

INSPECTION REPORT

THAMESIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 109800

Headteacher: Mrs Jane Moore

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th January 2001

Inspection number: 206796

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wolsey Road Caversham READING
Postcode:	RG4 8BY
Telephone number:	0118 901 5551
Fax number:	0118 901 5552
E-mail address:	admin.thameside@reading.gov.uk
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mary Waite
Date of previous inspection:	September 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Crowther <i>Registered inspector</i> 18814	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Art Design and technology Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Vivienne Phillips <i>Lay inspector</i> 9053		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Paul Ducker <i>Team inspector</i> 18488	Science History Geography Special educational needs English as an additional language	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Jo Harris <i>Team inspector</i> 3678	English Music Religious education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
David Major <i>Team inspector</i> 27709	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas Limited, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey. RH8 0RE Tel. 01883 723257

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager, Inspection Quality Division, The Office for Standards in Education, Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London. WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	9
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thameside is a medium-sized, community primary school for boys and girls who are 5-11 years old. It has 260 full-time pupils. The school is situated in a relatively affluent area, but mainly serves families whose social circumstances are less favourable than national averages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is below average, particularly in their language and social skills. Across the school, 94 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, of whom seven have a statement. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is well above average. About nine per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is high compared with the national picture; 15 are learning English as an additional language, of which four are at the early stages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Thameside is an effective school, with a number of strengths. The staff and governors have made great strides during the past two years in improving many aspects of the school's work. Strong, effective leadership by the headteacher has been crucial in this process. As a result, pupils make sound, often good progress during their time at the school, and positive attitudes to learning are promoted successfully. The quality of teaching is good in many lessons. However, there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching in some lessons, within both key stages, that prevent pupils from making the progress of which they are capable. There is a very wide range of attainment when children start school, with many having below average skills. By the age of 11, the standards pupils attain in English are close to, but still slightly below those expected for their ages; they are below expectations in mathematics, but match expectations in science. Attainment compares favourably with standards achieved in similar schools. There have been recent improvements in the results of national tests, but the school is still firmly focused on raising standards. However, the test results alone do not reflect the considerable value the school adds to pupils' confidence, attitudes and skills. The staff work very well as a team and are constantly trying to improve the quality of their work. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher and governors provide a very strong lead in raising standards.
- The results of national tests in English, mathematics and science are improving.
- Pupils' good attitudes, their good behaviour, and their good relationships with each other and with staff support learning well.
- Teaching is consistently good in a number of classes.
- The curriculum is planned very carefully so pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are developed steadily.
- The school promotes and sustains good links with parents.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Achievement in information and communication technology.

- The quality of teaching in some lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in September 1998, the school was judged to provide an acceptable standard of education, but there were serious weaknesses in leadership and management, the quality of teaching, the planning of the curriculum and, therefore, the standards attained by the pupils. Since then, the school has made good progress, in a relatively short period of time. Following the appointment of a new headteacher, the staff have made rapid progress in addressing most of the action points from the last inspection. The quality of teaching for the older pupils has improved considerably. The curriculum is now planned far more systematically, and subject co-ordinators offer good support for other teachers. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are much improved, so information can be used to plan the next steps in learning. The support provided for pupils with special educational needs is now well planned and effective; as a result these pupils make steady progress during their time at the school. Although pupils now make better progress in information and communication technology, it is still not good enough across the school. The school is continuing to improve, and has a good capacity to raise standards further.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average points scores in National Curriculum tests:

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	C	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	D	D	C	
science	D	B	C	B	

Attainment on entry to the school is below average compared with what is expected nationally. Pupils' achievements are sound during their time at the school. Results achieved in national tests for 11 year olds have improved recently and, for the year 2000, compared very favourably with those achieved by similar schools. The school exceeded its targets in national tests last year, but the results for 2001 are likely to be lower because the current Year 6 contains fewer high-attaining pupils.

Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 6 is close to, but not quite reaching national expectations in English. It is below expectations in mathematics, but matches expectations in science. In all three subjects, pupils make sound progress across the school, and good progress towards the end of each key stage. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are below average throughout the school, but literacy skills are developed well through work in other subjects. In information and communication technology, pupils make unsatisfactory progress across the school

because they do not spend enough time on the subject, so standards are below national expectations. In religious education, pupils' achievements are satisfactory during both key stages, and attainment matches that expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS (continued)

The younger pupils make good progress in geography and history, and continued sound progress in Key Stage 2 enables them to reach the expected standard by the time they leave the school. In music and physical education, pupils' positive attitudes support sound progress across the school and ensure that they reach the expected standard. In art and design, and design and technology (DT), though pupils make satisfactory progress, the quality of their work is slightly below expectations by the time they reach Year 6. Design aspects of DT and three-dimensional work in art need development. Pupils' achievements in English, science, art, geography and history have improved since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They generally listen carefully to their teachers and are willing to work, which provides a good base for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The school code of conduct is very clear, so pupils know what is expected of them and behave well in most situations. Pupils move around the school sensibly. There has been one exclusion in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are good. Pupils generally work and play well together. Older pupils have additional responsibilities, but there are too few opportunities for independent learning in lessons.
Attendance	Below the national average and poor for a few pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils	aged under five	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	sound	sound	sound

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; sound; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Sound' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of good features. It was very good in 15 per cent of the lessons observed, good or better in 42 per cent, and at least satisfactory in 93 per cent. The quality of teaching for the 7-11 year olds has improved considerably since the last inspection. Teaching is strongest towards the end of Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, careful planning, positive management of pupils' behaviour, and the use of a good range of teaching methods are strong features of most lessons. Where teaching is very good, imaginative strategies, high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and good organisation of learning, promote rapid progress. Where teaching is least effective, planning does not identify exactly what pupils are to learn, or include sufficient depth of content to ensure that all pupils are challenged. In some lessons, whole-class sessions last too long, the pace of teaching is slow, and pupils listen to the teacher rather than being involved practically in their learning. In a few lessons, expectations of pupils' good behaviour

are not high enough, so time is lost ensuring that they remain focused on their work. The school recognises the need to raise the standard of weaker teaching so that it matches the good quality seen in many lessons. Teaching is good in a high proportion of literacy and numeracy lessons. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound for children in the reception year, but lacking enough opportunities for structured play. Sound throughout the rest of the school, but with a significant weakness in information and communication technology. Consistency in planning the curriculum, led by subject co-ordinators, is a strength. Pupils would benefit from more opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language.	Good. Provision is well organised so that pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate targets are set. The quality of individual education plans is a particular strength. Work is generally well matched to pupils' needs in lessons and they receive good support from adults. The few pupils learning English as an additional language are well catered for.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' personal development is an important part of the day-to-day life of the school, and is supported effectively by good relationships. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, and there is sound provision for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils Assessment	The school provides good care and support for its pupils through a range of effective policies and procedures. Good procedures are in place to assess pupils' progress and attainment, and this information is increasingly being used to match work to pupils' needs.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school works very hard to build and sustain effective links with parents, so that they can support their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very strong, effective leadership for the school. During the past two years, she has motivated the staff team to achieve considerable improvements in many aspects of the school's work. She has a clear vision for strengthening the quality of teaching and learning still further. She is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher and other key staff, who have a shared understanding of areas for development and how improvements can be achieved.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body is supportive, actively involved in the work of the school and fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors bring

	considerable expertise to their work, visit school regularly, and are developing a sound overview of standards.
--	---

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED (continued)

Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There is considerable evaluation of pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching and learning, by the headteacher and senior staff. This has been used to identify areas where standards need to be raised, and to plan action to seek improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and management are very good. The school has planned its spending well in to the future. The school pays due regard to the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed. Teachers and classroom assistants are a committed and hard working team, but the good skills of classroom assistants are not best used in parts of some lessons. The school building is spacious and well cared for. Learning resources are sound.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their children enjoy going to school and make good progress. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ They are kept well informed about their child's progress. ▪ The school is very approachable if parents have concerns. ▪ The school expects children to work hard, achieve their best, and helps them to become mature and responsible. ▪ Behaviour in the school is good. ▪ The school works closely with parents. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some parents feel that homework is not set consistently in all classes. ▪ Some parents feel that there are not enough activities outside lessons.

The great majority of parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school's work, and inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Inspection evidence indicates that homework is set consistently, but inspectors agree that more extra-curricular activities would enrich pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children who join the reception classes but, overall, it is below average compared with what is expected nationally. At the time of the inspection, only 10 children were in the reception year, with about 30 more due to start school at the beginning of the following term. These children were making a confident start at school and sound progress in all areas of learning. Teachers provide a broad curriculum and identify specific and appropriate learning objectives for these children. However, they do not provide the best balance of structured play and independent activities that is most relevant for children of this age. About half of the children observed during the inspection are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development by the time they are ready to start Year 1. About half will not reach this standard. Children with special needs are well supported and make similar progress to other pupils.

2. In the year 2000 end of Key Stage 1 assessments for seven year olds, results in reading, writing and mathematics were all below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 of attainment was well above average in writing, and average in reading and mathematics. Based on teachers' assessments, attainment in science was below the national average. Comparisons with schools in similar social circumstances show that the 2000 results were about average. The school's results were very low until the year 2000, but now represent an improvement since the last inspection.

3. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 2 is below national expectations in English and mathematics, but close to national expectations in science. Many pupils begin Key Stage 1 with skills that are below average compared with what is expected nationally. In English, mathematics and most other subjects, pupils' achievements during the key stage are sound overall, regardless of their prior attainment, with good achievement in science. In history and geography, pupils make good progress because the curriculum is rich and varied and the subjects are well taught. In information and communication technology (ICT), however, pupils make unsatisfactory progress because they do not spend enough time on the subject. Overall, attainment is about the same as reported at the last inspection.

4. In the year 2000 end of Key Stage 2 assessments for 11 year olds, results in English were above the national average, results in science were close to the national average, but those for mathematics were below average. These results were significantly better than the previous year,

particularly for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 of attainment in English. Standards have risen at a faster rate than the national trend during the past two years.

5. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that attainment in the current Year 6 is close to, but not quite reaching national expectations in English, because the year group contains fewer higher attainers and a greater proportion of pupils with special educational

6

needs than last year. Attainment in mathematics continues to be below national expectations, but attainment in science matches national expectations. Given that many pupils start Key Stage 2 with below average skills, achievement during the key stage is sound, with rather better progress in English. Pupils of all abilities make appropriate progress. For example, a few high attainers are encouraged to achieve the very challenging Level 6 in the end of key stage tests, whilst pupils with special needs are supported so that they can achieve the best result of which they are capable. Across Key Stage 2, however, pupils' achievements vary between classes because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. Achievements in ICT continue to be unsatisfactory, but are improving as teachers become more confident and new equipment is used more effectively. In all other subjects, pupils' achievements are sound, and overall attainment has improved considerably since the last inspection.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make generally sound progress in relation to their initial attainment, and some make good gains, particularly in improving their literacy skills. Provision has improved markedly since the last inspection, and this is reflected in better progress. Tasks are now matched more closely to pupils' needs, and support from teachers and classroom assistants is more effective. Setting arrangements in Key Stage 2 enable teachers to ensure that work is at the right level, and the ratio of pupils to adults is often very favourable for the sets containing a high proportion of pupils with special needs. As a result, these pupils often make good progress in literacy and numeracy lessons. There are no significant variations in pupils' achievements by gender.

7. Pupils' listening skills are about average. Speaking skills are below average and vary greatly, with many pupils articulate and confident, but a significant minority lacking the confidence or skills to participate fully in discussion. Most pupils enjoy reading but attainment is just below average. In Year 2, higher-attaining pupils read fluently and with expression, but most are still developing their skills. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils read challenging texts fluently, with good expression. They discuss favourite authors, justifying their opinions well. However, many pupils have a limited range of reading to draw on and their opinions are expressed in simple terms. Standards in writing have improved since the last inspection. A good range of writing is undertaken in most classes. In Year 2, pupils are beginning to write sentences and use a writing frame to plan a simple story. Higher-attaining pupils write confidently at length, sustaining the plot, joining their handwriting and spelling quite accurately. By Year 6, higher attainers' writing is of an above average standard, with use of varied and interesting language in a variety of styles.

8. In mathematics, attainment in Year 2 is below national expectations. About two thirds of pupils work confidently with numbers to 100, for example when counting in 2s, 5s and 10s, or ordering numbers. Many understand the value of digits in larger numbers, but this is insecure for lower attainers. Most are able to estimate whether lengths are more or less than one metre, and check

measurements correctly. By Year 6, most pupils calculate confidently with numbers up to 10,000 and many have good calculation skills, including the use of decimals. Most pupils' knowledge and use of fractions is sound. They can sort two-dimensional shapes correctly, and calculate the perimeters and areas of different types of shapes. Overall, attainment in the current Year 6 is close to, but not quite reaching, national expectations. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed progressively as they move through the school, but they are below average.

7

9. Attainment in science is close to national expectations at the end of each key stage. For example, Year 2 pupils understand the different properties of materials, confidently using words such as hard, shiny, flexible and smooth to sort and classify natural and man-made examples. They understand that everyday materials change when they are cooled or warmed. They are able to make observations, describe their work, record their findings and make simple deductions. All pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1. Year 6 pupils understand that objects are pulled downwards because of the gravitational attraction of the earth. They used forcemeters to measure gravity, finding the weight of various objects and recording this in both Newtons and grams. All pupils understand the concept of a fair test; they can make predictions, record their observations and measurements and communicate findings using appropriate scientific language. Achievement is sound during Key Stage 2.

10. In geography and history, pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1 because the curriculum is well planned and stimulating, and teaching is good. They make sound progress during Key Stage 2, building on a secure foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding. In art, design and technology, music and physical education, pupils' achievements are sound across the school and standards are close to those expected for pupils' ages. In religious education, sound progress ensures that attainment meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. In ICT, however, pupils make unsatisfactory progress across the school because they spend too little time improving their skills, all the requirements of the national curriculum are not covered, and teachers are not yet making best use of equipment. As a result, attainment is below national expectations at the end of each key stage.

11. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievements and the standards of attainment they reach have improved considerably. In English, science, art, geography and history pupils are making better progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Results of national assessments, for both seven and 11 year olds, have improved during the past two years and are now as good as, or better than those achieved by similar schools. The rate of improvement has been good since the last inspection and the school is well placed to raise standards still further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. At the last inspection, there were significant weaknesses in pupils' behaviour, both in and out of lessons, caused by inconsistencies in management by staff. Since then, there has been a good rate of improvement. The high priority given to promoting positive attitudes and behaviour has resulted in a more orderly and productive community.

13. Attitudes to school are good. Parents say that their children like coming to school and are happy there. In most lessons, pupils do what is asked of them and enjoy their work, particularly

when it is challenging enough to hold their interest throughout. They are usually attentive in whole-class sessions, especially when they have good opportunities to answer lively questions, as in a history lesson where pupils compared the homes of rich and poor in Tudor times. In the best lessons, pupils' enthusiasm for learning is strong. For example, in a religious education lesson about different holy days, pupils were fascinated by the teachers' thoughtful questions linked to vivid, relevant video material. Pupils enjoy working together on collaborative activities such as those used in mathematics. They are willing to learn, but not often eager or curious to find out more for themselves. In the very best lessons, pupils are reluctant to stop work.

8

14. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils behave well most of the time in line with the school's code of conduct and the high expectations of staff. There are isolated instances of inappropriate behaviour, usually involving the same few pupils who have not adjusted to school life as successfully as their classmates. The steps taken by the school to deal with misbehaviour have been effective and have helped these pupils to understand the conduct required, even if they are not yet able to do the right thing all the time. Teachers manage behaviour positively, firmly and fairly so that, in most lessons, it usually supports concentration and learning well. Pupils move around the school in a civilised and orderly way. They are helpful and polite to visitors. Bullying is rare. In the playground, younger children play well together with encouragement from Year 6 monitors. The energetic play of many older pupils reflects the rough and tumble typical of their age group. There was one exclusion during the last school year.

15. Overall, personal development and relationships are satisfactory. Pupils are tolerant of each other and work together well, given the chance, as in a drama lesson where they practised in groups the movements and expressions of 'demons of the deep'. They are happy to share resources such as scissors and glue in art. Relationships are good and help to create a positive working atmosphere that supports learning. Adults get on well with pupils. They are friendly but firm and make it clear that they value the good work that pupils do. In some lessons pupils are given responsibility for organising themselves and working independently to meet specific goals, as in the best literacy and numeracy sessions. In general, however, independent learning skills are modest because there is not enough scope for their development as pupils often spend a long time listening to the teacher. Older pupils are given a range of responsibilities such as helping to prepare for afternoon lessons, looking after younger children and helping the office to distribute post. In religious education, pupils respond well to opportunities to think about other faiths and customs and show respect for different beliefs and ways of life. They are aware of the effect of their actions on others, but their understanding of how others think and feel is shallow. This is because, in other lessons, there are more limited chances for reflection and discussion about people's different lives and experiences.

16. Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is well below the national average with authorised absences above average. Most pupils come to school regularly and arrive on time. Almost all pupils are willing, even eager to attend. There are, however, a few pupils whose ill health or personal circumstances result in frequent or lengthy unavoidable absences. There are also a few pupils who are on roll but, in practice, are not living locally or able to attend school throughout the school year. These factors account for about a quarter of recorded absence and prevent the school's level of attendance from being close to average. There are a few families whose children are absent more often than usual. These individual pupils are happy to be in school and to learn when they have the chance. Their progress is affected adversely by their additional absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of good features. Throughout the school, careful planning, positive management of pupils' behaviour, and the use of a good range of teaching methods are strong features of most lessons. Where teaching is very good,

9

imaginative strategies, high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and good organisation of learning, promote rapid progress. Where teaching is least effective, planning does not identify exactly what pupils are to learn, or include sufficient depth of content to ensure that all pupils are challenged. In some lessons, whole-class sessions last too long, the pace of teaching is slow, and pupils listen to the teacher rather than being involved practically in their learning. In a few lessons, expectations of pupils' good behaviour are not high enough, so time is lost ensuring that they remain focused on their work.

18. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of the lessons observed. It was good or better in 42 per cent, and very good in 15 per cent. Teaching is strongest towards the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching for the 7-11 year olds has improved considerably since the last inspection, when about 30 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. However, the school recognises the need to improve weaker teaching, so that it matches the good quality seen in many lessons. Teaching was good in a high proportion of literacy lessons observed. In Key Stage 1, good teaching for science, geography and history enables pupils to make good progress. Music was well taught in the lessons seen. In ICT, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory overall, largely because teachers have yet to gain the expertise and confidence to make effective use of resources. This accounted for two of the unsatisfactory lessons observed. Teaching of all other subjects is sound.

19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. It is good when teachers and classroom assistants provide close support for individuals and small groups, and this has improved since the last inspection. In most literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers meet the special needs of pupils well, providing appropriate activities and good support. In Key Stage 2, setting arrangements enable tasks and adult support to be targeted effectively to meet the special needs of pupils.

20. Teaching for children in the foundation stage is sound. At the time of the inspection, the children had only been in school for a few days, but were making satisfactory progress towards the targets expected at the end of the reception year. The organisation of their learning, within a class of older pupils, creates challenges for teaching. Teachers identify appropriate learning objectives, organise lively, interesting whole-class sessions, and teach basic skills in language and mathematics effectively. Both teachers and classroom assistants make good use of opportunities to stimulate language, curiosity and practical skills. However, they do not provide the best balance of structured play and independent activities that is most relevant for children of this age.

21. Throughout the rest of the school, teachers have a secure knowledge of most subjects. Where teachers have a high level of expertise, pupils make good gains in learning. For example, in a history

lesson, Year 3/4 pupils thought about homes in Tudor times and the differences between those of the rich and poor. The teacher's good knowledge of the subject enabled her to lead a lively discussion, and to ask searching questions about the sources of evidence. As a result, the pupils were very interested, worked hard, and learnt a good deal about how to interpret pictures and text. Teachers use their good knowledge to plan lessons carefully, to explain ideas clearly, and to extend pupils' understanding. The only significant weakness is in ICT, where a number of teachers do not have sufficient confidence or expertise to make best use of the school's resources.

10

22. Basic skills are taught effectively. Reading is taught methodically, using a structured scheme. In literacy sessions, clear teaching of letter sounds and types of words strengthens pupils' ability in reading and writing. For example, Year 2 pupils learnt about the sound 'ow' and that it varied in different words. They read a well-chosen poem to reinforce their understanding and, throughout the lesson, the teacher kept bringing their attention to sound and letter patterns in a range of words. In mathematics, extending pupils' counting and calculating skills is a feature of all lessons, and there were good examples of teachers exploring a range of methods to consolidate pupils' learning.

23. Teachers' detailed planning is a good feature of many lessons. It identifies clear learning intentions, which are shared with pupils so that they know what they are trying to achieve. For example, in a science lesson, Year 2 pupils sorted different types of materials. The teacher began by explaining exactly what the pupils should know by the end of the lesson, kept reminding them during the lesson, and checked their understanding at the end. As a result, all the pupils remained focused and interested, and achieved the objective. However, in a significant number of lessons, there were weaknesses in planning. Learning intentions were too broad and did not guide the teaching. Teachers failed to share learning intentions with pupils, who were left uncertain about what they were trying to achieve. The structure and content of the lesson were too vague, with too little thought given to how pupils of various abilities would be challenged. These weaknesses, identified at the last inspection, are still a concern.

24. Where teaching was very good, it was the high expectations of what pupils could achieve that encouraged them to work hard and make very good gains in learning. For example, in a music lesson, Year 5/6 pupils listened to '2001 – a Space Odyssey' and 'Mars' from 'The Planets' by Holst. The teacher encouraged them to imagine what they might find in space, and the images the music evoked. The pupils responded by listening attentively and suggesting a wide range of interesting ideas. High expectations in a number of physical education lessons led to enthusiastic, controlled performance. Pupils enjoyed the challenging mental mathematics sessions that were a feature of many numeracy lessons because they had to think quickly and work hard. Where teaching was good, work was well matched to pupils' needs, and teachers planned a range of activities to ensure the right challenge. In a few lessons, however, mainly in Key Stage 2, work was not best matched to the needs of pupils, particularly the higher attainers.

25. Teachers use a good range of strategies, which are generally well suited to the task in hand. Whole-class sessions are often lively and interesting, and the best teaching ensures that pupils are fully involved. For example, a numeracy lesson in Year 1 began with the singing of counting rhymes, followed by opportunities for individuals to count to 20 and back, and then work ordering number cards from 1-10. More interest was created when the teacher read the book 'Six Dinner Sid' and

asked the pupils to respond to the many references to numbers. As a result, the pupils sustained interest and concentration and participated eagerly. A particularly imaginative literacy lesson in Year 2, about ice and snow, began with the teacher revealing an ice rabbit, made from a mould, that captured the pupils' interest immediately. Teachers use questioning skilfully to check and extend pupils' understanding. When pupils are working individually or in groups, both teachers and classroom assistants support them well. As a result, pupils usually concentrate on their work well and complete the tasks they have been given.

11

26. In most lessons, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and they praise good work and behaviour consistently. For the most part, pupils respond by listening attentively, concentrating on their work and behaving well. In a few lessons, however, teachers did not make their expectations of good behaviour clear enough, nor were they consistent enough in their management of poor behaviour. Pupils were allowed to call out answers, to be too noisy, and did not respond to the teachers' instructions. In these lessons, pupils found it difficult to concentrate, worked slowly, and made insufficient gains in learning.

27. Time was used well in most of the lessons observed and the better lessons moved at a brisk pace. For example, in a numeracy lesson for Years 5 and 6, rapid-fire mental questions, changing fractions to decimals and percentages, became more challenging, and not a minute was lost as the pupils moved to reinforce their skills using a computer program. The teacher constantly reminded the pupils of what had to be done and how much time was left, and they responded by working quickly to complete their tasks. A weakness in a number of lessons is that whole-class introductions are too slow, they last too long, and this does not leave enough time for the pupils' tasks. The good skills of classroom assistants are used effectively in many lessons, particularly working with pupils who have special needs, which is marked improvement since the last inspection. In a few cases, however, they were under-employed during the introduction to the lesson, often listening to the teacher for up to 20 minutes.

28. Most teachers use sound strategies to assess pupils' understanding. They often begin the lesson with a review of previous learning to check what pupils know. This strategy was used particularly effectively in a number of the Year 2 lessons observed. Teachers and classroom assistants observe pupils whilst they are working and gather useful information about current attainment. In a number of lessons, a good review of learning helped pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. The school has a very clear pattern of homework set out in a policy that has been shared with parents. The school expects pupils to read at home each night, and many do. The school sets an increasing amount of homework as pupils move through the school so that, by Year 6, they are expected to complete an amount that prepares them for secondary school. The work pupils complete at home makes a valuable contribution to their learning at school. Some parents feel that homework is not set consistently across the school, or across classes within the same age group. However, evidence gathered during the week of the inspection, by questioning a sample of pupils, indicates that homework is generally set consistently.

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

29. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum overall. At the last inspection, a significant weakness was the lack planning guidelines for all subjects. The school has addressed this issue very effectively. It now has a two-year programme, which caters for the mixed age classes in the juniors. Schemes of work for each subject have been drawn up, and co-ordinators have developed medium-term plans. Individual teachers use these to plan their lessons to meet the needs of the pupils in their classes. This is a very clear system, which uses the skills of the co-ordinators and promotes coherence, coverage and progression. There is still a need for some teachers to improve their short-term planning by identifying specific learning objectives and setting out the structure and development of the lesson more clearly.

12

30. The curriculum for pupils in the foundation stage is planned around the recommended areas of learning, but currently lacks sufficient opportunities for the children to engage in structured play. The curriculum for the infants and juniors meets almost all of the requirements of the National Curriculum. The weakness is in ICT where the juniors have insufficient opportunities to use the computer for controlling and monitoring. This weakness was identified in the last inspection report. Religious education is taught in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. There are many strengths in curriculum provision for design and technology, though the design element is weak. In art, greater focus on observational drawing skills and three-dimensional work is needed and, in music, more opportunities for pupils to develop their composing skills.

31. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of educational visits. For example, Year 1 pupils visited elderly residents in a nearby home as part of their local study, and junior pupils visited the Museum of Reading and the Museum of River and Rowing at Henley. Last year, a large number of pupils spent a day at the Millennium Dome, which they enjoyed greatly. The school offers the opportunity for a residential visit for the older pupils, to enhance their social development. Visitors to school have included a theatre group with an electricity show, and a puppet show to emphasise personal hygiene.

32. A number of the parents who returned questionnaires and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting felt that the provision of extra-curricular activities was weak. At the present time there are just two extra-curricular activities, the environment and drama clubs, which run at lunch times. However, other activities have been offered at different times, such as choir, robotics, football, tennis and country dancing. The school recognises the need to develop this aspect of its work.

33. The National Literacy Strategy is well established through the school and the teaching of basic literacy skills is good. Additional literacy support and booster classes are provided for some pupils. Literacy skills are developed across a number of subjects. The school has also introduced the National Numeracy Strategy successfully. Appropriate emphasis is given to developing mental calculation skills and teaching is often good in these lessons. Whilst pupils' numeracy skills are used and developed through work in some other subjects, planned links with numeracy are still developing.

34. The school recognises that pupils need careful support for their personal and social development through a planned programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE). It has

introduced a system for tracking personal development, which links to the content of the programme helpfully. The school is trying out units of the new programme, including material designed to meet guidance within the National Curriculum for aspects of sex and drugs' education. As yet, however, PSHE is not fully integrated into the curriculum. Where it is taught, provision is good.

35. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. It has improved considerably since the last inspection. Individual education plans provide good diagnoses of problems and set out practical ways of putting them right. These plans provide clear guidance for teachers, and

13

classroom support assistants. However, the use of this guidance to enrich teaching and to ensure tasks are well matched to pupils' needs is not yet consistently applied in all lessons, so overall progress for these pupils is satisfactory rather than good. Class teachers, specialist teachers and support assistants implement clear policy and guidance.

36. Provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision was judged to be satisfactory but with weaknesses in moral and social development, linked to inconsistencies in behaviour management. The school's aims include providing pupils with the social skills necessary for life and the fostering of emotional and moral development. Provision reflects these aims clearly.

37. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. There are good opportunities in religious education lessons for pupils to think about special occasions and what is important to them in their lives. Sometimes in music and drama they have the chance to be moved by an experience such as listening to 'The Planets' or sharing a lively, interactive game in 'circle time'. Assemblies are well organised with clear moral themes and well chosen stories. However, they do not always offer meaningful pauses for reflection or involve pupils fully in sharing their experiences. Opportunities are missed in lessons such as English for pupils to explore ideas and responses to inspiring stories and poems. Pupils' fascination with the effects of frost and ice on the pond was not used spontaneously, as it might have been, to encourage a sense of awe linked to the world around them.

38. Provision for moral and social development is good. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal, social and moral development, particularly the development of good relationships and standards of behaviour. The staff, led positively by the headteacher, set a good example of what is expected and show that they value the pupils' efforts to do what is right. Pupils are given clear guidance on the difference between right and wrong, in and out of lessons, as in the good routines for moving from one class to another without disturbing others. Some opportunities are given for pupils to take responsibility for tasks around the school and to contribute to community life by helping others, as when playground monitors organise games for younger children. In practical lessons, pupils are expected to use their initiative and take responsibility for setting up and putting away the resources they need.

39. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. A range of work, such as projects on Sri Lanka in geography and the Indus Valley in history, helps pupils understand differences in beliefs and traditions. The school values the diversity of its pupils and surrounding area, but has not been

able to involve a full range of artists, authors and other adults with particular skills in teaching pupils more about different traditions. The school uses the local area to develop understanding of the environment and cultural heritage, as in the Millennium Thames Path walk and Songline 2000 activities. Displays are often good, but do not always celebrate pupils' diverse backgrounds.

40. The school promotes equality of opportunity through the provision it makes for boys and girls, for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and for pupils with special educational needs. There is, however, variation in the quality of teaching in parallel classes, giving some pupils a richer, more stimulating curriculum than others of the same age. The school has good

14

relationships with partner institutions, including local nurseries, the secondary school and the university from which initial teacher training students are welcomed. Other community links include work through the successful environmental club and educational visits, particularly related to geography. Business links with the Prudential are valuable, with company staff supporting numeracy in school regularly, as well as leading training for the teachers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school takes effective steps to ensure that the care of its children is given the highest priority. As a consequence, the school meets its aim of providing an environment that is safe, secure and welcoming. Staff have a good knowledge and understanding of the pupils in their care and are committed to encouraging self-esteem and confidence.

42. Provision for pupils' health, safety, care and protection is good. The schools' policies and procedures for child protection are clear and manageable, guiding everyday practice and helping staff to deal with serious situations when the need arises. Staff are well briefed and trained, and do not ignore problems, however difficult they may be to resolve. Teachers know individual pupils well and are aware of their personal needs. Although personal development is monitored informally, an incident book records any concerns involving individual pupils and this is used by the headteacher to track personal development.

43. There is a strong, positive approach to promoting good behaviour, which the school monitors effectively. Staff carefully nurture good attitudes and encourage good behaviour, and warm, caring relationships between pupils and with adults. Isolated incidents of aggressive or threatening behaviour do occur, but these are not approved of by pupils and are dealt with firmly and swiftly by staff. Behaviour is formally reviewed each term to check for any areas of concern.

44. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school works closely with the education welfare officer concerning families whose children have high absence rates. As a result of effective, sharply focused teamwork, the level of unauthorised absence has been halved in a year, but is still above the national average.

45. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their academic progress. An effective tracking system monitors the progress of individual pupils and groups from

reception to Year 6. Standardised tests and teacher assessments are recorded and analysed to set individual targets for pupils and raise attainment. For example, standardised reading tests are carried out every six months, half-termly assessments are made in English, mathematics, science and topics, and the results of annual National Curriculum tests for pupils in Years 2 to 6 are evaluated. This information is used to group pupils into sets for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2, as well as providing important information to assist teachers in their planning. However, there is not yet a clear focus in all lessons on using data to make sure that the best learning opportunities are provided for the range of pupils. There is inconsistency in the use of individual targets, in the following through of reading assessments and in the marking of pupils' work.

15

46. Assessment and record keeping for pupils with special educational needs are good, which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Individual education plans provide good diagnoses of problems and lead to practical ways of putting them right. These plans provide clear guidance for teachers, and classroom assistants.

47. A key issue for improvement after the last inspection was to make better use of assessment information in order to set targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils. The school has made good progress towards this aim and effective systems are now in place that give the school the capacity for further improvement. As yet, however, the information is not used consistently to tackle weaknesses or to provide suitable challenges for higher-attaining pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. Parents have positive views of the school. They are more satisfied with what it offers their children than at the time of the last inspection. Partnership is stronger now because of the efforts made by the school to work with all parents, including those who find it difficult to respond.

49. The school has effective links with parents. It welcomes the deep interest and regular involvement of a core of committed parents. It encourages others to contribute in any way they can to school life. Events organised by the school association (TSA) are well supported and make a valued contribution to the community spirit and to the provision of resources for pupils. Staff are readily available at the beginning and end of the day so that all parents, including the least confident, can talk to them informally. Both teaching and non-teaching staff work hard to build good relationships with families. All staff offer constructive support with any matter that affects pupils' well-being, attendance and learning, and parents appreciate this. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about provision for their children in school and the progress they are making.

50. The school provides a good range of information for parents, much of which is of high quality. Reports give useful information about pupils' progress which, together with that provided at well-organised open evenings, results in parents feeling very well informed about their children's achievements. The inspection found that the information in reports is generally of good quality, especially on progress in English, mathematics and science. However, comments by pupils, specific

targets for improvement and key points about personal and social development are not included. Verbal comments about these matters are made at discussions with parents and are recorded.

51. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is positive. Some parents help in school and on trips and visits. Parents with particular skills, such as in librarianship or computing, provide significant help to the school and their children. Parents attend workshops, such as that on the Numeracy Strategy, or in connection with a new policy on behaviour management. Some parents listen to their children read. Many, however, are less active in support of their children's learning, in spite of the school's continuing efforts to encourage them to help. Overall, links contribute satisfactorily to pupils' learning at school and home.

16

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The school is well led and managed and, in the last two years, has developed an effective whole-school approach to improvement, which has had a positive effect on raising standards. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She has developed a strong team ethos, involving all staff and governors in school improvement. She has a very clear vision for the school, shared by all members of its community, which is well expressed in the school's revised aims, and is being fulfilled. Although the headteacher has been without the support of a deputy for significant periods of time during the last two years, her strong, purposeful leadership has enabled the school to improve many aspects of its work. Together with senior colleagues, she monitors and evaluates the work of the school systematically, which enables the staff to identify and tackle weaknesses. The headteacher also shows a strong commitment to creating and maintaining a caring ethos in the school, and helps pupils establish and maintain good relationships.

53. The school's commitment to and capacity for further improvement are good. The headteacher and staff are aware of priority areas for future development, and they are addressing most of them. Good systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and the standard of pupils' work. Subject co-ordinators are developing a good understanding of key strengths and weaknesses. They support colleagues effectively in planning lessons and, alongside the headteacher, monitor pupils' recorded work in their subjects. Some co-ordinators have had good opportunities to observe lessons, and provide teachers with feedback on their teaching, but this aspect of monitoring is still developing. The professional development of teachers is well supported by annual appraisal interviews. The school has recently introduced a new system, drawing on nationally agreed guidelines, in which teachers are set clear targets closely linked to improving pupils' performance. The school also has sound procedures in place for the induction of new staff, and works closely with Reading University to provide effective support for students on initial teacher training courses.

54. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved considerably since the last inspection. Then, there were few systems to ensure that these pupils received the support they needed, and progress in lessons was often unsatisfactory. Pupils' needs are now identified quickly. Plans outlining the best ways to support their learning are of high quality, which ensures that sound progress is made in most lessons and good progress in many.

55. The governing body provides good support for the school and is eager to help it improve further. Governors now receive detailed reports on all aspects of the school, and they have developed a clearer understanding of their role. They visit the school regularly and have developed a good working partnership with the headteacher and staff. They work effectively in committees dealing with issues relating to curriculum, finance, staffing and premises. They receive presentations and reports from subject co-ordinators, and take turns each month to visit lessons and gain first-hand information about teaching and learning. Following these visits, governors report back to the headteacher and to the full governing body, enabling them to play an active part in monitoring standards. The governing body has also become more directly involved in determining priorities for development, and used the services of a consultant to develop a five-year financial plan. Governors now play their role as critical friends to the school effectively.

17

56. The school improvement plan is a comprehensive and well-structured document, which provides a very good basis for managing school improvement. It contains clear priorities and appropriate targets aimed at raising standards. The main emphases have been on updating schemes of work, and beginning to implement monitoring programmes in order to improve teaching and learning. The headteacher has a very clear picture of educational issues, and provides good support for all subject co-ordinators.

57. The school has a committed and hard-working teaching staff whose experience and expertise are well matched to the demands of the curriculum. They are well complemented by a strong team of support staff, who are valued members of the school community. Educational priorities are very well supported through the school's financial planning. The school's financial management systems are good. The use of new technology in the management of the school is developing, and now includes the analysis of information about pupils' performance to help set academic targets.

58. The school has good accommodation for the needs of the curriculum, and the buildings are maintained and cleaned to a high standard. Classrooms are spacious, with adjacent areas also well used for art and other activities. An attractive new block provides good accommodation for two classes. There is a specialist music room, ICT suite and a resource base for special educational needs. However, the library area does not provide a suitably quiet space for reading or independent study, and there is no ready access to an outdoor space for foundation stage children to play with large apparatus and wheeled toys. A school field is scheduled to be in use in the near future. The range and quality of learning resources are satisfactory, with good resources for music.

59. At the last inspection, the leadership and management of the school were judged to be unsatisfactory, with significant weaknesses in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. There has been a considerable improvement since the appointment of the current headteacher. The school has made good progress in addressing the key issues that were raised, with the exception of developing ICT. Leadership and management are now strong features of a rapidly improving school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The school provides an environment that supports pupils' learning and development. Although many begin school with attainment that is below average, pupils make sound progress overall during their time at the school. Results of national tests for pupils in their final year are about average compared with what is expected nationally, and compare favourably with those achieved by similar schools. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of strengths, but there are weaknesses that hold back pupils' progress. Within this context, to continue the improvement already achieved in standards of work and pupils' achievements, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ raise standards in information and communication technology, as planned, by:
 - teaching a curriculum that meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum by implementing the scheme of work fully;
 - increasing the amount of time pupils spend using computers;
 - ensuring that pupils use and develop their ICT skills through their work in other subjects of the curriculum;
 - strengthening teachers' subject knowledge and making full use of improving expertise.

(paragraphs 3, 5, 10, 108-113)

- ◆ raise the standard of teaching in the lessons where there are weaknesses, by:
 - ensuring that lesson planning identifies learning intentions clearly, and has enough detail to guide teaching and learning effectively;
 - having high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and ensuring that the tasks set are appropriately challenging;
 - injecting more pace into teaching, and ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between whole-class activities and pupils working independently;
 - ensuring that the school's good policy for behaviour management is implemented firmly and consistently;
 - improving teachers' knowledge in the subjects where they are least confident;
 - enabling all teachers to observe and learn from existing good practice.

(paragraphs 17-18, 21-28, 76, 82, 88, 93, 98, 103)

In addition to the key issues, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. Each is followed by a reference to the paragraph(s) in which it is discussed.

- ◆ improve the attendance of the few pupils who are frequently absent from school. (16, 44)
- ◆ improve the provision of extra-curricular activities, particularly to enrich physical education. (32)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

67

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

29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	15	27	51	7		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

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

260

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

74

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

7

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

94

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15
---	----

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

20

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	21	44

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	19
	Girls	19	17	19
	Total	36	34	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (60)	77 (67)	86 (65)
	National	84 (83)	85 (84)	90 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	17	19	18
	Total	34	36	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	77 (69)	82 (66)	80 (57)
	National	84 (84)	88 (88)	88 (88)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	27	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	17
	Girls	26	21	25
	Total	40	33	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (72)	69 (66)	88 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	12	14
	Girls	25	24	25
	Total	39	36	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (61)	75 (72)	81 (83)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	3
Indian	9
Pakistani	6
Bangladeshi	10
Chinese	0
White	203
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
----------------	-----------

Average class size	26
--------------------	----

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	166

	£
Total income	484667.00
Total expenditure	469555.00
Expenditure per pupil	1708.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	2001.00
Balance carried forward to next year	17113.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	247
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	38	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	24	0	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	58	0	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	50	21	3	0
The teaching is good.	47	53	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	42	3	0	0

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	18	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	26	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	34	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	74	18	5	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	34	24	13	21

Although only a small group of parents attended the meeting, they were very positive about most aspects of the school's work. They felt that the school had improved considerably during the past two years. They mentioned strong features of this improvement, such as the school's positive approach to encouraging good attitudes and behaviour, and the way in which staff are very approachable if parents have concerns. These parents felt well informed about and appropriately involved in the work of the school. Nearly all the parents at the meeting were very pleased with the progress their children are making. Whilst parents were generally happy with the amount of homework set for their children, a few felt that it was inconsistent between classes, and that teachers should offer more feedback to pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

61. There is a wide range of attainment when children join the reception classes but, overall, it is below average compared with what is expected nationally. This is confirmed by assessments carried out soon after children start school. At the time of the inspection, five older reception children had recently joined each of two classes, and were being taught alongside about 20 Year 1 pupils. Approximately 30 younger children were due to start school in April. About half of the children observed during the inspection are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development by the time they are ready to start Year 1. About half are unlikely to reach this standard.

62. Although in school for only a few days, the children were already settled and confident, and making sound progress towards the targets expected at the end of the reception year. The organisation of their learning, within a class of older pupils, creates challenges for teaching. Teachers ensure that they identify specific and appropriate learning objectives for these children, based on national guidance. They provide a broad curriculum, covering all areas of learning. Whole-class sessions are lively and interesting, and basic skills in language and mathematics are well taught. Both teachers and classroom assistants make good use of opportunities to enrich language, promote curiosity and develop practical skills. However, they do not provide the best balance of structured

play and independent activities that is most suitable for children of this age. In most of the lessons observed, adults led the learning, so there were too few opportunities for children to select activities independently, or spend an extended period of time experimenting and exploring, with adults supporting their learning. As a result, whilst most aspects of children's language and mathematical development are catered for, elements of personal development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development receive too little emphasis.

63. A well-planned induction programme enables children to make a smooth start at school and begins fruitful and supportive links with parents. Baseline assessment results are analysed carefully to guide the planning of activities. There is careful support for the children with special educational needs. The staff have good informal assessment procedures, which help them to track the progress of each child.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Children join the reception classes with a very wide range of attainment in personal and social skills, but sound teaching supports the needs of individuals effectively and helps all children to make steady progress. Most are confident, interested and keen to learn, as seen in a mathematics lesson when they were eager to have their turn holding numbers from one to ten and to practise counting. Relationships between children are variable. In some situations they work and play well together, often benefiting from the presence of older classmates, but at other times they find it difficult to share and take turns, such as when playing in the sand

24

tray. There is a very wide range of attainment in self-care, and children changing for physical education need a good deal of assistance. Relationships between children and staff are good. There are clear routines and expectations, which help children to develop their understanding of right and wrong. Staff also understand the emotional needs of young children, and encourage them by praising any achievements.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Children make sound progress in this area, though the emphasis is on whole-class and small-group activities rather than on developing children's language skills as part of their wider learning. In literacy sessions, most children speak confidently, listen attentively to stories and rhymes, and many are beginning to recognise letter sounds. For example, when the teacher took a variety of objects from a bag, most children knew which began with 't'. Only higher attainers are beginning to recognise a few familiar words. Most of the children speak clearly, though many are quite reticent and a few have delays in some aspects of their speech.

66. Children handle books appropriately, and most are beginning to understand that it is the print that tells the story. None of the children seen could write their own first name independently. Opportunities to develop reading and writing are missed because adults lead too many activities. For example, following the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood', a group of children went to the role play area with a classroom assistant to 'write' a note to grandma, but this was a group activity rather than being a task they might complete as part of their play. The role play areas do not have ready

access to books, paper, pencils, notepads, diaries and other equipment that would encourage the children to incorporate reading and writing into their play.

Mathematical development

67. Teaching is sound in this area of learning. The first part of lessons is based on numeracy guidance, and teachers effectively involve children of all ages in a range of activities, counting, matching and ordering numbers to ten. A good example of combining mathematical and language skills was seen when the teacher read 'Six Dinner Sid' and children had to respond when they heard their number. The reception children then work with an adult on an activity specifically targeted at their learning needs, such as a number game. The missing element is more opportunities for children to explore and consolidate these number concepts in a wide range of structured play situations, for example counting and matching during creative role play. Children's attainment varies considerably. Most are confident counting, ordering and recognising numbers to five, and many can count well beyond. Most know the names of simple shapes. A few lower attainers still find counting small groups of objects difficult.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Children bring a variable standard of general knowledge to their learning. Most can talk about events in their own lives, such as their families and things that happened to them when they were younger. They enjoyed exploring torches and candles as part of their work on 'light sources', and most knew that a torch needed a battery to make it work. This activity generated a good deal of discussion and new vocabulary, which enriched children's language. Exploring dark corners was particularly popular. Children show an inquisitive approach to

activities, such as when they examined old and new toys and thought about the similarities and differences. All the children observed were confident in their use of technology. A number of children used the computer, showing good early mouse skills. Children make products and learn particular skills, such as when they made a figure, cutting the pieces of paper and joining the parts using paper clips, fasteners and pins. Most found these practical skills difficult. Teaching in this area of learning is sound, but not as systematic as in others. The staff rely on providing children with a wide range of interesting experiences, but there is not such a close focus on developing specific skills as is evident in numeracy and literacy.

Physical development

69. Progress in this aspect is restricted by the absence of easy access to an outdoor area, which would enable the children to develop a wide range of skills in running, jumping, climbing and balancing. Nonetheless, staff make best use of the facilities they have, using the hall, an outdoor play area and outings to a local park. In a games lesson, the children showed that they could control a large ball with the level of skill expected for their ages. They used space well, moving in a variety of ways and showing good control. Teaching for this aspect of physical development is sound, but more frequent access to physical activity is needed. In other activities, children's skills in using and

manipulating a range of tools develop well but, overall, fine co-ordination skills are below those expected for their ages.

Creative development

70. A range of activities enables children to make sound progress in developing their creative skills, but mainly in a fairly structured way. Music is a strong feature, and most children can sing a variety of familiar rhymes and songs. In a very good lesson seen, the higher-attaining children learnt about, and understood, the idea of high and low notes. However, there is no ready access to a range of musical instruments, or constant opportunities for art activities, which would help all children to use their imagination and build their early creative skills. Opportunities for creative play are limited to small bursts of activity, such as when children drew letters in shaving foam. The role play areas in classrooms and the activity area show that the staff have not considered carefully enough the potential of these for learning. Better provision of furniture, costumes and equipment would stimulate children's creativity, and provide an environment in which adults could intervene and extend the children's ideas.

ENGLISH

71. Results of the year 2000 national assessments for seven year olds were below the national average for both reading and writing. Compared with similar schools, however, the results were about average, and well above average for pupils reaching the higher Level 3. Standards were higher than in the previous three years when they were well below the national average for both subjects. Test results in English for eleven year olds were below average four years ago but have improved, rising at a faster rate than the national trend in the last two years, to above average in 2000. The school exceeded its improvement target. Compared with similar schools, results were well above average.

26

72. Attainment on entry to school is below the national average. Overall attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 is below average, while in Year 6 it is close to, but not quite reaching, national expectations. The late entry of pupils into the reception year and the number of pupils on the special educational needs register are factors influencing attainment in Year 2. Similarly, there is a greater percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 6, so overall attainment is lower than last year. Nonetheless, pupils' achievements are sound across the school, regardless of their level of ability, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when progress for the juniors was judged unsatisfactory.

73. Most pupils listen attentively in lessons, though some find this difficult. Speaking skills vary greatly. Many pupils are articulate, confident speakers, but a significant minority have a limited vocabulary and lack the confidence or skills to participate fully in discussion. Technical vocabulary is emphasised in most subjects, with key words often displayed in classrooms. Many opportunities are now provided for pupils to engage in speaking activities in most classes, which is an improvement since the last inspection. For example, in mathematics, the 'working pairs' arrangement promotes discussion effectively. Small groups of older pupils discussed music they had heard, evaluated 'shelters' in design and technology and, in literacy, worked in pairs to revise text to

include complex sentences. Valuable class discussions on text being studied in the literacy hour promote speaking and listening skills. These develop from the youngest pupils discussing the pictures on a poster of 'The Gingerbread Man' to the oldest pupils discussing the novel 'Clockwork' and predicting future events. Personal and social education and drama lessons also provide valuable additional opportunities, as does the drama club for juniors. Currently, standards of listening vary but are average overall, while speaking skills are below average.

74. Most pupils enjoy reading, and the emphasis on developing their knowledge of letter sounds enables them to read unknown words. In Year 2, some higher-attaining pupils read fluently, with expression and know associated vocabulary such as author and illustrator. The support of those parents who hear their children read at home, has a positive impact on standards. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils read challenging texts fluently, with good expression. They discuss favourite authors, justifying their opinions well. However, many pupils have a limited range of reading to draw on and their opinions are expressed in simple terms. Group reading takes place in most classes, with some discussion about the text. Book areas in classrooms are sound but book provision is limited, particularly for the older pupils. Non-fiction books are often used well to support displays in classrooms. At present, many pupils do not read a wide enough range of books, or have sufficient time to enjoy reading and be heard to read aloud. Overall standards are just below average.

75. Standards in writing have improved since the last inspection. There has been considerable emphasis on developing aspects of this, such as spelling, handwriting and grammar and this has had a positive impact. There is a good range of writing undertaken in most classes, which is an improvement since the last inspection. The introduction of specific times for extended writing, the literacy strategy and staff monitoring of writing samples have all helped to raise standards. The youngest pupils are beginning to write sentences and use a writing frame to plan a simple story. In a very good Year 2 lesson, after discussing two samples of writing prepared by the teacher, which emphasised use of interesting words, correct punctuation, presentation and grammar, the pupils all settled to write their own stories

about an ice man. Higher-attaining pupils confidently wrote at length, sustaining the plot, joining their handwriting and spelling quite accurately. They used a teacher-prepared thesaurus, while less able pupils used key word lists to support their writing. In the lower juniors, higher-attaining pupils write in styles to suit the purpose, such as playscripts, poems, newspaper reports and opinions. Lower attainers are not yet joining their handwriting and use simple sentences, but are nevertheless writing at some length and sustaining a plot. By Year 6, higher attainers' writing is of an above average standard, with use of varied and interesting language in a variety of styles. For example, correct style is used for a biography and autobiography, as well as instructions, poems, reports and imaginative stories. In their literacy lessons, pupils learn to use adjectives and adverbs, homophones and complex sentences to make their writing more interesting. They plan and draft some of their writing, but there is no evidence of pupils planning, drafting and editing their writing routinely.

76. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and was good or better in many of the lessons seen. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection. In the infants, 40 per cent of the teaching seen was very good, and in the juniors half the lessons seen were good or better. For example,

Year 2 pupils enjoyed a very good stimulus for their writing when they were able to feel and describe an ice rabbit, made in a jelly mould, and then watch as it gradually melted and changed shape. Very high expectations, a good pace, emphasis on phonic work and reference to individual pupil targets were features of another very good Year 2 lesson. Very good teaching in the top juniors encompassed a range of strategies to motivate and involve pupils and reinforce the learning objectives of the lesson, enabling the pupils to become confident in using homophones and pronouns. Classroom assistants provide good support for groups of lower-attaining pupils, but some are insufficiently involved during whole-class teaching times. Where teaching was sound overall but had weaknesses, the pace was too slow, expectations were insufficiently clear, and some pupils were not sufficiently involved in their work. Pupils have individual targets for improving their writing, which is good practice, and the most effective are those in the pupils' own language, rather than impersonal, technical vocabulary. The quality of marking pupils' written work varies greatly, with the best referring to the objectives and giving points for improvement. A further improvement since the last inspection is the attention given to developing writing skills in other subjects. For example, instructions by Year 2 about how to make Joseph's coat of many colours in design and technology, Tudor character portraits in history by lower juniors, and empathetic writing as though on board a Tudor sailing ship by upper juniors.

77. The literacy strategy is established successfully through the school. Ability setting for English in the juniors enables work to be planned at appropriate levels. The school has an adequate supply of big books and sets of books for group reading, but some class book areas require additional stock. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is sound. The subject is led enthusiastically and recently formulated schemes of work for speaking and listening, drama and extended writing are helpful additions to the literacy strategy documentation. The headteacher and co-ordinator undertake monitoring activities, and regular testing helps identify issues to be addressed. The school is well placed to build on recent improvements in teaching, learning and the standards achieved.

MATHEMATICS

78. In the year 2000 national assessments for seven year olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 of attainment was below the national average, but the proportion gaining the higher Level 3 was close to the national average. Results of the tests for 11 year olds showed a similar picture, with the proportion achieving the expected Level 4 below the national average, but an average proportion gaining the higher Level 5. Compared with schools in similar social circumstances, results at both key stages were average at the expected levels of attainment, and above average at the higher levels. Results over the four-year period to 2000 show a falling trend until 1998, at both key stages, but a significant improvement over the last two years, since the previous inspection. The school has made satisfactory progress in reaching its targets.

79. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 2 classes is below national expectations. About two thirds of all pupils work confidently with numbers to 100, for example when counting in 2s, 5s and 10s, or ordering numbers. They carry out a range of calculations with numbers and money, such as finding different ways of making 30 pence. Most pupils are able to estimate whether lengths are more or less than one metre, and check measurements correctly.

Many pupils understand the value of digits in larger numbers, but this is insecure for lower attainers. Most pupils can describe a range of two-dimensional shapes, and shade halves and quarters of these correctly. Higher-attaining pupils can correctly list properties of three-dimensional shapes, by corners, edges and faces. Pupils of all abilities have completed block graphs and pictograms, and most can extract information accurately from their charts. Across the key stage, pupils' work shows sound achievement, with a good amount of work covered in number. A strong emphasis is placed on mathematical language and the correct use of terms. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

80. By Year 6, most pupils can calculate confidently with numbers up to 10,000 and many have good calculation skills, including the use of decimals. For example, higher attainers can express 0.37 and 0.02 as fractions, and as percentages, quickly and accurately. Most pupils' knowledge and use of fractions is sound. They can sort two-dimensional shapes correctly, and calculate the perimeters and areas of different types of shapes. Many pupils can draw and use line graphs accurately, and interpret data correctly. Overall, attainment in the current Year 6 is close to, but not quite reaching, national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2.

81. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed progressively as they move through the school, but they are below average. Appropriate emphasis is given to developing mental calculation skills in mathematics lessons. Pupils also develop and use numeracy skills effectively in some other subjects. For example, in science most pupils take accurate measurements and are able to present their data in an appropriate form. However, the school is still developing its planned links between numeracy and other subjects across the whole curriculum.

82. The quality of teaching is sound overall. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all but one of the 13 lessons observed, good in three and very good in two. The quality of teaching was

29

better in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. Teachers generally share learning intentions with pupils, so that they know what they are expected to achieve, and there is a sound structure to most lessons. Where teaching is very good, learning proceeds at a good pace, with a high level of pupil involvement, and suitably challenging activities. Pupils are often encouraged to share their methods with 'working partners', explaining and discussing their methods as they make calculations. This strategy works well in many lessons, such as in Year 2 when pupils checked their understanding of the highest and lowest numbers the teacher had said, prior to giving answers. In another lesson, pupils shared place value cards in pairs, talking about their answers to each calculation before showing their cards. In one lesson for upper juniors, lower-attaining pupils extended their knowledge of more difficult multiplication tables through playing a variety of number games, checking their answers in pairs, and talking through their methods of calculation. In some lessons, the summary session is used well to check and extend learning. For example, in one lesson Year 1 and 2 pupils were each given a calculator to check their answers and learn new skills.

83. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They enjoy mental mathematics, and most respond keenly during question-and-answer sessions. Most lessons are well organised, and pupils complete a satisfactory amount of work. However, the pace of some lessons lacks challenge, and pupils are

not encouraged to extend themselves, so they do not complete enough work. For example, in a lesson in Key Stage 2, the teacher's explanation of how to use a number line to record calculations went on for far too long. This resulted in pupils losing interest and concentration, and having very little time to put the method into practice.

84. The mathematics co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject. The school has implemented a scheme of work, which follows the National Numeracy Strategy closely. Effective staff training, involving support assistants, has resulted in consistent practice and teachers placing a strong emphasis on teaching different methods. The co-ordinator has observed lessons throughout the school, and provided teachers with feedback on their lessons, the quality of their planning, and standards of pupils' recorded work in their books. This has helped teachers to raise standards. Good assessment procedures are in place, with end of unit assessments used to review grouping arrangements in Key Stage 2. The results of end of year tests are analysed thoroughly and used to inform target setting and improve planning. A good subject development plan is in place, which includes developing support for most able pupils, and a project aimed at developing parents' numeracy skills. The school is in a good position to continue the improvement in standards since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

85. The year 2000 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments showed pupils' attainment to be below the national average. This was a considerable improvement on previous years, however, gained by a developing emphasis upon scientific enquiry. Results of the Year 2000 national assessments for 11 year olds were close to the national average, and above average when compared with similar schools. There has been a gradual rise in standards during the past two years.

86. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 2 is close to national expectations. Year 1 pupils explored areas of darkness in the classroom using torches,

30

understanding that darkness is the absence of light. They also recognised that some light sources are brighter than others, eagerly discussing the differences between the light generated by a candle and that of a torch. Year 2 pupils understand the different properties of materials, confidently using words such as hard, shiny, flexible and smooth to sort and classify natural and man-made examples. By freezing water in a mould, they understand that everyday materials change when they are cooled or warmed. In all classes, an emphasis on the investigative aspect of science means that pupils are able to observe and describe their work, record their findings and make simple deductions. Although many pupils start Key Stage 1 with limited knowledge and understanding of the world, all pupils make good progress. This was particularly evident when pupils were engaged in investigative and experimental learning.

87. In Key Stage 2, most pupils give satisfactory explanations for different processes and phenomena and develop a sound level of understanding about forces and motion. For example, Year 3/4 pupils use the words attract and repel when investigating the properties of magnets. They also understand that certain materials have magnetic properties. Pupils were asked to predict and

record those objects in the classroom they thought would be attracted by magnets. They then tested their predictions and were able to conclude that the metallic nature of materials causes a magnetic attraction. Year 5/6 pupils understand that objects are pulled downwards because of the gravitational attraction of the earth. Pupils used forcemeters to measure gravity, finding the weight of various objects and recording this in both Newtons and grams. Using previous knowledge and experience, high-attaining pupils can explain that gravitational pull and friction affect movement. By Year 6, all pupils show that they understand the concept of a fair test, they can make predictions, record their observations and measurements and communicate findings using appropriate scientific language. Some of the lower-attaining pupils, most with special educational needs, struggle to explain their ideas orally and have weak recording skills. All pupils make sound progress during the key stage.

88. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good overall, but pupils' work shows more consistent achievement during Key Stage 1. In the seven lessons observed, teaching was very good in one, good in three and satisfactory in three. Teachers' planning is detailed and identifies precise learning objectives; these are made clear to pupils at the start of the lesson and re-visited at the end to identify whether or not they have been achieved. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, which enables them to explain concepts clearly and question pupils carefully, probing their knowledge and understanding. For example, after investigating gravitational attraction, pupils were asked whether the pull of gravity was the same for all objects and would this be the same on the moon. Pupils with special educational needs often have additional adult support. In some lessons, higher attainers are not always challenged sufficiently because expectations of what they can achieve are too low. Teachers generally manage pupils well, even though one or two can be difficult. Although lessons often include practical work, teachers sometimes dominate the discussion or lead the experiment, so not enough demands are made on pupils and there is too little opportunity to develop independence or initiative. As a consequence, some pupils become restless. Resources are always well prepared and well used, and classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Marking of pupils' work is variable in quality, with some teachers making valuable comments that help pupils' scientific development, and some simply acknowledging that work has been completed. Some use is made of ICT for data handling, to record results and produce tables and graphs, and modelling programs are used to support sorting and classifying.

31

89. There is a good scheme of work, which supports teachers' planning. Assessment procedures are good. Teachers gather a range of information about pupils' developing knowledge and skills at the end of each science topic and at the end of each academic year, using this to inform planning and set targets. However, not all teachers use this information to ensure that lesson planning includes work that is well matched to pupils' needs. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is satisfactory. The co-ordinator gives support to colleagues and carefully monitors the quality, range and attainment of work completed by pupils. However, there has been little monitoring of teaching in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and form plans to raise standards further. The grounds have been used extremely well to enable a range of environmental activities. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to raise standards further.

ART and DESIGN

90. Pupils of all abilities make sound progress in art, which is an improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory during Key Stage 2. Overall, standards are below those expected for pupils' ages, though there are examples of high-quality work. Pupils are introduced to a sound range of techniques and materials, but there is a lack of work in three dimensions, which the school has recognised and is planning to redress.

91. In Year 1, pupils investigate adding black or white to primary colours to make a variety of tints and tones. They experiment by applying paint in different ways, dribbling, splattering and brushing. They produce a large mural, inspired by the work of Kandinsky, in which each pupil's swirls of 'hot' and 'cold' colours were combined. In Year 2, pupils draw and paint self-portraits, and then extend the theme by painting a portrait in the style of Picasso's 'Weeping Woman'. These paintings are striking because of the bold use of colour, and they show that the artists have grasped the idea of painting parts of the face from different viewpoints. Still life drawings of spring flowers, in pastels, show that pupils are developing their ability to observe carefully.

92. In Year 3/4, paintings inspired by the work of Miro employ a vivid use of colour, whilst portraits in the style of Modigliani and Van Gogh show that pupils draw upon a range of work by skilled artists. Past work includes 'Pop Art' sculptures of everyday objects and packaging, inspired by the work of Warhol. Collage is also a good feature of the work for this age group, as seen in their 'Mythical beasts' and current work on 'Nightmares'. In Year 5/6, art in the previous term was well linked to pupils' history topic about the Indus Valley civilisation. Detailed pen and ink drawings of patterning on pottery, exploring batik as a way to pattern fabric, and weaving of textiles all developed pupils' range of skills effectively. There are a few good examples of observational drawing, but generally this work lacks attention to tone, form and texture.

93. The quality of teaching was sound in each of the four lessons observed. Teachers plan activities carefully and are clear about what they want pupils to achieve. Resources are well organised, and this enables pupils to work productively. Teachers' expertise and confidence in the subject varies. As a result, tasks are not always challenging enough, particularly for the older, higher-attaining pupils, in the demands they make on pupils' creativity. Pupils enjoy their art lessons and, once they are working, this results in an atmosphere of quiet concentration that promotes learning.

32

94. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced sketchbooks for older pupils. However, these are little used, and largely restricted to drawing rather than being a vehicle for pupils to develop a variety of ideas in a range of media. Their use varies between classes. Too little attention is given to developing an idea through a number of stages, in a range of media. Art is used effectively to enrich work across the curriculum, such as when Year 2 pupils produce detailed drawings of fabrics as part of their work in design and technology. The work of artists and craftspeople representing a range of cultures is not used enough to inspire pupils' work. Organisation of the subject across the school is good. The co-ordinator provides detailed plans of work for colleagues, which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. She monitors the standard of work across the school effectively and has a good grasp of strength and weaknesses, which will enable further improvements to be made. Spacious practical areas and good facilities such as a kiln extend the range of work that can be tackled.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

95. As at the last inspection, pupils of all abilities make sound progress in design and technology. Overall, they achieve standards that are close to, but not quite reaching, those expected for their ages. Since the last inspection, planning of the curriculum has improved, and now provides good support for teachers who, regardless of their own expertise, are able to offer a sound range of experiences for their pupils. Projects in a good range materials are undertaken, usually one each term, which develop pupils' skills steadily.

96. In Year 1, pupils spend a good deal of time using construction kits, which develops their skills in thinking about designs and making products within the constraints of materials. They also develop specific skills, such as the cutting and joining required when making a pop-up picture. An extended project involved tasting commercial fruit salads, and evaluating the quality, before making a fruit salad and judging its quality. In Year 2, the most recent project was making a 'dreamcoat', linked to work about Joseph in religious education. Pupils examined a range of coats and looked closely at the fabrics, developing skills in art and science. They designed their own coats, first drawing on paper and then using a simple graphics program on the computer. The making of the doll-sized coats involved cutting, sewing, joining in a variety of ways, and decorating the finished products, which are of high quality. Writing instructions for making and an evaluation of the process provided further opportunities to develop skills in English. This project is outstanding.

97. In Year 3/4, pupils looked closely at a range of purses, and examined the materials and fastenings. They drew designs for their own purses, from various viewpoints, and labelled them to support making. Their current project about sandwiches is just beginning with a taste test of a variety of commercially produced sandwiches, before being developed through designing and making pupils' own favourite sandwiches. In Year 5/6, pupils designed and made musical instruments, and the few finished products on display showed good skills in shaping and joining found materials, and decoration. These pupils' current project is about 'shelters' and two lessons were observed in which pupils evaluated the design, materials and fitness for purpose of a range of shelters, from an umbrella to a bus shelter. In Key Stage 2, evaluation and making are strong features of pupils' work, but designing does not extend pupils' ability sufficiently to show the development of design through a series of stages.

33

98. The quality of teaching was sound or better in each of the four lessons seen, and good in two. Teachers' planning makes it very clear what they want pupils to achieve, and the good teaching shares these objectives with pupils. Teachers use a good range of methods, leading whole-class discussion, demonstrating skills and organising work in pairs or groups, which encourages pupils to share ideas. For the youngest pupils, tasks are sometimes too difficult for them to be able to develop practical skills. Where teaching was good, challenging questions made pupils really think about their work. Pupils clearly enjoy design and technology, discuss ideas readily and work industriously when required.

99. Although the curriculum is well planned, in Key Stage 2 there are unacceptable variations between classes in the amount and quality of the work in pupils' books. This indicates that the subject receives varying emphasis, and this is a weakness. In the best practice, the subject links

very effectively with other aspects of the curriculum. Organisation of the subject across the school is sound. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, provides helpful support through planning and advice, and monitors standards through evaluating finished work. However, there is too little monitoring of the development of design skills, which is a relative weakness within a strong overall picture.

GEOGRAPHY

100. Attainment at the end of each key stage is close to that expected for pupils' ages. This represents good achievement across the school because a significant proportion of pupils start with a knowledge and understanding of the world that is below average. Pupils make good progress in developing a range of skills, and in extending their understanding of their own and contrasting localities.

101. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sound sense of place by studying the immediate locality of the school. Early map work skills are developed steadily, starting with simple maps and keys based on the classroom and the school environment. Year 2 pupils have a developing understanding of why things are like they are, and they indicate that they are pleased with the facilities they have in school. They can design their own symbols and keys and make sensible comparisons between areas within the school, carefully identifying features such as attractiveness, cleanliness and safety. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were able to define the purpose of a project titled 'Global Eye'. The teacher expertly used this project, which collects discarded spectacles and sends them to developing countries, to build an awareness of the world beyond the United Kingdom.

102. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to use the immediate environment and other localities in order to extend geographical skills and understanding. In two Year 3/4 lessons, pupils were able to describe the physical features of Cumbria and link the high rainfall with the upland nature of the Lake District. They know and understand the four points of the compass and demonstrate this by finding locations on a map. An emphasis upon local fieldwork enables Year 5/6 pupils to study the variety of ways in which land is used for houses, industry, roads, and recreation, and to explore the development of river systems through a study of the River Thames. The school environmental project, involving pupils from both key stages, was given a 'Mars Award for the Environment in Berkshire' last year. This has been particularly useful in supporting the development of geographical skills and enquiry.

34

103. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching was variable, one being good, one sound and one unsatisfactory. Lessons begin sensibly by referring to previous work and reinforcing skills already learned. Teachers use open-ended questions successfully, for example to lead discussion about the Lake District and its climate, and this extends pupils' knowledge and skills effectively. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, too long was taken in the whole-class session, so pupils' interest waned and too little time remained for independent work. Pupils are keen to learn about geography. They ask questions confidently about pictures and artefacts and show respect for different ways of life.

104. A recently introduced comprehensive scheme of work takes good account of the requirements of the National Curriculum and effectively supports teachers' planning. There is a

sound range of resources that provide good starting points for learning. Teachers' planning is monitored by the co-ordinator each half term but there is no opportunity provided to monitor the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator is most enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject and provides good leadership within the school.

HISTORY

105. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1 and reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages. They develop a sound understanding of life in the past. Year 1 pupils understand the ways in which some of their toys are different from those from the past. Using this information, higher-attaining pupils placed a number of dolls in chronological order by comparing different fashions, technical innovations and the materials from which the toys were made. Pupils know that stories that begin 'Once upon a time' and 'Long, long ago' are about events and people who lived in earlier times. They can make distinctions between aspects of their lives and life in the past. For example, by finding out about holidays in the past, Year 2 pupils learn to explain something of the similarities and differences between holidays then and the present day.

106. In Key Stage 2, Year 3/4 pupils extend their use of enquiry skills and have a sound knowledge of the distinctive features of life during the Tudor period. Pupils used photographs and books to identify the differences between wealthy and poor homes. They used evidence to make inferences, such as inferring that an ornate fireplace in a Tudor house represented relative wealth. In Years 5 and 6, pupils can talk about Tudor exploration and life during that period. They explain how they used a variety of sources to gain information, which was then presented in an interesting newspaper format using good historical language. Pupils have access to a suitable range of sources to aid their research. In a Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher provided a range of contemporary pictures and a short sequence from the film version of the story 'Oliver Twist' in order to convey the life of children during the Victorian period. As a result, the pupils responded well, enjoyed their work and applied themselves to the task in hand. Sound progress is made during Key Stage 2 and standards of attainment continue to be close to those expected for pupils' ages.

107. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good in two and satisfactory in one. Teaching was most effective, and had a positive impact on pupils' progress, where tasks were presented in an interesting context and pupils were encouraged to use a variety of sources. Work also focuses appropriately on skills, as well as facts, and is effectively

supported by investigation. Leadership of the subject is sound and improving with a good scheme of work in place to support teachers' planning. The co-ordinator has evaluated work across the school and identified what has been covered and approaches that have been successful. However, there has been little monitoring of teaching in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and form plans to raise standards further. There is some use of ICT for research. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the introduction of effective planning mean that standards have improved significantly since the last inspection.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

108. At the time of the last inspection, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was in line with national expectations, but by the end of Key Stage 2 it was below national expectations. Planning in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory, and the whole curriculum was not covered. Since then, the school has not fully addressed these weaknesses, and pupils in both key stages spend insufficient time working on computers to develop their ICT skills. Standards are below national expectations at the end of both key stages, and the required curriculum is still not fully in place in Key Stage 2.

109. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are given some opportunities to develop skills using the mouse and keyboard, but links between ICT and subjects across the curriculum are weak. In art and design, pupils use simple graphics programs to create patterns and images; they use a program to create basic compositions in music; they programme a moving toy to follow a set of instructions. However, little use is made of ICT during numeracy lessons, for example to convert data from class surveys into different types of charts. Similarly, pupils have relatively few opportunities to develop their word processing skills during literacy lessons. In the one lesson observed in the computer suite, Year 2 pupils were introduced to a new art program. Although the pupils worked together to begin drawing animal pictures, most lacked confidence and were unable to build on skills they had acquired on a similar program. The teacher also lacked confidence when demonstrating to pupils how to use different tools, or how to save their work. The achievements of pupils, regardless of ability, are unsatisfactory during Key Stage 1.

110. In Years 3 and 4, pupils slowly develop word processing skills, learning how to use different fonts and colours, and edit text. However, many opportunities are missed to develop and extend these skills in lessons. For example, during two ICT lessons on communication skills, pupils began to compare sending letters with e-mail messages. Although a small number of pupils were shown how to retrieve and send e-mail messages, none of them used computers to improve their word processing skills when writing their own letters, and most computers in the suite were unused.

111. In Years 5 and 6, pupils use the Internet to research information for their topic work. For example, they downloaded images and added their own text and clip art graphics when writing about Sri Lanka in geography lessons. Some use is made of software to support learning in science, for example producing a line graph to show the effects of temperature in an investigation on dissolving solids. However, pupils are not taught how to use simple spreadsheets to manipulate data. In a mathematics lesson, very good use was made of the computer suite when higher-attaining pupils converted fractions and decimals to percentages.

36

The program supported learning in mathematics very effectively, but required minimal use of ICT skills. Some older pupils have learned to present information on screen to groups, using 'Powerpoint', and some good use has been made of the school's digital camera. As in Key Stage 1, however, there are insufficient links made to subjects across the curriculum, and many opportunities are missed to develop ICT skills. As a result, pupils make unsatisfactory progress during the key stage.

112. In the few lessons seen, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory overall. Weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and confidence using ICT affect their expectations of what pupils can achieve, their ability to teach basic skills, and their efficient use of the available resources. Many teachers are

not yet confident in using the computer suite and the equipment is still unreliable. For example, in one scheduled ICT lesson on research skills, the teacher abandoned her plan to use the room when she discovered the 'Encarta' program was not available, owing to technical problems. When working on computers, either individually or in pairs, pupils apply themselves well and work enthusiastically. They share their knowledge and skills co-operatively.

113. The school has recently equipped a room with sufficient computers for whole class lessons. There have been many teething problems with this installation, and the hardware has regularly proved unreliable. Staff have received training as a group and have been given access to laptop computers, which are helping them to improve their own ICT skills. A new scheme of work is being implemented, making use of nationally agreed guidelines, but it is not yet fully in place. For example, elements involving control and monitoring have not yet been covered in Key Stage 2, but are planned for the future. A development plan for ICT identifies appropriate priorities but, as yet, the organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory. Assessment procedures are poor, with no system in place to record the individual skills of pupils during each unit of work. Although the school has made progress since the last inspection in improving equipment and staff confidence, these have yet to result in raised standards of attainment. Overall progress has, therefore, been unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

114. From the evidence available, standards are appropriate for the pupils' ages in both key stages. In the lessons seen, pupils made at least satisfactory and often good progress, enjoying practical involvement in the varied activities. They sang tunefully and participated enthusiastically in their weekly hymn practice, responding well to the good teaching.

115. The youngest pupils sing a number of nursery rhymes from memory, and are beginning to recognise high and low sounds. For example, they indicate a high sound by raising their hands and speaking in a high voice. Older infant pupils have listened to music from 'Swan Lake' and responded through drawing. In a very good lesson, younger junior pupils worked hard and enjoyed their success as they sang a round in two parts while sustaining two different beats on percussion instruments.

116. The quality of the teaching seen was all satisfactory or better, with some that was very good, showing an improvement since the last inspection. Features of the very good teaching include planning progressively challenging activities, good use of well prepared resources and

high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. For example, very good teaching with upper juniors included appropriate literacy links, as poems on a space theme were discussed before music on the same theme was played. Careful questioning encouraged the pupils to describe the images suggested by different pieces of music, and all responses were valued and encouraged.

117. There is a good-sized music room, which is well equipped with tuned and untuned percussion instruments. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership for the subject and has prepared a new scheme of work recently, which is proving helpful for the non-specialist teachers. Currently there

are no extra-curricular opportunities, but a small number of pupils learn to play the violin from a visiting teacher. Pupils perform in school in assemblies and at concerts, and the choir performs in musical festivals and to elderly residents locally. As well as literacy, links with other subjects are often good. For example, upper juniors made musical instruments in their design and technology lessons, while studying vibration and sound in science, and some pupils used a simple computer program to compose music. As yet, there is no evidence of pupils' own compositions in the developing portfolio of evidence.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. Pupils' achievements are sound during both key stages, and they reach standards close to those expected for seven and 11 year olds. Attainment is similar to the last inspection.

119. In games, pupils in Year 1/2 learn basic ball skills. They learn to pass and control a football over short distances, and to develop close control skills moving with the ball. They show sound control when dribbling with a ball. Year 3/4 pupils learn to strike a ball using a variety of bats, working together in pairs when hitting and fielding balls. Pupils in Year 5/6 improve their hockey skills by learning to pass, control and dribble a ball. They take care when working in a restricted indoor space. Their ball skills are generally as expected for their ages. In dance, Year 3/4 pupils create short sequences to express a range of emotions. They develop then change facial expressions and body postures as they move around, to convey a range of moods and feelings. They work in small groups to co-ordinate ideas and perform a series of actions. In Year 5/6, pupils use a range of compositional ideas during their dance lessons. They explore and develop a wide range of low body shapes and positions when simulating cat movements. Most pupils achieve well when developing their co-ordination and balance through learning to crawl, then pounce, improving their leaping and landing skills. They work well in pairs, developing short sequences designed to express emotions through confrontations.

120. The quality of teaching is sound overall, and the six lessons seen included one good and one very good lesson. The structure of lessons is good, with a warm-up, followed by a focus on skills or group activities, then a cool-down session at the end of the lesson. Where teaching was good or very good, the teacher constantly encouraged pupils to think about their movements and refine their techniques, making good use of demonstrations to model good practice and stimulate ideas. In these lessons, pupils had good opportunities to watch others perform, and appraise their efforts. Pupils generally enjoy physical education lessons, work sensibly, and try hard to develop skills and improve their performances. In one lesson, Year 5/6 pupils sustained great concentration and effort throughout, and were able to raise their performance to a high standard by responding to the teacher's constant prompts.

121. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes outdoor and adventurous activities for older pupils. There are satisfactory arrangements for swimming, with Year 4 pupils attending lessons at a local pool. At present, a limited range of extra-curricular sports clubs is offered. The school enters teams in local competitions in various sports. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is sound. The co-ordinator supports teachers' planning, offers advice, and has arranged training for staff in games skills. Good use is made of the hall for indoor lessons, but the school has only recently acquired an outdoor grassed area, which is still some way from being fit

for use; as a result, outdoor facilities are restricted. Resources for games and gymnastics are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented a new scheme of work, and maintained standards in the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122. Pupils of all abilities make sound progress and attainment in both key stages is in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus, as at the last inspection. Through their study of 'giving and receiving' last term, pupils in Year 1/2 considered special days and why we give presents at Christmas. They realised the importance of thinking of others to ensure the presents they give are appropriate. This term, their study of special days has developed as they consider work and rest days, and how different faiths celebrate their Sabbath. In a very good lesson, Year 2 pupils learnt about the Jewish Shabbat and the use of the Torah scroll. Pupils in Year 3/4 studied Christianity last term and have a good understanding of features of a church and Christian festivals. They learnt about the main events in Jesus' life and studied some of his teachings from the New Testament. They considered important people in their own lives as well as important Christians, successfully relating their learning to things that affect them. In their work on 'winter festivals' last term, Year 5/6 learnt about the celebrations of a number of different religions. There is too little recorded work in some pupils' books, as reported at the time of the last inspection. Their knowledge about different religions is developing further this term as they study the symbols associated with each.

123. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory, with one very good lesson. In that lesson, planning identified learning objectives precisely, questions were well used, teacher knowledge was secure and pupils' ideas were sought and valued. In a number of lessons seen, pupils of differing faiths were involved and asked to contribute; their beliefs were discussed sensitively. Pupils in Year 3/4 gasped with wonder as they shared a 'pop-up' book about the creation, and other opportunities to enhance spiritual development were seen, such as when observing a frozen ice rabbit in an English lesson and watching it gradually melt and change form. Pupils are keen to discuss issues and co-operate well in group tasks.

124. Pupils have opportunities to visit local Christian churches, but unfortunately not to visit places of worship of other religions, which are further away. The last inspection report stated that there were no religious artefacts in school. This issue has been addressed well, with a number already in use and more on order. A box of resources for each of the major religions is available now. The subject is led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who is aware that the helpful scheme of work requires some updating in the light of the newly-published Agreed Syllabus. At present it concentrates on facts about religions. It does not develop pupils' understanding enough about how people's lives, beliefs and values can be influenced by religion. The developing portfolio of evidence will be very helpful in this respect, as it gathers examples of work about both aspects.