

INSPECTION REPORT

Watermoor C. of E. School

Cirencester, Gloucestershire

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115614

Headteacher: Mr Ray Petersons

Reporting inspector: Christopher Spencer
15639

Dates of inspection: 14 - 16 January 2002

Inspection number: 196915

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Watermoor Road Cirencester Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Hartnell
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15639	Christopher Spencer	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Design and technology; Physical education; English as an additional language.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well is the school led and managed?
1311	Barry Wood	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20063	Gerry Slamon	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Information and communications technology; Religious education; Special educational needs; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11901	Pat Lowe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Under fives; Science; Geography History.	
23805	Margaret Lygoe	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art; Music.	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Watermoor School is a small one-form entry primary school situated in the Watermoor ward of the town of Cirencester. This ward is designated as an area of social deprivation by the local authority. Currently, there are 185 pupils on roll. The majority of these pupils live in the surrounding area and most of them reside in public sector housing. About one quarter of pupils is eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. About one third of pupils are on the SEN register, of whom three per cent have full statements. The school has very few pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school is a mix of Victorian and 1950's buildings constructed around a courtyard. An additional extension was completed recently. During the last 12 months more than half the teachers have changed. The current head has completed three terms. The school has a high number of teaching assistants (learning support workers.) Attainment on entry is below average. The school has suffered from some pupil mobility. Nearly one third of pupils who took last year's National Curriculum tests in Year 6 had not had the whole of their education in Watermoor School. The school aims to develop a sense of community, foster a happy caring and disciplined environment, and ensure that pupils achieve their full potential.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Watermoor School is an improving school. Following the last inspection, the school did not make the necessary improvements in order to raise standards and these are still too low for many pupils when they leave the school. The arrival of the new headteacher has very clearly focused the school on the raising of standards. There is some good teaching throughout and this is helping to raise standards. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are now good. They are well supported by the governing body and all involved in the school who are striving to raise standards. These recent improvements in leadership and management and in the quality of teaching enable the school to provide satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The Foundation Stage is good.
- Teaching is good across the school.
- The school's very good behaviour strategies are producing good attitudes and good behaviour and a decline in the incidences of bad behaviour.
- The personal development of pupils, including social, moral and spiritual development, is enabling them to be included in all aspects of school life and develop good relationships.
- There are improving relationships with parents.
- The head and key staff have a clear vision of how to raise standards and improve the school.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Sharing with parents the targets that have been set for pupils and the consistent monitoring of their academic performance.
- The use of assessment information to guide teachers' planning.
- Attendance.
- The role of co-ordinators to include monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997, but there is evidence of improvements only in the last twelve months following the appointment of the present headteacher. There has been a decline in standards in English, mathematics and science but there have been some improvements in other subjects. The whole school curriculum framework is promoting progression in all subjects but planning remains a weakness. Assessment procedures have been established and pupil data now exists for English, mathematics and science, but this information has not been used fully to set pupils targets and thereby improve standards. Teaching has improved considerably. There is now almost no unsatisfactory teaching, which compares with over one in five lessons identified in the last inspection. In this inspection, seven out of ten lessons were judged as being good or very good. Teachers' subject knowledge has now improved and this contributes to the high levels of good teaching. There have been some improvements in the role of subject co-ordinators but the high turnover of teachers has meant that many are very new to their posts and have yet to establish themselves fully. They have not yet developed a role in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects. A weakness identified in the last inspection concerning the linking of financial planning to school improvement has not been adequately addressed. It is a matter of some concern that the huge budget surplus built up over the last few years has not been used to improve standards. For example, it is only very recently that the school has put financial resources into the development of a computer suite to address the below average standards in information and communications technology. This recent investment is already beginning to raise standards in the subject.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Pupils achieve standards well below average in English, mathematics and science when compared with those of all schools and schools of a similar nature. Overall, standards have declined since the last inspection. Girls achieve higher standards in English than boys but

boys do better in mathematics and science. The school's most recent results in mathematics place it in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. These results are a cause for concern. Over time, the trend in the school's results is below the national trend. The school failed to achieve any of its agreed targets in 2001, but given the good teaching that now exists across the school its targets for 2002 are challenging but achievable. Pupils' achievements during their time in school have been poor and are well below what pupils in other schools achieve. Indeed, the percentage of pupils who attained the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests at age 11 is considerably below the national average. The findings of the inspection confirm these results. In information and communications technology, standards have improved because of the opening of the computer suite but standards remain below average. There have been improvements in design and technology and geography. Standards in these subjects are now average. Standards in physical education and history remain average, whilst those in religious education continue to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Because of the construction of class timetable it is not possible to make judgements about standards in music or art, though provision for these subjects appears to be satisfactory. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The good support they receive allows them to make good progress. Provision for the very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language is good and these pupils also make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils respond well to what the school offers and are interested and keen to engage in activities with a sense of enjoyment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils' behaviour in the classrooms is consistently good. Many pupils have a developing understanding of self-discipline, and behaviour around the school is orderly and calm, particularly in assemblies.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between the staff and pupils are totally trusting and mutually honest. Pupils increasingly value each other's opinions and qualities. Pupils work well together and are welcoming and polite.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Attendance is currently below the national average. The majority of pupils arrive for school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and 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.

Overall, teaching is now good throughout the school and this is a significant improvement on the last inspection. Many of the teachers are new to the school but they have established themselves very quickly. During the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in all but one of the lessons. More than seven-out-of-ten lessons were good or better and one-in-ten lessons was very good. The strengths of teaching include the management of pupils, which results in good behaviour and positive attitudes to work by the pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of most subjects. They now have better

expectations of what pupils can achieve and work is usually suitably planned to move most pupils forward in their learning. Marking of pupils' work is usually thorough and pupils appreciate the encouraging comments. Teachers make good use of learning support assistants in the classroom. These assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace was slow, aims were not made clear and little was accomplished during the long introduction. Insufficient time was allowed at the end for summarising learning. However, the good teaching that now exists throughout the school will improve standards over time.

The quality of pupils' learning is good largely because of the good teaching. Pupils are now beginning to learn and make progress in all years and in all subjects. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, though there not enough attention is paid to the use of phonic skills in reading during Years 1 and 2.

Homework is set regularly and used suitably to reinforce pupils' learning. Teaching in English was good or better in half of lessons and satisfactory or better in all but one of the lessons. In mathematics, it was good or better in nearly all lessons. Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good, and these pupils make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, and provides pupils with a relevant preparation for their next stage of education and for life beyond school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision for these pupils is good. Their needs are identified; they are given good support and, as a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The provision is good for these pupils and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and good provision for their spiritual and social development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but more could be done to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Overall, the support, guidance and welfare provision is satisfactory. The care the school provides ensures that pupils feel secure and well supported. There are weaknesses in the monitoring of pupils' academic performance and progress. Individual pupil targets are not set. The use of assessment information is only just beginning to help teachers in their planning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are now good. The new head has very quickly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school is now very much focused on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body has made good improvements lately. With the encouragement of the head, governors are now fulfilling their roles much better. They are seeking to strike a balance between support and challenge for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has begun to monitor and evaluate its performance. The head has introduced a rigorous policy of monitoring teaching and learning. Performance management is firmly in place and this is now linked to pupil performance.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Resources are used prudently. The staff is deployed well. Good use is made of the learning support assistants.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • Their children like coming to school. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The small number of parents who responded raised no significant issues.

The inspection team agrees with all the strengths identified by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

How high are standards?

1. The attainment of most children on entry to the school is below what is expected for their age. They make good progress and are on target to achieve in line with national expectations when they move into Year 1. The new curriculum for children in the Reception Class has been introduced and implemented well, and the majority of children are on course to reach the nationally agreed learning goals by the end of their time in the Reception Class. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of the Reception Class were below those expected nationally, except in reading and number work, where they met national expectations. All children, including those with special educational needs and those in the early stages of developing their understanding of the English language, make good progress and achieve well because of this good provision. This shows improvement since the last inspection, when the progress that children made was satisfactory.

2. These young children are able to work together and play co-operatively, taking turns and showing consideration towards others. They show a developing respect for the contribution of other children. Children listen well and become confident speakers. They are familiar with a range of traditional rhymes, and the school's early introduction of phonics is clearly benefiting their skills in early reading. Most children write their names satisfactorily and begin to write simple sentences by the end of their time in the Reception Class. Most are able to count to 20 and beyond and order numbers accurately to 10. They develop an appropriate range of mathematical vocabulary involving addition and subtraction and can recognise two-dimensional shapes. They develop early investigative skills and can identify some features of the natural world. They are progressively developing their ability to move in safety with confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination. All children handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely, with increasing control. They explore what happens when they mix colours and they understand the terms darker/lighter, thicker/thinner and shade. All the children enjoy music. They use their imagination and communicate their ideas through music. Familiar nursery rhymes and songs are sung with enthusiasm, and children tap out repeated rhythms and 'compose' music.

3. In the most recent National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 2, pupils aged seven achieved average standards for reading but well below average standards in writing. In mathematics, results were below average. Overall, this represents a deterioration since the last inspection, when results were around the national average. However, when compared with those of similar schools, the school's results are more favourable, and very good in reading. They are average in mathematics but still below average in writing. The school's results in reading, writing and mathematics are low because not enough pupils achieved the higher levels within the tests.

4. Over the last four years, the school's results when compared with national standards have consistently been below average and, even allowing for the relatively small numbers of pupils, they are not good enough. These poor results reflect the fact that the school had not been sufficiently focused on raising standards since the last inspection.

5. Inspection findings indicate that standards are currently below average in all aspects of English by the end of Year 2. By the time they are seven, average and higher attaining pupils speak clearly and reply to questions with suitable detail. An above average proportion of pupils are less confident, however, and do not yet speak with the clarity usually found at this age. Many more pupils use a limited range of words. Not enough attention is paid to encouraging specific speaking skills. Across the school, there are too few regular planned opportunities in class lessons for pupils to answer at length and to develop confidence and fluency in expressing their opinions. In reading, most pupils read simple text with reasonable confidence and accuracy, though they do not always recall what they have just read. Most pupils are confident with tackling very simple words. Some average and lower attaining pupils in Year 2 are less confident, however, in attempting words starting with combinations of letters such as “pr” and “tr”. Standards in writing are below average, though Year 2 writing books show that there has been good progress since the start of the school year. Pupils show an increasing awareness of what is expected of them. Lower attainers learn to sequence their ideas logically as they complete focused tasks. The average and higher attaining pupils consciously try to link their sentences with “interesting” words.

6. In mathematics at the end of Year 2, standards are below average. Pupils can add and subtract numbers to 10, though not always in their heads. Higher attaining pupils understand the place value of digits in numbers beyond 100, and remember the 2x, 5x and 10x tables. However, there has been not been sufficient emphasis on developing pupils’ skills in using and applying mathematics. Consequently, many find it difficult to find ways to solve simple problems.

7. In science, standards are close to the national average. Most pupils have a basic understanding of the growth and reproduction of living things and the conditions basic to their survival. They classify living things according to observable similarities and differences. Pupils show developing skills in making predictions and comparing them with their results.

8. In design and technology, history, and information and communications technology standards have improved since the last inspection and now meet national expectations. In geography and physical education standards remain in line with national expectations. In religious education, standards are in line with the locally agreed syllabus. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about art and music because of timetabling arrangements.

9. By the time pupils leave the school at age 11 their results in English are well below the national average and below average when compared with those of similar schools. Results have been consistently below average. When compared with their prior attainment pupils’ achievements are well below average. Very few pupils attain the higher levels in the tests, and boys do significantly worse than girls than is found nationally. In mathematics, the results in 2001 were very poor and placed the school in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. Pupils’ achievements are poor, and whilst boys did better than girls no pupils achieved the higher levels in the tests. In science, results were also well below average. Again, very few pupils attained the higher levels and boys did marginally better than girls.

10. Overall, when these poor results are put together, they place the school in the lowest 5 per cent of schools nationally. Trends over time are below the national trend. The school failed to achieve any of its agreed targets in 2001 but, given the good teaching that now exists across the school, its targets for 2002 are challenging but achievable.

11. The pupils who took the last end of Year 6 national tests have now left the school. About one third of these pupils had been on the school's register of special educational needs at some time whilst in the school, and a similar number joined the school at some point during the Years 3 to 6. If the pupils who did not have all their education in Watermoor School are removed from the figures, then the percentage of pupils achieving the national average in English and science would have been similar to that found nationally. However, in mathematics, results would still have been well below the national average. It is significant that only one pupil achieved a higher level in any of the tests and this points to a high level of underachievement.

12. Inspection evidence can point to some explanations for these low results. It is clear that the school has not been sufficiently focused on raising standards since the last inspection. Expectations of what pupils could have achieved have been low. There has been only limited target setting, and it is only recently that assessments of what pupils can do have begun to inform planning; hence the setting for mathematics in Year 6. There have also been some inconsistencies in teaching and learning, largely owing to a lack of rigorous monitoring by senior management. Whilst the new headteacher has addressed this shortcoming, the effect will take some time to come through. The impact of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies is variable. Numeracy is more secure than Literacy. However, the two new co-ordinators have already begun to address weaknesses in the implementation of the strategies.

13. The findings of the inspection are that by the end of Year 6 standards in all aspects of English are below average. Although most pupils speak with more confidence by the time they are eleven, many do not yet develop their ideas with the expected fluency. A few pupils have a good vocabulary and enjoy using new words in discussion, but many more pupils use a limited range of words. Not enough attention is paid to encouraging specific speaking skills. There are insufficient planned opportunities for speaking and listening. Although by the age of eleven the most able readers show a good understanding of their books, many others have not yet developed the ability to make deductions or inferences while they are reading. Texts used during literacy periods are not always as challenging as they should be, and by Year 6 many pupils have a more limited experience of literature than expected at this stage. Pupils have gained a secure understanding of how to use the small reference library. They are able to use contents and index pages competently, and the average and higher attaining Year 6 pupils can scan text quickly to find information. The overall standards of writing are below average at the end of Year 6. Spelling and punctuation skills are taught, but pupils often repeat basic errors and need reminding to check their work. Although a few able writers use a good variety of imaginative words, pupils' choice of vocabulary is often unexciting. Pupils' presentation skills improve as they move up the school.

14. In mathematics, standards are improving but remain below average. By the age of eleven, many pupils reduce fractions to simpler forms, and higher attaining pupils can calculate by using mental methods. These pupils show a good understanding of percentages and decimals and sequence. They can add and subtract negative numbers in context. Most pupils understand that perimeters and areas of simple shapes can be found by counting squares. Higher attaining pupils understand and use formulae to calculate these accurately. However, there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. This is having an adverse effect upon standards.

15. In science, standards are below at the end of Year 6 but they are improving on last year's results. Pupils competently carry out a range of experiments. They successfully conduct investigations and are becoming proficient in using symbols to replace drawings when explaining circuits. They carry out investigations on dissolving materials and on reversible and irreversible changes. Most are able to explain many life processes, such as

the workings of the ear and eye. They identify the major organs of the body and the organs of plants. They can name a range of materials, describe their properties, and explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. However, there has been insufficiently demanding scientific work for higher attaining pupils, who have not been challenged enough in the past.

16. In design and technology and geography, standards have improved since the last inspection and now meet national expectations. In history and physical education, standards have stayed the same and meet national expectations. In religious education, standards continue to meet those required by the locally agreed syllabus. In information and communications technology, the new computer suite is having a positive impact on raising standards but standards still remain below expectations. There is insufficient evidence to judge standards in art and music, as a result of timetabling arrangements.

17. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning when they receive specific support in lessons and in withdrawal groups. This good support allows them to make the same progress as other pupils in all lessons. Provision for the very small number of pupils who have English as an additional language is good, and these pupils make good progress.

18. Given that pupils' attainment on entry is below average, their achievement in the Reception class is good. However, in the past, this achievement has not been maintained throughout the rest of the school. Consequently, overall achievement has been unsatisfactory and often poor. As the school has become much more focused on raising standards and because the quality of teaching is now good, pupils' achievements are presently satisfactory, but the school will have to work hard to make further improvements.

19. Evidence from the inspection indicates that this is a school now very closely focused on raising standards. The consistently good teaching that now exists throughout the school, combined with the very positive attitudes of pupils, should lead to an improvement in standards. At present, however, standards are not high enough.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

20. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. The previous inspection indicated that pupils showed positive attitudes to learning and this has been maintained. Children entering the Foundation Stage have limited life experiences for their age, and they generally have social and speaking skills that are below average. However, they often show very good attitudes and behaviour. They build trusting relationships with their teachers and support each other. They respond to formal teaching and learning, listen well and are interested and keen to engage in activities with a sense of enjoyment. They have a developing understanding of classroom routines and only occasionally shout out answers in their enthusiasm. Very few children exhibit any challenging behaviour but some pupils can be shy or lack confidence when speaking owing to their limited vocabulary. The quality of education in the reception class enables all children to make good progress and develop significantly over the year.

21. Respect for other's feelings, values and beliefs is good, and pupils are supportive of those with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are keen to do well and show good attitudes to learning.

22. Although many pupils make a long journey to the school, they arrive calmly and are happy to attend school. They wear the school uniform with pride. As pupils progress through the school they gain increasingly good attitudes that ensure a positive learning environment. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are interested and want to be involved in activities. They listen well and are attentive to their teachers. Most are keen to take part in discussions, although their limited vocabulary can sometimes restrict the development of ideas. Older boys can be more responsive than girls to good teaching, and want to display their knowledge. Pupils are motivated to work hard and concentrate on tasks, even when the outcomes can be limited by their prior learning. Their sensible attitudes allow the school to operate efficiently and sustain an orderly community.

23. Pupils' behaviour in the classrooms is consistently good. Older pupils often exhibit exceptionally good behaviour in lessons when motivated and interested by their learning. The staff has clear control and easily corrects any restlessness or poor behaviour without challenge. Many pupils have a developing understanding of self-discipline and realise the benefits of a calm and ordered classroom. Behaviour around the school is orderly and calm, particularly in assemblies. Pupils play harmoniously together in limited playground space. Over the last year, there have been no exclusions. Incidents of poor behaviour have progressively reduced to minimal levels during the autumn term, and this is a strong indicator of the effectiveness of the staff and the acceptance of the school's norms of good behaviour by all pupils. No bullying, racial incidents or swearing were evident during the inspection, nor are these identifying characteristics of the pupils or school.

24. Pupils' personal development and relationships within the school are very good and are a significant strength. The relationships between the staff and pupils are totally trusting and mutually honest. All staff support pupils well. The school consistently tries to raise pupils' self-esteem and this is helping to raise their confidence and maturity. In the classroom, teachers are developing pupils' ability to listen to each other. Pupils are increasingly valuing each other's opinions and qualities, and their readiness to collaborate and co-operate is evident in the classroom. Older pupils are aware of the needs of younger pupils for safe play in the playground. Pupils are inquisitive and welcoming to visitors. Boys and girls eat and play amicably together.

25. The school's strategy for pupils' personal development is effective in producing a very good outcome. The school has made a high priority of building pupils' self esteem and this is increasingly well promoted by the quality of assemblies, formal personal, health and social education and courses on citizenship.

26. The school constantly promotes positive role models through good teaching and visitors to the school. Pupils learn to care for each other whilst developing a broader sense of care through charities and helping older people. They quickly settle into class routines and systems. Some lessons have a necessary awareness of health and safety so that pupils can react appropriately in the school and the outside world. Opportunities for independent learning, through research and referencing materials, ideas or facts, are developing features of the school. Older pupils are keen to use the Internet for additional learning. Pupils are given a good array of classroom responsibilities, and older pupils have whole-school responsibilities throughout the day as monitors. The staff supports a good range of clubs both at lunchtime and after school. The school makes good use of the local community and further afield for extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of the outside world, through trips and residential visits. Pupils have an awareness of their environment and there is no litter or graffiti on the site. They respect the classroom resources well. Pupils tidy their classrooms and cloakrooms often on their own initiative, which indicates that they value the school.

27. Attendance was satisfactory in the last complete reporting year but is now currently below the national average. Only one class has an attendance level above the national average and unauthorised absence is high. The school finds it difficult to impress on all families the need to carry out their statutory obligations regarding their children's attendance at school. In-term holidays are a major reason for a high level of authorised absence. Some pupils find it difficult to come to school on time, but punctuality throughout the rest of the day is satisfactory. The completion of registers meets statutory requirements. The registration period is carried out courteously and efficiently and provides a settling and calming period for all pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

28. Teaching is good overall and has improved significantly since the previous inspection when two in every ten lessons were found to be unsatisfactory. Although about half of the teachers have joined the school in the last year, they have quickly established themselves with the good quality of their work. Teaching is now good in over seven out of ten lessons and very good in more than one in ten. Lessons are only occasionally unsatisfactory. Examples of good lessons were seen in most subjects and in all classes. Teaching in mathematics and science is good and, as a result, standards are beginning to improve. The National Numeracy Strategy is now being followed effectively. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted but has not been fully implemented. There are, consequently, some shortcomings in planning and teaching English, though teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory overall. Teaching in the reception class is consistently good. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection, and as a result, the children are now making a good start to their formal schooling.

29. Lessons are generally well planned, with a clear focus on what pupils are to learn. For example, in a Year 6 information technology lesson, the teacher shared the learning objectives with the pupils so that they understood the context of their work. The lesson was linked effectively with previous work so that learning was coherent and skills and knowledge could develop steadily and progressively. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of most subjects. Their explanations are clear, and relevant subject vocabulary is introduced. The deficiencies in teachers' knowledge of science and information technology no longer exist.

30. The good teaching overall is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' learning, which is now often good or better throughout the school. Learning is often good because teachers plan interesting and stimulating activities. In many lessons, teachers constantly reinforce concepts, frequently by skilful use of questioning. This good learning is now helping pupils to make better progress, and standards are beginning to rise.

31. Pupils are well managed. Classrooms are well organised and most lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers expect and achieve good standards of behaviour; there are few disruptions to learning. Questions are used effectively in some lessons to assess pupils' learning. Not enough emphasis is placed, however, on improving speaking skills and giving the pupils regular opportunities to speak at length. In some mathematics lessons, for example, teachers do not require pupils to give full answers and to explain their strategies. This sometimes impacts on pupils' learning and their progress.

32. Teachers generally have good expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work is usually suitably planned to move most pupils forward in their learning. Planning for mathematics is good and is securely based on the National Numeracy Strategy. This is not the case in English, where tasks often do not offer enough challenge, particularly to those capable of higher attainment. Consequently, their learning and progress in this subject is not as good as it should be.

33. Marking of pupils' work is usually thorough and pupils appreciate the encouraging comments. In English, science and history, however, not enough guidance is given to help average and higher attainers to improve their work. In Year 6, when pupils are taught mathematics in ability groups, teaching for the higher attainers is of a high standard. Expectations are high; pupils are motivated to work hard and learning is very good.

34. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Their role is clear in all lessons and they work well with individuals and groups. Teachers use resources well in most lessons to interest pupils and to illustrate teaching points. In one very good lesson, for example, an "Anglo-Saxon" visitor brought history to life for Year 4 pupils, illustrating her talk with a wide range of artefacts.

35. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall, although not enough attention paid to the use of phonic skills in reading during Years 1 and 2.

36. Homework is set regularly and used suitably to reinforce pupils' learning.

37. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from being taught in small groups by the special needs teacher. Members of the support team are well trained and are effective. They are well prepared and are generally efficiently used by teachers to support pupils' learning. Teaching for those pupils with English as an additional language is good, both in class and during specifically focused group activities, resulting in full inclusion in the curriculum.

38. Teaching in the foundation stage is consistently good. It is good in all six areas of learning. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was found to be satisfactory. Teaching and non-teaching staff have a clear understanding of the needs of young children. Planning is based on clear objectives for all areas of learning and is consistently good. Assessments take place when children enter the Reception Class, and inform the planning of future work. Activities are well planned to meet children's needs. Good records are kept of children's progress and are shared with parents and the teacher of the class to which pupils progress. Homework in reading is used well to enhance children's progress. This good teaching helps the children to make good progress and achieve well.

39. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace was slow. The aim was not made clear and little was accomplished during the long introduction. Work set for one group had already been completed the previous week and no time was allowed for summarising learning.

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

40. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements for each subject of the National Curriculum and religious education. It is broad and balanced, and provides pupils with a relevant preparation for their next stage of education and for life beyond school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when insufficient attention was given to science, history, geography, design and technology, and information and

communication technology. The National Numeracy Strategy is now well established and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Use of the National Literacy Strategy is not as consistently well planned for. It is having a greater influence on pupils' learning in those classes where it is well used. The contribution that other subjects can make to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills has yet to be fully explored. The school has identified the need to develop a policy for literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. As this is not yet in place, there is a variety of practice in other subjects. This means that opportunities to promote communication, reading, expression and numeracy skills are often missed or simply not provided.

41. Recently, the decision has been made to adopt the schemes of work which have been developed for all other subjects in the National Curriculum by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). While this change is not complete, the school has moved effectively in this direction to the extent that it has also adopted and is, in part, practising the associated assessment procedures, as, for example, in the case of information and communication technology. In the case of religious education, an appropriate scheme of work is in place, combining the QCA recommendations with the programme of the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.

42. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage comprises a good balance of formal learning and play, and takes account of the goals in the six areas of learning which children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception class. The planning for the teaching of basic core skills in language acquisition and mathematics is good, and the use of national guidance ensures that the children's development in literacy and numeracy builds well on what they have already learned.

43. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There are after-school clubs for sporting activities such as football and netball. There is a dance club, an information and communication technology club, and a choir and an orchestra. The school makes good use of day trips to places of historical interest and of visiting historians, scientists, theatre groups and artists to enrich the curriculum and to enhance pupils' learning experiences. The social development of Year 6 pupils is further enhanced through the annual residential trip. The local community reports that pupils are very good ambassadors for their school when they go on trips and visits.

44. The school places appropriate priority on pupils' personal development. Some aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE) are well planned. Sex education and issues relating to drugs misuse occur within the science curriculum, and the involvement of the health services and the community police officer ensures that pupils are made aware of health issues and given accurate facts as part of their preparation for adult life.

45. The school is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity and social inclusion, and fulfils these commitments for pupils with special educational needs. Support is effective in ensuring that pupils with learning disabilities are able to participate fully in lessons and to make progress similar to that of their peers. Individual education plans for these pupils are carefully drawn up and accurately identify the new targets for pupils' development. However, the needs of pupils of higher attainment are not always well planned for. There are too many examples of all pupils being presented with the same work in lessons. In some lessons observed, girls were seen playing a passive role in whole class sessions, as teachers did not expect enough from them in this respect.

46. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Most teachers and support staff ensure that pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum and that they are fully included in lessons and all school activities. In a small number of lessons, teachers fail to notice when these pupils, and others who are reticent, do not contribute during whole class sessions. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs are fully included in trips, visits, and all extra-curricular activities.

47. There are good arrangements in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs. A register of special educational needs is kept up to date by the co-ordinator. Pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and correctly identify the specific needs of pupils on the register.

48. The school has very good links with the family centre from which many of the children join the school. There are also good links with the secondary schools to which pupils transfer. These links help to ease the process of transfer to another school and help to ensure progress in pupils' learning from stage to stage. There are also good links with the parish and the local community, and these support pupils' learning as well as their social development. The school has forged strong links with the adjoining special school, and pupils join each other in some lessons. Pupils take part in music and dance festivals with local schools and in inter-school competitions in football, netball and athletics. They are able to contribute to the wider community through many opportunities to support charities such as Barnardo's, the Red Cross, and Cancer Research, when pupils are joined by governors, staff and parents in singing carols to raise funds.

49. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils are clearly taught right from wrong. All staff consistently applies school rules. Pupils have had opportunities to devise their own class rules, and as a result they readily accept them. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual and social development. Consequently, pupils have developed well both spiritually and socially. Assemblies are held daily and have a strong sharing element. The daily acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and support pupils' spiritual development. The school has a strong caring ethos that is reflected in its support for national and local charities. Pupils treat each other with a strong measure of care. They mix well with others. This ethos has been further enhanced by the school's links with a local special school. It reaches out to the local community through participation in music and dance. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The school provides well for pupils' understanding of British culture and has strongly promoted local history and culture. However, at present there is not enough consideration of exploring ways of giving pupils a greater understanding and knowledge of the richness and diversity of the different cultures represented in British society today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Overall, the support, guidance and welfare provision is satisfactory. Procedures for improving the behaviour of pupils have been improved. The new headteacher quickly realised that these needed strengthening and they now function at a very good level. The care the school provides ensures that pupils feel secure and well supported. It focuses on the individual and furthers pupils' learning, personal development and maturity.

51. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory but lack rigour in the recording of activities and outcomes, and evaluations of risk assessment. The school is a safe environment for all pupils and staff, as evidenced by an inspection of the site and a below average accident rate. A small number of health and safety problems have been identified and remedial measures are being undertaken. First aid facilities are adequate, with a

dedicated on-site medical room. The school has a sufficient complement of qualified first-aiders. Pupils are well acquainted with health and safety principles in school through the personal health and social education provision or by teacher guidance at the start of lessons where appropriate. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. The school nursing service provides invaluable support for medical checks, sex education and child protection.

52. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and are a strength of the school. The school has developed high expectations of pupils' behaviour and has significantly improved their attitudes and behaviour. Teachers focus on good behaviour and raising pupils' self esteem, particularly within the classroom. Pupils have helped in the development of simple school rules and have universally signed the code of conduct that is displayed in all classrooms. Systems and procedures are well defined in a draft behaviour policy. These have an effective balance between sanctions and rewards that are fairly and consistently applied by well-trained staff. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The community police officer is a regular and welcome visitor to the school and helps in the provision of the drugs awareness project and courses on citizenship for the older pupils.

53. The monitoring of the personal development of pupils through the Foundation Stage is good, with well-documented procedures that produce accurate assessments. Throughout the school, the monitoring of personal development is satisfactory, although this relies on staff observation and discussions rather than a whole school system. Personal development targets for individual pupils have not been set so far. The school's knowledge of each pupil allows it to involve professional agencies as required for those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. The school effectively supports pupils with special educational needs to meet targets set in their individual education plans and statements.

54. A measure of the school's success is that pupils are taken off the register as well as placed on it. Parents are kept informed of pupils' progress, which is reviewed regularly. The school meets the requirements outlined in pupils' statements of educational needs. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.

55. The school administration makes use of information technology to update personal information about pupils and this is sufficiently accurate and detailed to support any medical emergency.

56. The school has good relationships with secondary schools and guides parents and pupils through transfer without anxiety. Induction procedures for new pupils are effective. Parents perceive the school as being very welcoming.

57. Recently, work has been undertaken on assessment, which was a key issue in the last inspection. Pupils are assessed formally in English, mathematics and science and this information gives teachers a clearer understanding of their pupils' achievements. However, whilst the school collates this data on pupils' performance, using a variety of tests, this is not used sufficiently well to inform teachers' planning. Its absence makes the setting of individual targets for pupils and the school very difficult. There are curricular targets set in some classes and for all pupils with individual education plans, but there is no consistent approach across the school. To date, pupils have not been set specific targets about what they will achieve in the National Curriculum Tests, nor have any targets been shared with parents. The absence of a consistent approach to assessment is evident where work is

insufficiently matched to pupils' needs in some lessons. However, this academic year has seen the introduction of setting for mathematics in Year 6. This setting is based on pupils' prior performance and the school intends to extend it to other year groups. Whilst procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory, there are sound procedures for monitoring their personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

58. The school has the support and respect of the parents and is working hard to improve parental relationships. Parents have a wide range of expectations for their children's education and some find it difficult to have a meaningful relationship with the school. Although the school works very hard to involve all parents it has met with mixed success. Parental involvement in the school is limited despite its best efforts. A small number of parents answered the parents' questionnaire and attended the parents' meeting prior to the inspection. However, when their views are assessed in conjunction with a substantial number of interviews with individual parents it can be seen that their satisfaction with the school has increased and is at an overall good level.

59. There are significantly high levels of approval for the good behaviour of pupils, the quality of teaching and the values and attitudes of the school. Parents have a belief that the school is improving. Levels of dissatisfaction have decreased, though parents express concerns about the high staff turnover.

60. Overall, the effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory. The school has an open door policy and the headteacher and staff make a practice of meeting parents in the school playground. This is more effective in the reception year and lower school, where a good number of parents regularly escort their children to school. The school finds it difficult to involve parents in regular school events such as the celebration assemblies. This is partly owing to the small size of the hall. The impact of parents in the school is satisfactory. A few parents play a high quality role within the school and within classrooms, either as volunteers or as learning support assistants. The governing body has its full complement of parent governors. They are knowledgeable and committed to helping the school. A small enthusiastic committee of parents runs the Friends of Watermoor School Association, which makes a financial contribution to the school.

61. The quality of information for parents has improved to a good level. The prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents are documents of good quality and indicate that the school values its parents. Other written communications, including the newsletters, are of sufficient quality, regularity, and timeliness and are respectful to the role of parents. Annual reports are satisfactory. They give full and perceptive insight into pupil's abilities in all subjects of the national curriculum, but they do not contain targets. Parents are asked to give their impressions separately but pupils are not asked to contribute their views of the school year. All formal evenings for parents are well attended.

62. The contribution of parents to their children's learning is satisfactory. An educational partnership between home and school is developing. However, only half the parents have signed the home-school agreement and the incidence of in-term holidays and unauthorised absence indicates that a minority of parents do not perceive the education of their child as a high priority. The school has been sensitive in its running of parenting classes, which have been well received. There are plans to develop adult learning classes with the adjacent Family Centre. Parents are given an overview of topic work at the start of each term. A

high proportion of parents approve of the present homework arrangements. Homework and reading diaries are being increasingly well used. Teachers mark homework well and give good feedback. There is close collaboration between teachers and the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Together, they produce meaningful individual educational plans.

63. When pupils have special difficulties the school gives good support and parents are well involved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. Leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are now good. This is a similar judgement to that of the last inspection, when the previous head had only recently been appointed. The present head has been in post for three terms and since his arrival he has very quickly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses. In particular, he has begun to tackle the poor standards in English, mathematics and science. The school is now very much focused on raising standards.

65. The school has not improved as much as it could have done since the last inspection and it is only recently that changes have begun to occur. Whilst standards were found to be requiring some improvement in the last inspection, little appears to have taken place that would have led to the raising of attainment for the majority of pupils. Educational priorities have not been supported effectively by school development planning. Neither has this planning been linked to sound financial planning. As a result of this, a substantial carryover of some £97,000 occurred in the last financial year. This budget surplus could have been used to implement the school's post inspection action plan and, in particular, address the low standards. For example, it is only recently that the new computer suite has been opened, even though standards in information and communications technology were found to be below average.

66. However, the present head, together with the governing body, has now set in place a programme to address the school's deficiencies. The new chair of governors is leading the governing body well. He has set about reforming the committees so that they have a good knowledge of the school. With this knowledge they are beginning to challenge the head. They have made a good start in beginning to shape the direction of the school. However, the current school improvement plan, whilst identifying correct priorities, has not yet got the raising of standards as its central focus. Whilst the governing body fulfils its statutory duties well it has not been good at accounting for the performance and improvement in the school. It has not challenged the head sufficiently to account for the school's poor performance. This is now changing. With the encouragement of the head, governors are now fulfilling their roles much better. They are seeking to strike a balance between support and challenge for the school.

67. The school has begun to monitor and evaluate its performance. The head has introduced a rigorous policy of monitoring teaching and learning. Teachers are regularly observed and receive oral and written feedback. Targets for improvement are set. Many of the co-ordinators are new and have yet to develop their role in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. This was an area of criticism in the last inspection and the position has not really changed since then. However, there are plans already in place to develop the role of the co-ordinators and they have now all got new job

descriptions. Performance management is firmly in place and this is now linked to pupil performance. However, the target setting process for pupils and the school is not yet secure. The head, together with the assessment co-ordinator, is gathering a good level of data about the school's performance, but this has yet to have an impact across the whole school on teaching and learning.

68. Financial planning has been unsatisfactory. The substantial budget surplus has been a cause for concern, particularly when this money could have been used to improve standards and the quality of pupils' education. The head has already used about one-third of this surplus on the pupils. In particular he has already established the computer suite. Governors have decided to keep a contingency to allow for the expected falling roles, so that the seven classes can be maintained in the short term. The present school improvement plan includes costings but it is not firmly linked to the budget. However, financial planning is now much more secure, with governors planning and monitoring expenditure more carefully. The head has ensured that all specific grants are used correctly. For example, money set aside for special educational needs is used well. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Resources used to provide additional support for pupils with statements of educational needs are used efficiently and support pupils' learning well. Information and communication technology is increasingly used to support the learning of these pupils.

69. Although there has been this financial surplus the school readily applies the principles of best value in all its purchases. The school's financial regulations are secure. The minor recommendations in the last financial audit have been addressed. The administration and secretarial support add a quiet, calm and welcoming atmosphere to those entering the school. Day-to-day management is smooth and efficient.

70. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs is effective. The co-ordinator has good systems in place to ensure effective liaison between classroom teachers, classroom support assistants, outside agencies, parents and the special needs governor. The special needs governor is committed and provides strong support.

71. The school environment is pleasant, maintained well and in good order. The classrooms are adequate for the numbers of pupils, and there are now sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum. The present leadership has begun to create a climate in which the school can improve rapidly and address the main issue of low standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Raise standards in English by:
(Paragraphs: 87 – 94)
 - * using assessment information to plan work that is matched accurately to the needs of pupils and groups of pupils and which consistently challenges those capable of higher attainment;
 - * offering all pupils regular planned opportunities to develop their speaking skills and to give extended answers;
 - * providing a wider range of books for all pupils and increasing the focus of developing phonic skills of younger pupils and comprehension skills across the school;
 - * providing in-service training for teachers to improve the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

- Raise standards in mathematics by:
(Paragraphs: 95 – 103)
 - * setting clear, achievable targets so that pupils' knowledge and understanding are developed step by step;
 - * taking every opportunity to develop and apply pupils' mathematical skills and language across the curriculum;
 - * challenging pupils to discuss their work and to articulate their thinking.

- Raise standards in science by:
(Paragraphs: 104 – 111)
 - * setting clear achievable targets, identifying those pupils who have the potential to achieve the higher levels, and providing them with appropriately challenging work.

- Implement a whole school assessment strategy that:
(Paragraph: 57)
 - * brings together all the information on pupil performance;
 - * sets challenging targets for all pupils;
 - * tracks pupils' progress over time;
 - * ensures that assessment information is used for curricular planning.

- Minor issues:
 - * Improve attendance.
(Paragraph: 27)
 - * Develop the role of subject co-ordinators to include monitoring of teaching and learning.
(Paragraph: 67)
 - * Ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
(Paragraph: 49)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	30	11	1	0	0
Percentage	0	10	61	22	2	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	Y R– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	185
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	42

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y R– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	63

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	94.5
National comparative data	93.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	10	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	10	10	9
	Total	26	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (86)	89 (90)	96 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	8	9	10
	Total	24	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	86 (86)	89 (93)	93 (93)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	16	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	6	3	8
	Girls	12	3	12
	Total	18	6	20
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67 (74)	22 (63)	74 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	4	5	5
	Girls	8	4	11
	Total	12	9	16
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	44 (n/a)	33 (n/a)	59 (n/a)
	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	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	182
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.7
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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£

Total income	407394.00
Total expenditure	378744.00
Expenditure per pupil	1913.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	68487.00
Balance carried forward to next year	97137.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
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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
Number of questionnaires returned

185
39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	31	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	45	5	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	45	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	62	38	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	41	5	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	16	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	38	16	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	45	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	28	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	54	8	0	7

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. The attainment of children in the Reception Class is in line with expectations for their age in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The majority of children are in line to achieve all the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception Class.

73. Attainment on entry to the Reception Class is below the county average. It improves steadily as a result of good teaching which leads to good learning. The new curriculum for children in the Reception Class has been introduced and implemented well.

74. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of the Reception Class were below those expected nationally, except in reading and number work, where they met national expectations. All children including those with special educational needs and those in the early stages of developing their understanding of the English language, make good progress and achieve well because of good provision. This represents improvement since the last inspection, when the progress that children made was satisfactory. Teaching is good in all six areas of learning detailed below, representing an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory.

75. Teaching and non-teaching staff have a clear understanding of the needs of young children. Planning is based on clear objectives for all areas of learning. Assessments take place when children enter the Reception Class and inform the planning of future work. Good records are kept of children's progress and are shared with parents and the teacher of the class to which pupils go on. Children make a positive start to their education within a challenging learning environment. Homework in reading and phonics is used well to enhance children's progress.

76. All the children in the Foundation Stage are in the Reception class in the school.

Personal, social and emotional development

77. The attainment of pupils in personal, social and emotional development is below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Class. They make good progress and attain well. The attainment of most children is in line with expectations for their age.

78. They settle well into the routines of school, and the calm, welcoming atmosphere helps them to feel confident and secure. The staff ensures that all children are fully included in the activities provided. They form very good relationships with the children. Children learn to work together and play co-operatively. They gain the confidence to try out new activities and learn to organise themselves independently because materials are easily accessible. Activities are carefully planned and structured so that children are enabled to work well individually and in groups. Everyday routines encourage self-confidence and a sense of belonging. Children gain increasing self-control and begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. They learn to take turns and show consideration towards others. Adults insist that children tidy away resources, and this helps them to develop respect for their environment and the property of others.

79. Children adapt well to increased independence and responsibilities. They develop concentration and perseverance as they practise their writing and reading skills. In circle time, they gain confidence in expressing their feelings as they talk about their families and learn that not all families are the same. They show a developing respect for the contribution of others. Adults use every opportunity to reinforce appropriate behaviour. For example, they ensure that children say 'please' and 'thank you', and praise them when they line up sensibly.

Communication, language and literacy

80. The attainment of children in communication, language and literacy is below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Class. Children make good progress as a result of good teaching. They achieve well and their attainment is generally in line with expectations for their age.

81. There are many formal and informal opportunities to develop language skills. Direct teaching and practical activities introduce and consolidate the key skills of language. Children learn to concentrate when listening to stories and to the contribution of other children to discussions. Adults effectively develop children's listening skills by insisting on full attention when they are talking and by ensuring that children listen carefully to each other. They themselves speak clearly, thus providing a good example. They also listen well to children and extend discussions so that children become increasingly confident speakers. Children become familiar with a range of traditional rhymes. They begin to blend sounds to form words, and higher attaining pupils read simple books with repetitive texts. Children benefit from the school's early introduction of phonics and the practice of teaching letter sounds and shapes and building up word banks at the beginning of the literacy lesson. Most children write their names satisfactorily and begin to write simple sentences by the end of their time in the Reception Class. Teachers and learning support staff take every opportunity to extend children's vocabulary and encourage them to explain what they are doing. In the literacy lesson, teachers choose books that stimulate children's interest in words, spelling and simple punctuation. Children are encouraged to take their reading books home and share them with adults.

Mathematical development

82. The attainment of children in mathematical development is below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Class. They make good progress as a result of good teaching. They achieve well and their attainment is generally in line with expectations for their age.

83. Children gain confidence in counting as they join in number rhymes and songs. They learn to sort and order items as they play with a range of carefully selected, colourful apparatus. Most children count to 20 and beyond and order numbers accurately to ten. They demonstrate early knowledge and understanding of how to solve problems involving addition and subtraction, and the use of vocabulary such as 'add one more', 'take one away', 'how many altogether' and 'how many are left?' Opportunities for practical activities are suitably planned and children develop an appropriate vocabulary to describe colour, size and shape. Most children are able to recognise flat shapes, such as a square, rectangle, triangle and circle. They gain some knowledge of capacity and weight through practical experiences with sand and water. Mathematical vocabulary is emphasised and classroom

resources reinforce mathematical concepts well. There are displays and books related to number, games, puzzles, weighing activities and computer programs. Work is matched well to children's prior learning and, at the end of each lesson, teachers help children to explain what they have learned.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. The attainment of children in knowledge and understanding of the world is below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Class. They make good progress as a result of good teaching. They achieve well and their attainment is generally in line with expectations for their age. Children develop early investigative skills as they learn about the layout of the school and people who work in it. They identify features of the natural world in the school grounds and study new growth. They show a keen interest in the differences between night and day and learn about the habits of nocturnal animals and birds. They make links with the story, 'Oliver's Wood' and their work on Van Gogh and his picture, 'The Starry Night'. Stimulating activities are linked well to the early learning goals, and teachers ensure that children gain knowledge, skills and understanding in practical contexts. When exploring and investigating the environment, children talk about the features that they like and dislike. They learn about people in the community who help them and about safety. Children develop a sense of time and relationships as they talk about themselves and their families and gain a sense of the past as they study old toys, such as teddy bears. They learn about belonging to different groups in religious education and show a developing respect for people of different cultures and beliefs. Children develop their scientific knowledge through the study of materials. They use information and communication technology, with increasing confidence, to support their work. For example, they use the pencil tool to draw their family. The school has appropriate plans to further develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. Children build and construct with an increasingly wide range of objects, selecting appropriate resources and adapting their work where necessary.

Physical development

85. The attainment of children in physical development is below expectations for their age on entry to the Reception Class. They make good progress as a result of good teaching. They achieve well and their attainment is in line with expectations for their age and by the time they leave the Reception Class most will have achieved the early learning goals in this area. Regular use is made of the outdoor area, which is soon to be fenced off and further resourced. The school hall is used twice a week for physical education and dance. During the inspection, pupils listened to the tape, 'The Bear and the Scary Night'. They explored different movements such as bouncing, stretching, waving, marching, reaching and sinking. Their movement was appropriately controlled. They are progressively developing their ability to move with confidence, imagination, control and co-ordination in safety. Most children show a good awareness of space and of others. In the school hall, they use climbing equipment, travelling around, under, over and through it. The majority of children are beginning to recognise the importance of keeping healthy, and the things that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They recognise changes that happen to their bodies when they are active. Physical skills in the classroom are taught well. All children handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. They show developing hand and eye co-ordination when engaged in cutting and gluing.

Creative development

86. The attainment of children in creative development is below expectations for their age, on entry to the Reception Class. They make good progress as a result of good teaching. They achieve well and their attainment is generally in line with expectations for their age. Their creativity is developed within a very supportive learning environment. They explore and experiment, developing confidence as they try out new ideas with adults who working alongside them, talking to them about their work and introducing appropriate vocabulary. Colour and texture are explored through a range of resources and sensory experiences, and children talk about their observations. They explore what happens when they mix colours and they understand the terms darker/lighter, thicker/thinner and shade. They experiment with different media to draw themselves and others. Form and shape are explored in two and three dimensions as the children create models, extending their knowledge of joining techniques. They contribute to collages and explore printing techniques. All children enjoy music. They use their imagination and communicate their ideas through music. Familiar nursery rhymes and songs are sung with enthusiasm, and children tap out repeated rhythms and 'compose' music. They are developing their ability to sing tunefully, in unison. They explore a range of musical instruments and develop their understanding of pitch as they experiment with high and low sounds. Social skills and imagination are developed as they dramatise stories and take part in role-play in the home corner and in the outdoor play area. Children respond well to what they see and hear.

ENGLISH

87. National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils in 2001 were well below the national average and below average when compared with those of similar schools. The pupils' achievements when compared with their Year 2 test results were well below average. School records do show, however, that the number of pupils with special educational needs was above average in this year group, and that about one third of the class entered the school after Year 2. Girls consistently have achieved better standards than boys have over the past four years, often by a greater margin than is found nationally. In the 2001 national tests for Year 2 pupils, results in reading were similar to those found nationally and well above those in similar schools. Writing results were well below national standards and below those in similar schools. Teachers assessed the standards in speaking and listening as below average, with no pupils achieving at the higher levels.

88. Inspection evidence shows that standards are currently below average in all aspects of English by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. An analysis of school assessment data indicates that test results for the current Year 6 are likely to be better than those achieved in 2001. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for planning, but the strategy has not been fully implemented and there are some shortcomings in teaching and planning. Not enough progress has been made in raising standards since the previous inspection. Pupils capable of higher attainment are not challenged sufficiently. Specific support for pupils with special educational needs, however, is good, and these pupils make satisfactory progress over time, achieving satisfactory standards compared with their previous attainment.

89. Standards in speaking and listening are below average overall and few pupils achieve at the higher levels. By the time they are seven, average and higher attaining pupils speak clearly and reply to questions with suitable detail. An above average proportion of pupils are less confident, however, and do not yet speak with the clarity usually found at this age. Although most pupils speak with more confidence by the time they are eleven, many do not yet develop their ideas with the expected fluency. A few pupils have a good vocabulary and enjoy using new words in discussion, but many more pupils use a limited range of words.

Although all teachers speak very clearly and are good role models for pupils, not enough attention is paid to encouraging specific speaking skills. There are too few regular planned opportunities in class lessons across the school for pupils to answer at length and to develop confidence and fluency in expressing their opinions. Too often, questions can be answered with single words, and teachers frequently do not ask pupils to expand or explain their answers. When lessons are planned to develop speaking skills, pupils respond well and learning is good, as was seen in a Year 2 history lesson where the class thought of questions to ask Samuel Pepys. Pupils who have special educational needs in this aspect are identified early and they receive good quality focused support.

90. All classes have a daily reading time and most, but not all, pupils benefit from reading regularly to their parents. Phonic skills are taught and most pupils in Years 1 and 2 are confident with tackling very simple words. Some average and lower attaining pupils in Year 2 are less confident, however, in attempting words starting with combinations of letters such as “pr” and “tr”. A few less able readers further up the school have similar difficulties. The co-ordinator has already identified the need to focus more rigorously on teaching phonics during Years 1 and 2. By the time they are seven, most pupils read simple text with reasonable confidence and accuracy, although they do not always recall what they have just read. The school uses a number of structured reading schemes, and by the time they reach Year 6 most pupils are still reading from these. All pupils also borrow books from the class and school library but some pupils find the scheme books dull, preferring “longer stories and whole books.” Less able readers cope adequately with their reading scheme books but find it difficult to manage the more varied vocabulary in other books. Most pupils say they enjoy reading but a few boys have little interest. Although by the age of eleven the most able readers show a good understanding of their books, many others have not yet developed the ability to make deductions or inferences while they are reading. Texts used during literacy periods are not always as challenging as they should be, and by Year 6 many pupils have a more limited experience of literature than expected at this stage. The school already plans to improve reading resources significantly and, at the same time, will be focusing on choosing books to tempt the more reluctant boys. Research skills are thoroughly taught and are satisfactory. Pupils gain a secure understanding of how to use the small reference library. They use contents and index pages competently, and the average and higher attaining Year 6 pupils can scan text quickly to find information.

91. Standards in writing are below average at the age of seven, although Year 2 writing books show that there has been good progress since the start of the school year. Pupils show an increasing awareness of what is expected of them. Lower attainers learn to sequence their ideas logically as they complete focused tasks. The average and higher attaining pupils consciously try to link their sentences with “interesting” words. The school has recently introduced a new handwriting scheme, though it is too early to assess the impact of this. Presentation of work improves as pupils move up the school. In Years 5 and 6, where teachers have high expectations and give clear guidance, pupils’ written work is often neatly presented. The overall standards of writing are below average, and by the time pupils reach Year 6 few achieve at the higher standard. Spelling and punctuation skills are taught but pupils often repeat basic errors and need reminding to check their work. Although a few able writers use a good variety of imaginative words, vocabulary choices are often unexciting. Teachers work hard to stimulate pupils’ imagination during extended writing sessions, and in a very good Year 6 poetry lesson a group of less able pupils were inspired by the teacher to choose descriptive words and similes to use in their own poems.

92. The teaching in lessons observed was satisfactory overall, which is similar to judgement of the previous inspection. No poor teaching was observed. This is an improvement. Teaching was most effective in Year 6, where a group of pupils were given additional support for writing. The lesson was very well planned. Resources were used

imaginatively and the teacher focused closely on what she wanted the pupils to learn. As work was closely matched to individual needs pupils, were fully involved and interested. Teachers generally plan and prepare lessons carefully and their behaviour management is good. As a result, most pupils listen attentively and little time is wasted during lessons. Most teachers direct questions carefully to involve as many pupils as they can. However, there are currently not enough opportunities for pupils to answer at length or to explain their answers. Written work is always marked, with teachers making encouraging comments. At present, not enough guidance is given to the average and higher attainers on how they might improve their work. Specific support for pupils with special educational needs is good, and pupils make good progress when taught in small groups. Teachers and learning support staff ensure that these pupils have full access to the curriculum. Assessment information is used well and tasks are usually matched accurately to their specific needs. By contrast, not enough challenge is provided for pupils capable of higher attainment, and there is scope for staff to review the value of some of the many worksheets used. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the pace was slow, the aim was not made clear and little was accomplished in the long introduction during which many pupils sat passively. A lower ability group had already completed the task planned for the whole class. No time was spent on summarising learning.

93. Literacy skills are suitably used across the curriculum and effective links are established with other subjects such as history and information technology. For example, Year 5 pupils had used their word processing skills to present their poems for display, and the Year 2 teacher reinforced work on punctuation in a later lesson in the computer suite.

94. Management of the subject is now good. The recently appointed co-ordinator is developing a clear view of where improvements in teaching and learning need to be made and has prepared an action plan to tackle shortcomings. The school has a good range of procedures for assessment but class teachers have yet to use the information fully in their planning. There is no whole school system format for planning literacy in outline across each half term. Where this is done, for example in Year 4, the teacher has devised a clearly balanced series of objectives and has identified different strands of work to be covered, some in a single week and some over the whole period. Teachers do not yet set challenging individual targets for all pupils. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how they should improve their work. Although teachers use the National Literacy Strategy as a basis for planning, many of the useful strategies for planning and teaching have not been introduced or implemented. Not all the staff has completed the training linked with the Strategy.

MATHEMATICS

95. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are below average for their age. Results of the most recent national tests for seven-year-olds show that the majority of pupils reached the expected level, and were close to the national average. Few, though, achieved the higher Level 2 scores or Level 3. The very low performance in last year's Year 6 was because no pupils achieved Level 5 (which is above the expected Level 4) and because of the high number who did not reach the expected level. When the results are considered over a four-year period to 2001, they represent a very significant decline since the last inspection, when standards were in line with the national expectation for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6.

96. Inspection evidence confirms these results. Standards are below average but improving. The evidence indicates that this fall was the result of inconsistencies in teaching, which resulted in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding not being progressively developed step-by-step, and of an unsatisfactory approach to assessing pupils' progress, which would allow this to happen. The school explains that about one third of last year's Year 6 pupils had joined the school other than at the normal time of entry. However, inspection evidence shows that the decline in standards was more attributable to the inconsistencies in teaching as well as the lack of rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning until this year. Lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and discussions with staff indicate that standards are now improving and are better than they were last year. The recently appointed headteacher, who enjoys good knowledge of the subject, has taken responsibility for mathematics. He is committed to raising standards and has already put many initiatives in place to achieve this. He guides planning, provides good advice for teachers and rigorously monitors teaching to achieve consistency of practice. Setting arrangements have been introduced in Year 6 to allow pupils to be taught in three ability groups. Improved assessment procedures, and a thorough analysis of test results to identify weakness in provision. allow teachers to focus more on what pupils need to be taught. These initiatives, together with the introduction of a new scheme to support teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy, are having a positive impact on standards.

97. Girls did not achieve as well as boys in the tests for 11-year-olds. The school is developing strategies redress the balance. Whilst some girls do not readily offer to answer questions, there was no evidence during the inspection of a difference in performance between boys and girls. In the good lessons, teachers challenge all pupils to answer questions, with boys and girls working together at all levels of attainment.

98. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and was good overall. There is no significant difference between the teaching in different age groups. Of the six lessons seen, teaching was very good in one, good in four and satisfactory in one. Teachers generally have high expectations of work and behaviour and a good understanding of how pupils learn. There is a good balance between direct teaching and independent learning. Behaviour management is good and this allows all pupils to learn without disruption. Pupils enjoy the subject and work hard with sustained concentration. These good attitudes have a positive impact on their learning. Although Year 6 pupils are well taught when in set groups, there is insufficient use of assessment to ensure that all pupils' needs are met when they are taught as a class.

99. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on mental computation. Pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons but their understanding of mental strategies and their ability to explain these have not been well developed over time. However, most teachers now understand the importance of asking pupils to explain their reasoning, and where teaching is particularly good, pupils are well challenged to discuss their work and explain their thinking. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson where higher attaining pupils were highly motivated to explain the strategy they used to calculate the unknown number which, when added to 56, would give 100, and to calculate what they would add to 0.02 to get 1. The teacher continued to teach rigorously and challenge pupils as they worked on individual tasks, so that by the end of the lesson all could find the area of a right-angled triangle by considering it as half the area of a rectangle. Another good example of pupils being challenged to explain their strategies was seen a Year 4 lesson where pupils were learning to use partitioning to add 2-digit numbers. The class teacher made sure that all pupils were involved and, as a result, learning in this lesson was good.

100. By the age of seven, pupils can add and subtract numbers to 10, though not always in their heads. Higher attaining pupils understand the place value of digits in numbers beyond 100 and remember the 2x, 5x and 10x tables. In a good Year 2 lesson, the class teacher used an effective range of interesting strategies to challenge pupils to identify numbers that are 'one more', 'one less', 'ten more', 'ten less' than numbers on a 100 square. By the end of the lesson, most pupils could work out numbers that were 'ten more' or 'ten less' than 25. Pupils know the difference between odd and even numbers and the names of common two- and three- dimensional shapes, for example cube and rectangle, and how many sides they have. Analysis of work shows that pupils are taught to use standard units of measure in a range of contexts covering length, capacity, mass and time. Higher attaining pupils use a ruler to measure straight lines with some accuracy in centimetres. Although teachers in Year 1 and Year 2 take account of pupils differing levels of attainment when planning work in numeracy, pupils' work indicates that this is not always the case in other aspects of the subject.

101. All aspects of mathematics are given appropriate consideration, but there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics. The development of these skills appears to have been neglected in the past. Recent improvements in provision for information and communication technology are helping to improve pupils' data handling skills. The co-ordinator has correctly identified the need to provide pupils with opportunities to apply and develop their mathematical skills in meaningful ways across the curriculum.

102. By the age of eleven, many pupils reduce fractions to simpler forms, and higher attaining pupils work out in their heads calculations such as ' $4/12 = 1/3 = 5/15$ '. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of percentages and decimals, and they sequence, add and subtract negative numbers in context. All pupils use their newly acquired information technology and communication skills of drawing and interpreting straight line graphs. Most pupils understand that perimeters and areas of simple shapes can be found by counting squares, while higher attaining pupils understand and use formulae to calculate these accurately. Teachers expect pupils to present their work neatly and pupils respond well.

103. Resources for the subject are good and are well used by teachers to develop pupils' mental skills. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 lesson where all pupils were involved because they were using individual white boards to calculate e.g. $100 - 45$. The class teacher made good use of questions such as 'how did you do it' to probe pupils' understanding. In this lesson, as in others, the teaching assistant was well used to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Most teachers are aware of the needs of these pupils and ensure that they are full included in all parts of lessons. Although good assessment procedures are now in place, the school has yet to set realistic and challenging individual targets for all pupils to ensure a greater rate of progress and to ensure that all reach their full potential.

SCIENCE

104. The results of teacher assessments in 2001 at the end of Year 2 have risen since the last inspection. Standards in science at the time of the last inspection were judged to be below the national average at the end of Year 2, and this trend has continued in successive years until 2000. In 2001, they were close to the national average. Pupils' attainment in science was equivalent to that in reading and better than that in writing and mathematics. There were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

105. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection. Standards in science at the time of the last inspection were judged to be below the national average at the end of Year 6. Since then, results have declined to well below the national average, except in 2000, when they were close to the national average. In 2001, they were well below the national average. They were very low in comparison with prior attainment and well below in comparison with those of similar schools. Pupils' attainment in science was equivalent to that in English and better than that in mathematics in comparison with all schools nationally. In relation to prior attainment, pupils' results in science equalled those in mathematics and were lower than their results in English. In relation to similar schools, the results in science were better than those in mathematics but worse than those in English. There were no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

106. Inspection evidence showed that the standard of work attained at the end of Year 2 is close to national expectations. In view of the fact that pupils enter the school with standards that are below those expected for children of their age, the improvement at the end of Year 2 is satisfactory. However, improvement is limited by the fact that targets are not set in science in Year 2. Pupils are not aware of their level of attainment or what they need to do to achieve better. Parents are not made aware of what their children need to do to achieve their potential. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their work to help them to achieve the higher grade. As a result, not a single pupil was assessed at the higher level, compared with over one quarter of pupils nationally. With support, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets in their individual education plans but often find it difficult to apply their knowledge in test conditions.

107. Standards are below average at the end of Year 6. This represents an improvement on the 2001 results. The school has set targets at 3 per cent higher than the results achieved last year, with twice as many pupils expected to achieve the higher level in 2002. If achieved, these results would represent an improvement on 2001, although they will still be below national expectations. In order to reach national expectations it would be helpful if:

- pupils participate in the setting of their own individual targets, which are made known to parents, and are aware of the National Curriculum level they are at and what they need to do to raise that level; and
- the school identifies specific pupils who have the potential to achieve a higher grade and provides them with appropriately demanding work.

108. The absence of these measures to date has been a contributory factor in the consistent low results both in relation to the national average and to similar schools.

109. By the age of eleven, pupils competently carry out a range of experiments. For example, pupils in Year 6 successfully carried out an experiment to alter the brightness of a bulb, building on their prior knowledge of how to wire circuits correctly. They are becoming proficient in using symbols to replace drawings when explaining circuits. They carry out investigations on dissolving materials and on reversible and irreversible changes. The teacher encourages them to organise their own experiments, make and record their observations, and evaluate their findings. Pupils in Year 3 investigated an aspect of the behaviour of magnets. They planned a fair test, decided what to measure and what equipment to use, made and recorded measurements and drew appropriate conclusions. Pupils are encouraged to ask scientific questions beginning with the words, how? what?, when? and where? Pupils in Year 4 made observations and comparisons of relevant features of the human skeleton; average and higher attainers made their own models with

moveable parts. Year 5 pupils continued with their study of the earth, sun and moon. Most pupils know that it is the earth that moves and not the sun, that the earth spins on its axis once in every 24 hours, and that it is daytime in the part of the earth that faces the sun. Lower attaining pupils recognise that the earth, sun and moon are spherical and are able to explain how shadows change as the sun moves across the sky.

110. By the age of 11, pupils are able to explain many life processes, such as the workings of the ear and eye. They identify the major organs of the body and the organs of plants. Keys, based on observable features, are used to assist the identification and grouping of living things. Most pupils understand the food chain. They name a range of materials, describe their properties and explain the differences between solids, liquids and gases. They use scientific terms such as *evaporation* and *irreversible changes* to predict whether other changes are reversible. Pupils know that a complete circuit is needed to make electrical devices work, and understand the role of insulators and conductors. They know that sound is caused by an object vibrating and that the vibrations travel through the air and various materials to reach our ears.

110. By the age of seven, most pupils have a basic understanding of the growth and reproduction of living things and the conditions basic to their survival. They classify living things according to observable similarities and differences. They grow plants and are able to name the main parts of a flower. They name the main external parts of the body and realise the importance of a healthy diet and exercise for humans. Simple classifications are used to sort living things into groups. Pupils recognise that different living things are found in various habitats. They give simple explanations for changes in living things, such as health and diet in animals and lack of water in plants. Similarities and differences are identified as they study the properties of common materials. Explanations are given for why some materials are suited for specific purposes, for example making electric cables. Pupils investigate changes in materials by processes such as bending and stretching, and heating and cooling. Through practical activities, pupils gain an understanding of electric circuits. Most pupils understand how to test and record results. For example, they carry out investigations to discover how pushes and pulls make things move, speed up, slow down or change direction; they create a Venn diagram. However, their mathematical and information technology skills are, as yet, insufficiently used to record results in a variety of formats. Pupils show developing skill in making predictions and comparing them with their results. However, there is little evidence of pupils showing initiative and independence by setting up their own investigations, and higher attainers are not challenged to reach their potential.

110. Teaching is good overall. It was good in five of the six lessons observed and very good in a Year 5 lesson. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory. The rate of learning reflects the teaching. Teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and they teach basic scientific skills satisfactorily. Pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is good. Lesson planning is effective; teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are going to learn and what they are expected to achieve within the lesson. Most pupils have good attitudes to their work; they are interested and keen to achieve the objectives of the lesson and apply intellectual effort to their work. Teachers make good use of resources to engage pupils' interest and develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils draw on their literacy skills as they label diagrams, carry out research, engage in discussion, develop their vocabulary and report on results. The use of questions and ongoing assessment within the lesson ensure the involvement of all pupils. The management of pupils is good and the good behaviour and very good relationships that prevail promote learning. All pupils make good progress, including pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of developing their understanding of the English language. Trained support staff contribute

effectively to pupils' progress. Pupils' work is always marked and written comments help pupils to have a sound knowledge of their own learning, although they seldom tells pupils how they can improve. Pupils are not clear about what standards within the National Curriculum they should be aiming to reach.

111. The subject is well led by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator who provides clear educational direction and gives very good support to colleagues. Science is a focus of the current school improvement plan. The school has an appropriate scheme of work based on national guidance. Careful planning of work ensures that all aspects of work are covered. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to raise attainment in science, particularly with regard to more able pupils. Benefits would accrue from setting achievable targets, linked to National Curriculum levels that will challenge pupils of all abilities and particularly higher attaining pupils. The co-ordinator has encouraged a greater emphasis on investigative work and is keen to develop pupils' scientific writing. He monitors planning and pupils' work and will have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are in place but assessment information is not yet used effectively to guide curriculum planning and provide appropriate work for pupils of differing abilities.

ART AND DESIGN

112. Standards in art were above average when the school was last inspected. Only two art lessons took place during the period of the inspection and there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching or on pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

113. Pupils have the opportunity to work with different materials and explore a suitable variety of techniques. A display of chalk drawings of candles by Year 1 pupils showed that pupils respond well to ideas, and use a limited range of colours confidently. Careful portraits by pupils in Year 2 demonstrate an increasing attention to detail. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their skills, for example through pencil sketches in Year 4, and portraits drawn in pastel by Year 5 pupils. The work of established artists such as Matisse and Kandinsky is used well as a stimulus, and pupils gain a sound awareness of different styles. Year 6 pupils have researched the life of Alphons Mucha, some using the Internet, and most produced carefully drawn patterns in his style. In a Year 4 lesson, many pupils talked confidently about a range of pictures, but their sketching skills were broadly average for their age. Pupils are taught to experiment and explore colour and shape over a number of weeks. In Year 3, for example, pupils have explored texture and pattern in the environment, experimenting with a range of materials and techniques.

114. In the few lessons seen teaching had a number of strengths. Both lessons were carefully planned as one of a series of lessons during which skills were to be developed step by step. Lesson aims are shared with the pupils so that they are clear about what they are to learn and how it links with their previous learning. The teachers had secure subject knowledge, instructions were clear, and resources were used well. Pupils with special educational needs were given good support and as a result had full access to the curriculum. In one lesson the teacher tried to cover too much during the introduction, and this resulted in a loss of pace and some restlessness among the pupils. The lesson had started extremely well, with pupils responding enthusiastically as they discussed a variety of pictures and techniques. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to discuss their work, for example in Year 3 where pupils were given time to talk about pattern and shape. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have sketchbooks but these could be used more effectively in all classes to collect ideas and to explore techniques.

115. The co-ordinator for art also leads information technology, and her focus over the past year has been on developing the computer suite. She offers advice to colleagues but has identified the need to focus more closely on art, to revise the school policy and scheme of work, and to develop formal assessment procedures. Pupils have suitable opportunities to use drawing programs when they use the computer suite but there are no classroom computers for individuals to use during art lessons. Apart from some work on Mendhi and Rangoli patterns there is little evidence of examples of the school extending pupils' understanding by introducing them to art from a wide variety of cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards in design and technology meet national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be below national expectations across the school. During the inspection it was not possible to see any design and technology lessons because of the structure of the timetable. Judgements have been made from examples of pupils' work, photographic evidence and discussions with pupils.

117. The improvements are mainly owing to the establishment of a long-term curriculum framework that is now in place throughout the school. This curriculum identifies a number of designing and making assignments for each year group and ensures a consistent and systematic offer in the subject throughout the school. The curriculum framework also enables pupils to experience a range of work in a variety of materials, thereby enhancing their experiences in their assignments. Teachers sometimes link these assignments with other areas of the curriculum. For example, when Year 4 pupils were studying the Vikings as part of a history topic, they designed and made Viking houses using simple wooden frame structures and card. Pupils in Year 3 designed and made pizzas as part of a project on food and visited a local pizza restaurant.

118. The consistency of approach through the curriculum enables pupils to develop skills progressively. This enhances their learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.

119. Throughout the school, pupils experience work in resistant materials, textiles, food, paper and card, and mouldable and recycled materials.

120. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to generate ideas, plan what to do next, and use models, pictures and words to describe their designs. In a textile assignment, designing and making a bag, these pupils have also used computers to generate some of their designs. They used appropriate skills to construct their fabric bags and joined and combined these materials in a variety of ways, including sewing and gluing. The finished products are of good quality.

121. Older pupils have demonstrated satisfactory skills in using resistant materials to design and make moving buggies. There are some good examples of high quality products that these pupils have made. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to select a range of tools and equipment to construct their working models. They can measure and mark out with some accuracy to cut and shape their materials. They have a good knowledge of how to strengthen a joint using triangular frames. They are aware of the need for a quality finish on their product. However, pupils are not yet systematically evaluating their finished products so that they can improve their skills for their next assignment. Standards are also affected by a limited number of resources. This inhibits the progress of higher attaining pupils.

122. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their designing and making assignments. For example, one Year 6 pupil spoke with pride about his completed buggy and how it has been worn out at home with constant use. They clearly enjoy the subject and appreciate the idea of being able to work at an assignment over a number of days rather than having it spread out over a number of weeks. They are able to work in pairs and share the tasks. They have very positive attitudes to the subject.

123. In the absence of a co-ordinator, the head has recently assumed responsibility for the subject. Design and technology will feature in the school curriculum development programme in the next academic year. This will be a good opportunity to improve teachers' subject knowledge and thereby raise standards further.

GEOGRAPHY

124. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe any geography lessons because of timetabling arrangements. Evidence was obtained from an examination of pupils' work, the policy and scheme of work, long-term and medium-term plans, assessment records, resources, photographic evidence, current displays and a discussion with the co-ordinator.

125. This evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils at the age of seven meets national expectations, as was the case in the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those in the early stages of developing their understanding of the English language, make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory. In view of the fact that pupils enter the school with standards that are below those expected for their age, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the school environment, the immediate locality and the natural world. They make plans and maps of the school and their route to school, drawing on knowledge gained from walks around the school, the school grounds and the local area. Local weather studies lead to comparisons with weather in other parts of the world. Pupils study types of houses in the locality and the materials of which they are constructed. They are clear about what they like and dislike about the area. Pupils in Year 2 learn about the island of Struay in Scotland and compare life on Struay with life in Cirencester. They also study seashores past and present, with reference to Weston-super-Mare. The travels of Barnaby Bear continue to engage pupils' interest, as they take turns to take him on holiday and send postcards of his 'experiences'. It increases pupils' awareness that the world extends beyond their own locality.

126. The evidence indicates that attainment at the age of eleven meets national expectations. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and those in the early stages of developing their understanding of the English language, make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when progress was satisfactory. Achievement is good. Pupils in Year 3 have a sound knowledge of weather patterns around the world. They continue to explore the local area and make suggestions on how it can be improved. Year 4 pupils carry out a local area study and discuss environmental issues. They look at the influence of the early settlers on settlement patterns. Pupils in Year 5 investigate local traffic. They carry out a study of water. Life in India is compared with life in Cirencester. Pupils in Year 6 trace the source and course of the River Severn. They are able to compare aerial photographs with the corresponding maps of the river. Their mapping skills are developed as they study atlases, globes, world maps and Ordnance Survey maps of mountain regions, namely Cumbria and the Dolomites.

127. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching, since no lessons were observed. From the evidence cited above, teaching appears to be at least satisfactory, and in some cases good. The evidence shows that geographical skills are taught satisfactorily and that teachers' knowledge and understanding is good. As a result, pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding and develop their skills. Teachers clearly have high expectations and engage pupils' interest, with the result that they apply intellectual and creative effort to their work. Lessons are planned carefully and there is clear progression within and between year groups. Pupils' written work is of a high standard, and the quality of presentation suggests that teachers place emphasis on high standards. Marking is generally satisfactory. Where it is good, pupils are given guidance on how they can improve further.

128. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. An appropriate curriculum is in place, with opportunities for fieldwork and an emphasis on geographical enquiry skills. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are satisfactory. The provision for pupils with special needs is good. Opportunities are provided for pupils to consider moral issues such as conservation of the environment. They gain an understanding of other cultures through their study of houses in other parts of the world. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. Pupils explore the local area and talk to local people. They make visits to places of geographical interest, as outlined above.

129. The subject is well led by a relatively new and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Leadership ensures clear educational direction. The co-ordinator has an overview of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Resources are generally good but there is a need to update some of the maps. Although geography is not a focus of the school development plan until 2003, the co-ordinator has produced an action plan and is already addressing specific needs such as updating the policy. At present, there are only limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning. Procedures for addressing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, but assessment information is not consistently used to guide curriculum planning and provide appropriate work for pupils of differing abilities.

HISTORY

130. During the inspection, four history lessons were observed. Further evidence was obtained from an examination of pupils' work, the policy and scheme of work, long-term and medium-term plans, assessment records, resources, photographic evidence, current displays and a discussion with the co-ordinator.

131. This evidence indicates that the attainment of pupils at the age seven is in line with national expectations. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was below national expectations at age seven. This improvement results from improved teaching and more time is now being devoted to history. In view of the fact that pupils enter the school with standards that are below those expected for children of their age, progress is good and achievement is satisfactory. There is a greater emphasis on the development of research skills, a sense of chronology, significant events in the past, and the influence of famous men and women. This was illustrated by a lesson in Year 2 during the inspection. The emphasis was on historical enquiry skills. Pupils were presented with a range of questions about the Great Fire of London, for example 'How was it put out?' 'Why did it burn for so long?' and 'How long did it take to rebuild London?' Skilled questioning techniques were used to probe pupils' understanding of the story. Effective use was made of pictures and sentences for pupils to order/sequence important events in the story and to understand the role of Samuel Pepys in the Great Fire. Most pupils showed a good understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory. Higher attaining pupils made up some good questions 'to ask' Samuel Pepys, e.g. 'How did you feel during the fire?' 'Why did

you write in a secret code?' 'Were you excited by the Fire?' They were very keen to explain what they had learned. One pupil had brought in a fire fighter's uniform, enabling comparisons to be made between the present and the past. Lower attaining pupils were well supported by the learning support assistant. All pupils made good progress because the work was challenging for all ability groups.

132. The attainment of pupils at the age of 11 is in line with national expectations, as it was at the last inspection. More time is devoted to history than at the last inspection and there is a greater emphasis on historical skills. Pupils make good progress and achieve satisfactorily. During the inspection, pupils in Year 3 learned about ancient Egypt from what has survived. The 'discovery' of a number of artefacts in a sand tray, borrowed from the infant department, proved a good strategy in engaging pupils' interest. Pupils produced good close observational drawings of a number of artefacts, including a necklace, Tutankhamun, a tomb, parchment, a model of a cat and hieroglyphics. Higher attaining pupils wrote a paragraph to describe their 'find'. Lower attaining pupils, with support, wrote at least one sentence. A further challenge was to decide what we could put in a time capsule to inform future researchers about life in 2002. Pupils in Year 4 were fascinated by the arrival of an 'Anglo-Saxon' lady, i.e. an historical interpreter from the Forest of Dean. She kept them enthralled for two hours as she brought the Anglo-Saxon period 'alive'. Very good questioning techniques were used to encourage pupils to reason, to judge the period by the standards of the time and not the present day, and to compare their own family units with those of Anglo-Saxon times. Resources were excellent and all pupils learned a great deal from examining a range of artefacts. Higher attainers were able to describe with confidence what they had learned; lower attainers gained a good understanding, with support.

133. Pupils in Year 6 successfully distinguished between fact/fiction/evidence/opinion as they considered the causes of the Second World War. Higher attaining pupils were able to apply their knowledge of the current war in Afghanistan to war in general. Average attaining pupils showed understanding of a simple time line. Lower attaining pupils were helped to distinguish between evidence and opinion.

134. Teaching varied from satisfactory, through good, to very good. It is good overall, and leads to good learning. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are good, with the result that pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding is good. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond with interest, enthusiasm and involvement. Teachers' planning is sound. They engage pupils' interest, with the result that pupils apply intellectual and creative effort to their work. Teaching methods effectively enable all pupils to achieve well. Work is usually appropriately challenging for all groups of pupils and leads to good progress. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of their own learning. Time and resources are used well and pupils' productivity and pace of working is satisfactory. The quality and use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory. Teachers support the development of pupils' literacy skills through discussion, research and writing. Opportunities to promote learning through communication and information technology are not, as yet, fully used. Marking is mostly satisfactory. Where it is good it helps pupils to know what they have achieved and how they can progress further.

135. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory. An appropriate curriculum is in place. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum are satisfactory. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Opportunities are provided for pupils to consider moral issues in relation to historical events, for example the early invasions of Britain and the Second World War. Their social development is enhanced through discussions with adults about the recent past and through their work in groups and pairs. They gain an understanding of other cultures as they learn about the invaders and

settlers of Britain. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. Pupils explore the local area, visit local museums and the Forest of Dean, and learn from visiting 'Celts', 'Anglo-Saxons', 'Romans' and a speaker on 'Britain since 1930'.

136. The subject is well led by a relatively new, enthusiastic co-ordinator. Leadership ensures clear educational direction. The co-ordinator has an overview of teachers' planning and pupils' work. Resources are very good and are used well. Although history is not a focus of the school improvement plan until 2003, the co-ordinator has produced an action plan and is already addressing identified needs. In addition to her monitoring of planning and pupils' work, it would be advantageous if she could have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. Procedures for addressing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory, but assessment information is not consistently used to guide curriculum planning and provide appropriate work for pupils of differing abilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

137. Standards in information and communications technology are average for pupils at the end of Year 2 but remain below average for pupils at the end of Year 6. The development of information technology has been a major focus for the school since the last inspection, when standards achieved by pupils were below national expectations and progress in learning was unsatisfactory. The school has wisely provided training for all members of staff and has appointed an enthusiastic co-ordinator who is very effectively supported by a knowledgeable and helpful technician. All pupils are now taught in a newly developed computer suite that houses all the computers. These initiatives, together with the a good scheme of work for each year group and visits by teachers to other schools to study good practice, are having a positive impact on standards, and appropriate skills are now being taught in all year groups. However, these improvements in provision have been too recent to raise standards in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, although making good progress in their learning, have not yet had time to experience all the elements of the information technology curriculum. The school is considering ways of making greater use of computers throughout the school day so that information and communication technology can be used more fully as a tool for learning in all subjects of the curriculum.

138. The quality of teaching is good and supports good learning. Four lessons were observed during the inspection, three of which were good and one satisfactory. Teachers plan effectively, using national guidance. Explanations are clear and, consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs, understand what they are to do. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons and higher attaining pupils are often used to support less able pupils or those with special educational needs. Pupils' enthusiasm, very good behaviour and willingness to discuss their work and to help each other, make very positive contributions to their learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in learning to save, retrieve and print their work. By the end of Year 2, they compose and edit their own versions of traditional fairy tales, making effective use of mouse control and keyboard skills. In a good, well-prepared Year 2 lesson, pupils were observed making effective use of cursors and the space bar to improve sentences in their writing about Cinderella. One pupil improved his sentence from 'Cinderella went down the steps' by adding the adjective 'steep' to 'steps'. Most pupils in this class use a word processor competently to change the style and size of letters and to write and improve short texts. By

the end of Year 2, pupils have been successfully taught to produce graphs from data collected, as, for example, when they research the most popular ice cream flavours. They are able to use CD ROMs to research simple information. Planning shows that by the time they are seven, pupils will have been taught to write programs for programmable toys to send them on specific routes.

139. Work produced shows that by the end of Year 6 pupils have been taught how to enter text and manipulate it by changing font, size, style and colour. Pupils combine pictures with text, and confidently compose and edit their work on screen. They carefully consider layout and presentation to enhance their work, to produce work with text, maps, graphs and pictures. Pupils are becoming familiar with the function of graphics and are growing in confidence in using clip art and digital images from a scanner. They take a lot of pride in their work; the resulting work is attractive to the reader and pupils are justifiably very proud of what they have produced. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils were being effectively taught to develop their ideas by assembling and organising text, tables and images to produce a school newspaper. The headings they produced were attractive and fulfilled the purpose of catching the reader's attention. By the age of 11, pupils are able to use LOGO to draw 2-D shapes on the screen, including squares, rectangles and triangles, and use 'repeat' to shortcut strings of instructions. They confidently access information using CD-ROMS, but as yet they have less experience of simulation packages and monitoring technology.

140. Data handling skills are now being suitably developed across the school and this is having a positive impact on pupils' knowledge and understanding of data handling in mathematics and across the curriculum. Information and communication technology is also being increasingly used to support work in other areas of the curriculum and the school plans to extend this provision. However, there are currently no computers in the classrooms.

141. Pupils have been assigned their own folders so that teachers can use this information to assess pupils' work and to provide extra support where necessary. Teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to computers, and higher attaining pupils are well used to help those who are less confident. Cabling for direct access to the Internet has recently been completed and new equipment to support developments in control and monitoring are now in place. Year 6 pupils are given further opportunities to use computers and for specialist teaching during their visits to local secondary schools. These initiatives help to widen pupils' experience of information and communication technology as well as enhancing their social development. The school is now well placed to continue to raise standards and to make increasing use of information and communication technology in other subjects of the curriculum. A well-attended computer club has just been introduced, and this will help to raise the profile of the subject in the school and to enhance pupils' learning.

MUSIC

142. Only one music lesson took place during the period of the inspection and there is too little evidence available to make judgements on either attainment or teaching. Attainment in music was found to be above average at the time of the previous inspection. Although there have been substantial staff changes since then the school has a number of staff who are confident in teaching and performing.

143. The standard of singing in the assemblies is good and pupils obviously enjoy singing in unison. Pupils sing confidently and tunefully, with good control of tone and pitch. Most pupils listen attentively to the music which is played as they enter and leave the hall, but teachers do not take advantage of the opportunity to tell the pupils about the work nor about the

composer. In the one lesson seen, Year 1 pupils obviously enjoyed listening to music as they gathered on the carpet at the start of their music lesson. They listened carefully to the taped lesson and showed a satisfactory understanding of simple pitch, identifying high and low sounds. The teacher managed the lesson well, stopping the tape skilfully to reinforce learning while maintaining the pace of the lesson. The pupils enjoyed singing the familiar action song "Incy Wincy Spider" and made satisfactory progress in learning new and quite challenging songs. They are familiar with a range of percussion instruments and have had experience of performing while following a series of symbols. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and consequently have full access to the lesson. Older pupils are introduced to a suitable range of musical terms and compose their own songs using a variety of structures.

144. The co-ordinator had only been a week in post at the time of the inspection. She has a good understanding of subject management and has already identified the need to improve resources by widening the range of instruments and samples of music and by increasing those from a range of non-Western cultures. The school has adopted national guidance as a basis for planning, and the co-ordinator has identified the need to revise the scheme of work and to ensure that teachers have adequate supporting material. Formal assessment procedures have yet to be developed. The school has maintained the strong tradition of regular performances to parents and with other schools, thereby contributing to pupils' social development. The extra-curricular choir and orchestra continue to offer pupils the opportunity to practise and perform together.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. Standards in physical education are average at the end both Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement is similar to the findings of the last inspection. There are no differences between the standards achieved by boys and girls. Standards have largely been maintained through a curriculum framework that systematically offers pupils opportunities to develop skills in gymnastics, games, dance and swimming, and through the enthusiasm that teachers and pupils have for the subject. This enthusiasm is reflected in lessons and in the pupils' performances in competitions and the local dance festivals in which they take part. In view of the fact that pupils enter the school with standards below those expected for children of their age, progress is good and achievement is satisfactory.

146. Because of the structure of the timetable it was possible to see only a limited number of lessons. Judgements have been made from talking with pupils and looking at photographs and video recordings of their performances.

147. Pupils in Year 2 work enthusiastically in dance lessons. They are able to express and communicate ideas through movements in their bodies. They can copy, remember and repeat simple actions with control and co-ordination, and they are able to vary these skills and link them in ways that suit the activities. They are able to demonstrate their performances and evaluate others' work in a positive manner. They are learning to reflect a variety of music through movements of their bodies. These younger pupils have also learnt some basic gymnastic exercises such as forward and backward rolls, and they are able to perform these movements safely with some grace. They are able to work independently or with a partner.

148. Older pupils in Year 6 are able to demonstrate a range of skills within physical education. In dance, their performances combine gymnastics with the grace of movement. For example, in their performance of "Ghost Dance" they combine floor exercises such as cartwheels, jumping, and turning and rolling with movements of arms and legs to express

feelings from the music. The performance shows precision, control and fluency. Pupils choreographed this piece with the help of a local dance teacher, and it was then performed in a local dance festival. Pupils also have good skills in repeating movements to the regular beat of music, as demonstrated in country-dance.

149. These older pupils have also acquired good skills in games. They understand tactics in competitive games such as netball. Pupils also achieve well in games and gymnastics lessons, because they are taught skills and techniques systematically. This was well illustrated in a Year 5 lesson where pupils' skills were progressively developed during the session. By the end they were able to play a simplified version of the game, using all the tactics necessary for a full game. Pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 experience swimming as they attend the local pool for one term each year. Nearly all pupils achieve the minimum of 25 metres and many more achieve higher awards. Standards in swimming are above average.

150. Overall, the teaching is good. This has helped maintain standards. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they have high expectations of pupils. Their enthusiasm is relayed to pupils; for example, teachers and pupils alike are always dressed appropriately for these lessons. All lessons begin with an appropriate warm up during which pupils become aware of their bodies and the movements that will be required. Teachers demonstrate skills well. They also use pupils to demonstrate and often stop lessons to enable others to evaluate performances. Most lessons include increasing challenges so that pupils' learning is developed systematically. All lessons include a warm down and a revision of the skills learnt. Teachers plan and teach physical education lessons with due regard to health and safety. For example, pupils are taught to set up and put away equipment safely and efficiently. Pupils are managed well in these lessons, and they display good attitudes towards the subject. They are able to concentrate and work hard for the whole session.

151. The school's enthusiasm for the subject is reflected in number of extra-curricular activities that are available for pupils. The school enters local competitions in football and netball, and older pupils enjoy outdoor activities during the summer term. The co-ordinator has a good grasp of standards and knows what is required to improve attainment in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152. Standards in religious education match those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils aged seven in Year 2 and eleven in Year 6. These sound standards have been well maintained since the time of the last inspection. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching and learning in these lessons was good in two and satisfactory in two. This evidence, together with analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' plans, and discussions with staff and pupils indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. Throughout the school, pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. Teachers feel well supported by the agreed syllabus and research the subject well. However, there is not a wide enough range of artefacts and research materials available to older pupils. This would help pupils to retain knowledge of aspects they themselves have researched rather than depend on teachers to provide them with facts about faiths, traditions and religious practices. In this way, the subject would also

make a greater contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Teachers manage their pupils well in lessons and this ensures that all pupils can learn in a calm, peaceful environment. In some lessons, however, some pupils are allowed to play a passive role because teachers fail to notice those who are reticent and to challenge them through closely targeted questions.

153. By the end of Year 2 pupils show a sound understanding of the richness and diversity of different religions by looking at Christianity and Judaism. They are taught about special books such as the Bible and the Torah, and that each gives rules for living. Through visits to their local church, pupils are able to recognise and understand the purpose of different parts of the building. They are beginning to understand the significance of baptism as a sign of belonging. Pupils know that a major element in different faiths is that of caring for one another and the environment. They are taught key events in the lives of Jesus and Moses and study a range of Bible stories. They know that Jesus' two main commandments or rules are to love God and each other and are told stories such as that of the Good Samaritan to support their learning and to deepen their understanding. Circle times are well used to further develop pupils' moral understanding of issues such as bullying and fair treatment for all.

154. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding of the origins of Christianity and of the life and times of Jesus. Teachers build well on what pupils have been taught in Years 1 and 2, and they gain a deeper understanding of Judaism as well as being introduced to Judaism. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils show that they have a sound understanding of the importance of festivals such as Epiphany, Diwali, Advent, Hanukkah and St Lucia's Day. They learn that each of the faiths studied has a Supreme Being, a place of worship and key leaders such as Jesus, Moses and Muhammad. They are also taught that each faith has a Holy Text, for example the Bible, the Qur'an and the Torah, and teachers deepen pupils' understanding of the rules for living which these contain. Although pupils develop a sound understanding that religions share some common features it is when they are challenged to make links between different faiths that their weak powers of retention are evident. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of how people should treat each other through studying the lives of inspirational people and the parables of Jesus. Assemblies, led by members of staff or the vicar, are used well to support pupils' learning and their moral and social development. Respect and care for God's World are strong features of the agreed syllabus. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher made good use of the story of Noah for pupils to consider the importance of caring for our planet Earth as well as to challenge pupils to consider 'new beginnings' in their own lives. In this way the teacher ensured that pupils were not only learning about religion but also from religion.

155. The school ensures that the subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development. Pupils join with the local community in church services such as Harvest, Christmas and the Epiphany. These opportunities further strengthen pupils' understanding of Christianity as well as supporting their sense of community. The school supplements its own range of artefacts by borrowing resources from the Diocesan library. However, greater use needs to be made of displays of pictures and artefacts to support pupils' understanding and knowledge of the main faiths represented in Britain today and to further support their cultural development.