessment procedures are of good quality. They are starting to make a positive contribution towards identifying each pupil's individual needs. The National Curriculum tests are now analysed effectively, and numerous, on-going checks are carried out to assess pupils' rate of progress. There is, however, still a weakness in teachers' day-to-day use of assessment. Lesson evaluations frequently lack precision and the identified opportunities for assessment in lesson plans are too vague. Teachers do not always have sufficient insight into pupils' levels of understanding or the standards individual pupils can achieve.

SCIENCE

112. Standards in science were judged by the last inspection to be above average throughout the school and this was consistent with the results being achieved in National Curriculum tests. There has been some deterioration in standards insofar as teacher's assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, and the test results at the end of Key Stage 2, have not kept pace with the improving national results. In 2001, standards were average at the end of both key stages. Improvement is now evident throughout Key Stage 2 where, for example, pupils currently in Year 6 are achieving above-average standards. Very good progress is occurring in Year 3 and the pupils have moved on rapidly since being assessed as average at the end of Key Stage 1. These same pupils are already achieving above expectations for their age. These improvements have resulted from consistently very good teaching and the good leadership that the new subject co-ordinator is providing.
113. The work of pupils in Year 2 is, currently, of average standard. They are acquiring a satisfactory range of knowledge and understanding of the topics that they study. They use correct terminology in tasks, such as the labelling of diagrams of electrical circuits, or the recording of what happens in investigations. Scrutiny of the work covered in Year 2 shows that pupils experience a broad curriculum with good emphasis on practical investigations. They are taught to think scientifically and are encouraged to make predictions about what might happen in an investigation. This enabled them, for example, to identify, correctly, if a bulb would light when they studied different circuit diagrams, and they then proceeded to create the circuit, practically, to see if predictions were, indeed, correct.
114. In Year 6, pupils show that consistent progress is being achieved by pupils as they move through Key Stage 2. Pupils have broad knowledge across a wide range of topics. They achieve good standards in investigative work and this is due, in part, to the frequent opportunities provided throughout the key stage for them to design and carry out experiments. As a result, by Year 6, they have a good routine of automatically establishing a hypothesis, and then incorporating their good knowledge of how to ensure that a test is fair as they set about testing the hypothesis. The use of correct terminology by pupils in Year 6 is evident in their detailed study of food chains and food webs and in well-organised investigations into rates of food decay. A good balance of theoretical and investigative work in a lesson on electricity enabled pupils of all abilities to acquire knowledge and understanding. The clear explanations provided by all pupils confirmed the good levels of this understanding.
115. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1, but scrutiny of teachers' planning shows this to be satisfactory, with appropriate attention being paid to the basic skills of scientific investigation. Teaching is very good overall at Key Stage 2. Learning is good overall but there are variations between teachers in the extent to which more able pupils are being challenged. In Year 3, for example, there is very good attention to the needs of more able pupils and they are provided with good opportunities to work at the right level. Older pupils are spending too long completing the same tasks as others, before moving on to work planned to extend their thinking. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, are provided for well, both through modified tasks that take account of learning difficulties in language, and through good quality support by classroom assistants. As a consequence, the pupils demonstrate good achievement by attaining expected levels of knowledge and understanding for their age. Pupils with English as an additional language learn quickly and no modification of activities is necessary for them.
116. At Key Stage 2, teachers have very good knowledge of the subject; they plan lessons very thoroughly and communicate their very high expectations, both of standards to be achieved in the work, and of the behaviour in the classroom. Pupils use the school's good equipment with respect and they have clearly been taught well about safety considerations in practical lessons. Pupils work conscientiously and collaboratively, in conditions where a large range of equipment is often being used in comparatively small classrooms. A lesson in Year 4 in which filtration was being investigated as a method of cleaning dirty water was typical of pupils' very good ability to work in small groups. They decided specific roles for themselves, carried these out successfully, and completed a demanding range of tasks involving recording and interpreting the results. The busy atmosphere of activity, and intense discussion, demonstrated pupils' high levels of interest, their

very good behaviour and, most especially, the very skilled teaching that caused all this to happen. All these features of good quality teaching were repeated in Year 3, in an investigation of the permeability of rocks, in which all pupils progressed well in their learning and the more able pupils were unstoppable in their search for further knowledge in response to the teacher's expert questioning.

117. Teachers use resources well, ensuring they are well prepared and have good potential to help pupils' learning. Charts and tables, together with recording of results in graphs, are making a good contribution to the development of pupils' numeracy skills, but information and communication technology is not used sufficiently as a means of creating these records of results. Pupils' writing skills are developed well by pupils recording results of most investigations in their own words. This enables pupils to reinforce their understanding of scientific vocabulary and provides good development of pupils' handwriting and spelling skills. The presentation of work is, consequently, good.
118. The new co-ordinator manages the subject well and commits considerable time to carrying out the responsibilities, despite being a part-time teacher who also co-ordinates design and technology. The curriculum has been modified well to incorporate the latest national guidelines for the subject. There has been good improvement in the provision of opportunities for investigative work since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has clear and appropriate priorities that are presented in a good subject action plan. These include the development of the subject's links with information and communication technology. Such priorities have arisen from constructive evaluation of what has been observed informally and, while the monitoring of teaching and pupils' work has not yet occurred, there are clear plans for this to commence during this school year.

ART AND DESIGN

119. Standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are above those expected. The school values the subject's contribution to pupils' learning, especially to their spiritual and cultural development. Work, throughout the school, is good and is starting to show a particularly high standard in Key Stage 1, because the co-ordinator works in this key stage and has made much impact since her appointment earlier in the term.
120. At Key Stage 1, pupils experience working with a broad range of media and techniques. They experiment, very successfully with colour, line and shape, and thorough use using interesting stimuli, such as photographs and other visual resources. For example, in Year 1, pupils used half faces, and mirrors, and had to draw the other half accurately. They had famous images like the mask of Tutankhamen, self-portraits of Vincent Van Gogh, Gauguin, or Modigliani, and many of their efforts were very mature. All the pupils worked in a careful, thoughtful manner, and one pupil noticed that his study in the style of Paul Klee could not be made symmetrical, because the patches on the eyes and face were very different on the original. This work really helped pupils to notice detail and went alongside their other work on portraits very well. Here they drew famous people such as Michael Caine from photographs, capturing the likeness extremely well. Their painted collage studies of kings and queens were equally mature, sensitive and observant. One pupil observed that his King George was not smiling, but 'gritting his teeth'.
121. Pupils in Year 2 continue the study of viewpoint, and have also produced some very mature, delicate work, for example their pastels of still life, flowers, and paintings in the style of Monet. Only a small 'window' was left of the image and the pupils' task was to enlarge and reproduce its essence. Several of the pieces were excellent, controlled and delicate in their use of form and colour. All were of a very high standard. Another example also demonstrated their abilities to observe and use their imaginations well, when they planned a 'bird's-eye-view' of a Christmas adventure, with themselves as a miniature character. The teacher had taken a photograph of each pupil in the pose for their picture; they then cut it out and drew in the background. The results were extremely detailed and often great fun, such as hanging on to a spiral decoration, popping out of a pudding or sliding down a little brother's leg. In all cases, the work was good because teachers had planned it well and offered pupils imaginative and varied ways to practise their skills. They draw, paint, collage and sketch detailed houses or church interiors, like artists, because they have the confidence and skills needed to do so. Completed work is displayed prominently to show the school values what is produced, and in ways to enhance the pupils' learning environment in most

classrooms, as well as public areas. Very good links are made with other areas of the curriculum, such as geography, history, and religious education, as well as literacy and mathematics.

122. Throughout the school, pupils' visual perception is improved very well through good focus on detail and recording observations. In Key Stage 2, for example, techniques are practised in sketchbooks. Pupils try out different types of pencil and the marks that can be made; pattern and shape for Greek vases; printing repeating patterns of different types; using computer images to add a different look or drawing faces to show different expressions. Their work is careful and mature, because teachers expect high standards. When drawing the face, as part of the portrait study, the teacher reminded them not to use speech bubbles, as facial expressions should tell the story. Pattern is explored well through art from other cultures in Years 3 and 4. Symmetry is the main feature of Rangoli patterns and the pupils have tried them in different media, such as chalk, crayon and collage. The teacher has also sensitively placed one of these patterns at the threshold to the classroom, as this is where they are traditionally found. Pupils in Year 4 have painted stunningly evocative Aboriginal work, written the story of the journey in the picture, and interpreted the signs and ideas used in this art form from Australia. They continue their study of viewpoint, through sketches of the playground. The teacher has skilfully drawn out the features with the pupils and given them 'strange' colour ranges with which to work, in order to heighten that other viewpoint, successfully. By the end of Year 6, pupils have had opportunities to consider drawing figures through cartoon characters, and proportions of the body by studying a person from life.
123. The quality of the work is sustained throughout the school, but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to draw and paint as they reach Years 5 and 6. The school is aware of this and plans are already in hand to rectify the situation.
124. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and is very good in Key Stage 1. Teachers are enthusiastic and many have good subject knowledge. This is reflected in the way that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, approach the subject with confidence and evident enjoyment. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to enhance pupils' learning in art and design.
125. The new co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and has a clear vision for the subject. Her high quality leadership is already having a positive effect on pupils in Key Stage 1, and a growing impact on pupils in Key Stage 2. Because work is so well planned, all groups of pupils have great successes and the more able artists flourish. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection, when standards and progress were broadly in line with those expected, and pupils' skills were underdeveloped.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. By the end of both key stages, all pupils attain standards that are in line with expectations for their age groups. Good improvement has taken place in the design element of the work, because the new co-ordinator has good ideas and a vision for the subject. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those who are more able, make good progress because appropriate tasks are designed for pupils of all abilities and pupils have very good opportunities to practise the skills they need, before embarking on the whole design brief.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is good, throughout the school. This is because teachers have high expectations for the whole process, but especially for the design element of the work to be undertaken. Thus, when pupils design a vehicle, wall hangings, moving monsters, or shelters, teachers ensure that they consider the purpose, the users, and the safety of the finished article, from the very beginning. Focused tasks are planned for pupils to practise certain skills and detailed evaluation then takes place of the finished product. A good example of this took place in a lesson in Year 3 where pupils were designing packaging for biscuits. Many pupils had produced designs on the computer and printed off colourful paperwork, with graphics and text. Good discussions took place about the best way to decorate the box, and one or two examples were contemplated and evaluated. Pupils also consider how they could change or modify their design, however, little evidence was seen of any modifications taking place. Pupils in Year 6 design shelters, and make them in the form of scale models. Careful consideration is taken of the 'owner' of the shelter in deciding about various different components that are needed within the shelters. This reflects the

good attention paid by teachers to encourage pupils to consider the purpose of what they are designing and making.

128. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for how the subject should develop, and has already solved the problem of inadequate resources, by spending her money wisely, in order to support the projects she has planned for different age groups. Resources are now good. She has also ensured that the scheme of work builds progressively on pupils' existing skills and that the tasks are interesting. This is why pupils are making better progress than at the time of the last inspection. She has already monitored a couple of lessons and has other methods in her plan, such as talking with pupils, and looking at pupils' books and design sheets, as well as at the finished article. Assessment procedures are manageable and examples of pupils' work are kept to illustrate different levels of accomplishment. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to enhance pupils' learning in design and technology. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.

GEOGRAPHY

129. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and only one in Key Stage 2. Supplementary evidence indicates that pupils achieve expected standards at the end of both key stages and pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. Despite a reduction in the amount of time devoted to the teaching of geography, since the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the school still provides pupils with a worthwhile learning experience. However, the development of pupils' investigative skills, criticised in the previous inspection, remains weak and mapwork resources still need improvement.
130. The recently updated policy and guidelines for teaching geography have ensured an adequate breadth of coverage. Topics are linked effectively to other subjects, such as science or history. For example, pupils in Year 5 successfully linked work on the Nile delta to their topic on Ancient Egypt. They developed a clearer understanding of the Egyptian way of life from the additional input. However, the current organisation of the geography curriculum means pupils frequently lose interest in the subject, and forget what they have learned, when there are excessively long gaps between topics. In discussion, pupils voiced mixed attitudes towards geography, despite having a genuine enthusiasm for most other subjects.
131. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils talk on a simple level about the local area. They produce good-quality plans of houses and have sound knowledge of prominent buildings in Seer Green. Pupils in Year 2 use computer programs effectively to process information about their summer holidays. However, there are too few programs to support topic work and information and communication technology does not make a strong enough contribution to pupils' progress in geography. Younger pupils develop literacy skills well when writing information in their 'My Passport' book about places they have visited. They demonstrate secure knowledge of hot and cold countries. There is no consistent approach, however, towards the development of research skills. Although teachers provide good quality information books in the classroom, the library does not invite pupils' use because it is some distance from the Key Stage 1 classrooms.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 recall previous work on the water cycle and reservoirs, but their recollection lacks detail. They remember work on Kenya and populations, using world maps and globes. There is evidence, in the work of pupils in Year 5, of good quality Ordnance Survey work, with knowledge of four-figure grid references, secure understanding of similarities and differences between Seer Green and High Wycombe, and good development of literacy skills. The work of pupils in Year 4 also demonstrates a satisfactory understanding of the local area, with sound mapwork skills. However, pupils' recall presents a fragmented picture of development. Although there are many isolated examples of good quality work in books and displays, the school's approach lacks consistency and cohesion. Pupils' enquiry and mapwork skills are not developed in any systematic way and the depth and breadth of pupils' knowledge is very dependent on the frequency of their geography lessons. Pupils' knowledge of environmental issues is also weak. Although pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, the rate of progress in different year groups varies considerably. Well informed, articulate boys and girls in Year 6 recall recent work on solving traffic problems in the local area in great detail, but their knowledge of past topics is shallow, and their

understanding of geographical issues does not match their levels of ability. The school's regular residential visit to the River Dart is used effectively to develop pupils' geographical skills and deepen their understanding.

133. Too few lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Evidence taken from examples of previous work, however, indicates that teachers use the small allocation of teaching time well, but do not allow enough time for pupils to work independently or research information in sufficient depth. Simple but effective assessment sheets provide adequate information about individual pupils' understanding of topics. Teachers display pupils' work well and store a range of resources in their classroom. However, they do not make enough use of resources and the new co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop better storage arrangements, in order to encourage greater use.
134. Priorities for development relate accurately to the areas in most need. The new co-ordinator is leading the subject satisfactorily and is very aware of the need to monitor pupils' work in order to gain better insight into standards achieved, the rate of pupils' progress and their interest in the subject.

HISTORY

135. Standards were judged to be broadly average at the time the school was last inspected. Pupils made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of people in the past, but development of enquiry and research skills was not as strong. Currently, standards are similar and pupils achieve standards expected for their age. Their overall progress is satisfactory and pupils' research and enquiry skills have improved. There are several examples, particularly in the topic work, in Year 6, on The Second World War, of good quality independent research. However, these skills are not yet developed in any systematic way. Consequently, there is considerable inconsistency in the quality of independent work between topics and year groups.
136. Despite the heavy emphasis on teaching literacy and numeracy, the time allocation for history has been used effectively to ensure a good balance of coverage. The scheme of work is well structured to ensure pupils develop an increasing understanding of events. They are less secure about the reasons for change. In discussion, a group of enthusiastic, well-informed pupils in Year 6 had very good factual recall of Ancient Egypt, but all hesitated when asked to explain why certain events had instigated change. The long gaps between topics sometimes hinder progress when pupils have difficulty retaining knowledge or building on previous skills. Although there is some evidence of computer research being used well in work of pupils in Year 5, there are insufficient programs to support learning and information and communication technology does not play a strong enough part in the development of pupils' history skills. Work is linked well to other subjects, when appropriate. For example, pupils study old and new buildings in Seer Green very effectively as part of their history and geography work. There is evidence that pupils' literacy skills are being developed well through independent research project work in Year 6. There are also examples of good individual pieces of writing in work in Year 5 on the afterlife. However, once again, these skills are not developed in any systematic way and too much is left to the discretion of the class teacher.
137. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a secure understanding of Victorian Britain. Some pupils in Year 2 know that Florence Nightingale lived at the time of Queen Victoria and one boy has even worked out that a past relative lived before either of them. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the similarities and differences between the past and present. Pupils in Year 1 are clear that candles and fires were used in the past in place of light bulbs and central heating. In this year group, the display of Victorian artefacts is of a high standard. It motivates pupils well and many have brought in objects from home to add to the interesting collection. Normally shy pupils are surprisingly forthcoming in discussion about their contributions. Teachers in Year 1 also involved parents and grandparents, very effectively, in a recent topic on old and new toys. They successfully captured pupils' interest and curiosity.
138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed secure knowledge about topics such as Ancient Greece and the Romans. In Year 6, pupils display good understanding of the Second World War. One has written that she enjoyed doing her own project because she had done it independently. Pupils in Year 5 use history vocabulary well. They talk about archaeologists and hieroglyphics, as

they develop their understanding of the Egyptian civilisation. Many are well motivated and enjoy history. They research information at home, unprompted, and enjoy remembering dates of important events.

139. The quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory, and in half the lessons in each key stage it is good. Teachers ensure pupils study topics in sufficient depth to ensure a good level of understanding. In some year groups, such as Years 1 and 4, teachers' own enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and pupils are motivated to find out more. In these lessons, the introductions are informative and teachers provide an interesting range of activities to extend knowledge and challenge the more able. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on 'Baths and Bathing in Roman Times', the teacher used visual resources well to set the scene. She successfully incorporated pupils' own experience, such as a family visit to Bath, to extend pupils' knowledge. By the end of the lesson, most pupils knew the sequence of activities and could explain the differences between the three bathing areas. Pupils of all abilities wanted to know more. In some of the other year groups, however, teachers do not capitalise sufficiently on pupils' thirst for knowledge. As a consequence, more able pupils do not always produce work in line with their ability and miss the opportunity to develop their spirit of enquiry when activities are undemanding or the pace of lessons is too slow. These pupils are capable of achieving higher standards.
140. The school is aware of the need to extend its range of artefacts and re-organise its storage of resources to make them more accessible. Information books are of a good quality and support pupils' learning well. Visitors to the school play an important part in developing pupils' knowledge of a particular period in history. Pupils in Year 6 recalled information about the recent 'Air-raid Archie' visit with impressive detail. Although individual classes make visits to places of historical interest, the use of visits to support class learning is not developed strongly enough.
141. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator is recently appointed, but already has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The policy has been recently updated and schemes of work have been adapted to take account of new requirements. Simple, but effective, assessments are in place, but these are not yet used with any degree of consistency. Currently, no one has a clear enough view of the standards achieved or the rate of each pupil's progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

142. Standards exceed expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and match expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' skills, and the progress they made were limited. The school has worked hard to replace the poor quality equipment and the new staff is benefiting from specialist, funded training in order to gain more confidence and expertise in the use of information and communication technology throughout the curriculum.
143. By the end of Year 2, pupils know that televisions and other equipment can be controlled by remote signals and that the printer and the computer are sending information back and forth. They write, choose clipart and incorporate it into their work, successfully, and are able to search for and locate information about summer holidays. They then use the data, effectively, in geographical work. During the lesson observed in the inspection, the teacher reinforced the geographical vocabulary very well and provided good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills. In this way, pupils' understanding was enhanced. Besides using the computers competently, in the suite, pupils also have opportunities to use the equipment in classrooms, for example, when word-processing, however, insufficient use was made of this facility in both key stages, throughout the inspection week.
144. Older pupils have good opportunities to draw, edit, copy-paste, save and print appropriately, for a variety of interesting uses. One very good example of a well-planned activity was seen in Year 3, when pupils designed a calligram to represent the weather dance they had devised in a physical education lesson. They manipulated text very imaginatively, to produce interesting and eye-catching sheets, incorporating clipart and special text effects. Older pupils had a very challenging, problem-solving task to work through, using a logo program, and they worked on this well. Because this was so challenging and interesting, as well as open-ended, pupils concentrated very

well, and were confident, patient and co-operative throughout. The task would have been further enhanced by the use of the programmable toys. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, and those who are more able are catered for equally well, and can work at their own pace, because teachers plan the work to be appropriately inclusive. This is also the case in Year 6, where work is of a high standard and really stretches the thinking of the more able pupils, whilst understanding, and appropriate challenge, are also evident for other ability groups. All these pupils share information well and are able to explain what they have done, using a spreadsheet, in some detail. Good links are forged with the mathematics curriculum through the use of formulae and measuring value-for-money prices.

145. High expectations from teachers for good behaviour and independence, and judicious support from various expert parent-helpers, including the link governor for information and communication technology, ensure that pupils learn well and make the progress that is expected. Teachers are gaining in confidence, using the suite, and the school has ensured best value for money by employing highly recommended trainers, under the National Opportunities Funding arrangements. Pupils work well and concentrate on their tasks, because teachers allow times for exploration and investigation, as well as setting a task for completion in a set time. Pupils use good, technical, language to talk about what they are doing, because teachers encourage its use all the time.
146. The school is well aware that it must work hard to keep up with current developments, but the co-ordinator is a senior member of staff, which ensures a high profile for the subject. He has good ideas about how to develop the subject and is providing effective advice for the staff. The school has used its funding well, to furnish the suite and the new equipment is being incorporated into teaching and learning in a systematic and purposeful way. The school is well aware of its obligations to pupils about safety and security when using the Internet. Parents are happy to sign a document which sets out, succinctly, what sensible measures the school will take to safeguard their children, and teachers also sign up to a similar document. At present, there is no facility to use email, but plans are already in hand for this to begin, with involvement from schools around the world, in the new term.

MUSIC

147. At the time the school was last inspected, pupils achieved above average standards in music which was a strength of the school. The current picture is very similar. Pupils continue to reach standards above those expected for their age, and all pupils, not just those who are musically talented, make good progress. In lessons where the quality of teaching is exceptional, pupils of all abilities reach very high standards. The range of instrumental tuition available has been increased and is now very comprehensive. Pupils learn violin, viola, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, horn, trombone, guitar and drums. Tuition is of good quality and enables the pupils involved to reach well above average standards. Great care is taken to ensure pupils who receive instrumental tuition do not have their lesson at the same time each week and do not miss their entitlement to other subjects. The school orchestra and wind band play an important part in developing pupils' performing skills. Not only is the school choir of high quality, but choir practice is also an important social occasion when staff, pupils and parents join together. A large number of pupils take part. They can join without an audition, so that all who are interested can participate. Members of the choir extend their literacy skills well when they write words for songs and carols that are subsequently performed.
148. Younger pupils quickly become part of the school's music community. Music assemblies are very important occasions for everyone to sing together, perform and listen to a diverse range of music. During the week of the inspection pupils in Year 1 were seen appreciating the music of Stephan Grappelli. Pupils in Year 2 joined the rest of the school in singing 'I The Lord of Sea and Sky' musically and with good expression. The whole occasion was very moving. All pupils in Key Stage 1 were involved in their Christmas production, 'The Whoops-a-Daisy Angel'. Pupils of all abilities sang numerous songs from memory, remembered their lines well and acted without adult support. The performance was truly memorable. Pupils' sense of performance develops from an early age. Parents and teachers are rightly proud of the quality of these concerts.
149. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing with good tonal quality and clear diction. They develop controlled breathing techniques and acquire an understanding of singing in harmony. They use a

hand signal technique to develop their singing further. Many sing in two and, occasionally, three parts. Computer programs are also used effectively to develop pupils' composing skills.

150. Boys and girls of all ages have an enthusiasm for music. It was particularly rewarding to observe boys in Year 6 totally involved in singing and instrumental activities. Older pupils clapped spontaneously during one assembly when younger pupils sang a song, with difficult words, for the first time.
151. From the wealth of opportunities offered to pupils and the small number of lessons observed, it is possible to make the judgement that standards of teaching are very good. The school makes very effective use of the co-ordinator's expertise in supporting non-specialist class teachers. Homework also plays an important part of pupils' musical development. On occasions, the quality of teaching is excellent and pupils of all abilities make remarkable progress. The main purpose of a lesson in Year 5, for instance, looked deceptively simple. Pupils had to work out the melody of the song, 'We Go Walking'. They had just used it to warm up their voices. Good humour and enjoyment prevailed throughout. Levels of co-operation had to be extremely high and the teacher deliberately placed pupils in mixed-ability groups to increase the chances of success. Suddenly, the whole room erupted into animated activity. Thirty pupils, clutching orchestral instruments, keyboards, recorders and percussion set about the task with a vengeance. Even when the most musically talented had succeeded, the teacher expected more. Everyone persevered to the bitter end. All completed the task and enjoyed each other's success. Pupils applauded the trumpeters when they finally got the pitch right. This was an ambitious lesson that fully matched the needs of all abilities.
152. The recently appointed co-ordinator is a very accomplished practitioner. She is an inspirational subject leader who has a very accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Her commitment to involving all pupils, staff and parents in the high standards achieved is a major positive feature. Music is a very important part of school life. It permeates the work of the school and makes a significant contribution towards pupils' personal and social development. Many pupils at Seer Green develop a love of music that will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Standards have improved since the last inspection and now exceed expectations by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve the same good standards as their classmates. There has been good development of the curriculum, teaching is good overall and there is good provision of extra-curricular activities that encourages participation in a good variety of sports.
154. Standards in games are above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils show good control and co-ordination in basic skills, such as kicking accurately, dribbling, trapping, and passing to a partner. Pupils prepare properly for exercise by performing suitable stretching exercises. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show good techniques when performing a range of hockey skills, and striking a ball accurately. In gymnastics, pupils in Year 3 combine different actions successfully such as rolling, jumping and balancing into flowing sequences with a clear start and finish. Although pupils have not been observed swimming, teachers' records indicate that national standards are reached, with most pupils achieving at least the requirement to swim 25 metres competently and confidently by the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the effects of exercise on the body as a result of the good attention that teachers pay to this in all lessons.
155. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned thoroughly and teachers pay good attention to health and safety factors. Good teaching incorporates good use of selected pupils to demonstrate specific actions that reinforce key features of what is to be learned. The pupils observing these demonstrations are encouraged to look out for particular features or evaluate what is particularly good about what they are watching. Very good games teaching, such as that seen with pupils in Year 5, incorporates a good range of learning activities that build well on earlier learning. Teachers' levels of subject knowledge are generally good, especially in games and gymnastics. The good rate of pupils' learning, results from their willingness to practise hard at improving their skills. A lesson in Year 2 on football skills demonstrated this commitment well. Extended practice, building on the teacher's good specific guidance on technique, resulted in many

pupils making significant progress in the lesson, to a point where very accurate passing could be sustained. Teachers use their observation skills well to carry out ongoing assessment of pupils' learning, and lessons frequently contain on-the-spot changes to planned activities in order that immediate needs can be met.

156. The deputy headteacher is acting temporarily as the subject co-ordinator and providing good leadership and management based on his own high level of subject expertise. His exemplary teaching provides a model that could very usefully be observed by colleagues. The long-term curriculum planning incorporates all six areas of activity in the National Curriculum programme of study for Key Stage 2, even though the school has the option of reducing this to five areas. Present arrangements for subject co-ordination mean that the co-ordinator has had no time for monitoring the planning or teaching of the subject but this is planned to be during this school year. Through informal observation the co-ordinator has a good awareness of pupils' standards and more able pupils are guided towards local sources of specialist coaching that will meet their advanced needs. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, all of which are for mixed gender groups, and offers many opportunities for pupils' involvement in competitive sport at local level. Resources are satisfactory overall, although the school is restricted in the amount of gymnastic apparatus that it holds, due to storage limitations at the community hall that it has to use for indoor lessons. The extensive school grounds are used well for outdoor and adventurous activities at Key Stage 2. Skills in this area of activity are developed further during the annual residential experience for pupils in Year 6.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. Religious education is inspected by a separate Diocesan team.