

# INSPECTION REPORT

## OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chesham Bois, Amersham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110479

Headteacher: Michael Corcoran

Reporting inspector: David Westall  
2414

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 March 2001

Inspection number: 207097

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Amersham Road  
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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Downey

Date of previous inspection: 12/10/1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19082	Tessa Farley	Team inspector	Geography Music Physical education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
3349	Jacqueline Ikin	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology The Foundation Stage	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
3856	Sandy Wellsted	Team inspector	English History Special educational needs	Attitudes, values and personal development

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

There are 214 pupils on roll, aged between four and 11, and they are taught in nine classes. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, and the percentage on the school's register of special educational needs is below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need; and five pupils speak English as an additional language. On entry to the school, and at the end of the reception year, children's attainment is generally above average and a significant minority demonstrate standards which are well above average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a sound school where most pupils make satisfactory progress in their academic learning and all benefit from effective provision for their personal development. Standards are generally high in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2, reflecting the sound overall progress that most pupils make from their good starting points on entry to the school. The school's management and leadership are sound, and benefit from the good working relationship between the headteacher and deputy. The school's main strengths lie in the high quality teaching in Year 6 and pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. Its key weaknesses are in its provision for more able pupils, and the quality of teaching in Year 1. Overall, however, the school's strengths considerably outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The quality of teaching is mainly very good in Year 6, and enables pupils to achieve well.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- The deputy headteacher is particularly effective, and makes a very significant contribution to school improvement.
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, social, and cultural development, and very good provision for their moral development.
- The school is a caring community where pupils' welfare is given a high priority.
- Pupils' standards are high in English, mathematics and science.

#### **What could be improved**

- Except in Year 6, the more able pupils often make insufficient progress because their work is too easy.
- There are important weaknesses in the teaching in the Year 1 class.
- Most subject co-ordinators do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, across the school.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' standards and progress need to be improved in most subjects.
- There are weaknesses in elements of the provision for children in the reception class.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Overall, the school has made sound progress in addressing most of the weaknesses identified in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1998, and is now a better school. The last inspection found the school had serious weaknesses in relation to its leadership and management. The headteacher was not monitoring the school's performance with enough

rigour, including the teaching and the quality of the curriculum provided for the pupils. In addition, the governing body was not sufficiently involved in decision making and school evaluation; and a range of statutory requirements was not fulfilled. The school has been successful in rectifying these weaknesses, and the leadership and management are satisfactory. The governors now have a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, work purposefully with the headteacher to secure further improvements and fulfil their roles as critical friends. The headteacher is also considerably more effective than in 1998. His monitoring procedures are sound and have a beneficial effect; and he has worked successfully with the staff to improve the quality and range of the curriculum. All statutory requirements are now met. The headteacher has also enhanced the school improvement plan, which was criticised in 1998 for the lack of detail about individual initiatives. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were too low in 1998 but now match those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 2.

In two important respects, the school has made insufficient progress since the last inspection. More able pupils needed more challenging work in 1998, and the roles of subject co-ordinators were generally underdeveloped. These are still key weaknesses in the school.

## STANDARDS

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

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

The table shows that pupils' results in English, mathematics and science have been well above the national average for the last three years. When the 2000 results are compared with those achieved similar schools, they are well above average in English and science, and average in mathematics. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results, and show that pupils' overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 (in Year 6) are well above average in English and mathematics, and are above average in science.

Standards, at the end of Key Stage 2, are above those expected nationally in design and technology, geography, music and physical education; and are well above average in history. In art and design and in ICT, standards in Year 6 are in line with national expectations.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic, enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with teachers and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks, and respect the opinions of others. Pupils respond well when given responsibility, but most require more opportunities to use their initiative and develop their decision-making skills in lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is good, with low levels of unauthorised absence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years (The Foundation Stage)	aged 5-7 years (Key Stage 1)	aged 7-11 years (Key Stage 2)
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory overall but with weaknesses in Year 1	Satisfactory overall, but mainly very good in Year 6

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 94 per cent of all lessons observed. Good, and occasionally very good, lessons were evident in just under half of all lessons; and these were mainly in Key Stage 2. There are important weaknesses in the teaching in Year 1, while Year 6 pupils benefit from teaching which is mainly very good and is otherwise good. The quality of teaching in both Year 6 classes is a major strength in the school.

In the Foundation Stage, the teaching is broadly satisfactory. Children are interested in their tasks and a positive working atmosphere is created. However, children need more opportunities to learn through well planned practical tasks, and to develop their creative talents. In addition, they would often benefit from more focused guidance from their teacher, through questions which are specifically targeted to address their learning needs.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching in English is satisfactory overall, but is good in Year 5 and very good in Year 6. In Year 6, teachers are very confident in their own knowledge of the subject. This is very evident in the sharply focused questions they put to their pupils, and in the constructive way they help pupils to improve and attain higher standards. These teachers provide pupils with rich experiences in the subject, and develop pupils' imagination and creative talents as well as their technical skills. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, in mathematics and science and enables most pupils to make sound progress in their learning. However, very good teaching in Year 6 means that all pupils progress well in both subjects because they are working at the edge of their capabilities.

In English, mathematics and science, more able pupils often require more challenging work, except in Year 6. In these subjects, the teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 1 where there is often a lack of clarity about what pupils should learn from their lessons, and expectations are too low.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Teachers' planning is generally sound, and the learning intentions of most lessons are clearly identified. Teachers usually provide clear instructions and explanations for their pupils and organise their lessons effectively. Overall, the quality of teaching in the school enables most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, to make sound progress in their learning.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is mainly sound, although there are weaknesses in the provision for children's creative and musical development, and insufficient purposeful practical activities, including play. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced, and meets statutory requirements. Sufficient time is allocated for teaching literacy and numeracy, and sound use is usually made of this time.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision is sound overall. However, these pupils progress very well when given short sessions of one-to-one support from the special educational needs support assistant, and benefit from very good teaching in Year 6.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes sound provision for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good, and provision for their moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community and pupils' welfare is a high priority. However, procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress and standards need to improve.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher fosters a positive team spirit among staff and, overall, his leadership and management skills are satisfactory. The deputy headteacher is a key strength in the school and works well in partnership with the headteacher. Most subject co-ordinators do not have a sufficiently clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects, across the school. As a consequence, they are in a weak position to target precise areas for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides sound support for the leadership and management of the school, and ensures that statutory requirements are met. Governors work purposefully with the headteacher to secure further improvement in the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The results of statutory testing are analysed carefully in English, mathematics and science; and there are sound procedures for checking the quality of teaching. However, most subject co-ordinators do not evaluate pupils' progress and standards with enough rigour; and there has been no adequate evaluation of the impact of the school's policy for more able pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of its resources. The school budget is analysed carefully, and financial planning is appropriately linked to the school improvement plan.

There are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school's accommodation and the learning resources for pupils are both satisfactory, overall.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They believe their children are happy at school.</li> <li>• They believe the staff are easy to talk to.</li> <li>• They believe the school has high expectations for work and behaviour.</li> <li>• They believe their children develop mature and responsible attitudes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They would like a greater range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings generally support parents' positive views, although teachers should expect able pupils to achieve higher academic standards. The range of extra-curricular activities is similar to that in most primary schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. On entry to the school, and at the end of the reception year, overall attainment is above average and a significant minority of pupils demonstrate standards which are well above average. In the reception class, children make mainly satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points, although aspects of their creative and physical development are inhibited by weaknesses in the provision.
2. In Key Stage 1, the results of the 2000 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in reading and writing were in the top five per cent achieved nationally and were well above the results achieved by similar schools. In Key Stage 2, the 2000 results in English were well above the both national average and the results of similar schools. In both key stages, high results have been maintained for the past four years.
3. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results, and show that pupils' current standards in English are well above average, overall, at the end of both key stages. By the end of Year 2, pupils read simple texts aloud fluently and confidently, using an appropriate range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They read expressively, responding well to punctuation marks; and can find hidden meanings. Most pupils can adapt their writing to match different purposes, and the more able pupils produce skilfully crafted stories. Most Year 6 pupils can analyse and appreciate a wide range of fiction and information texts, and can justify their choice of reading matter. They read very well, and the written work of many Year 6 pupils is of a very high standard. Their vocabulary is extensive, and they are able to choose their words carefully for their precision and impact. Their work is almost always beautifully written and well presented, and their spelling is usually accurate. Across the school, pupils' speaking and listening skills are good.
4. In mathematics, the results of the 2000 SATs in Key Stage 1 were in the top five per cent nationally and were also very high when compared to the results of similar schools. In Key Stage 2, the 2000 results were well above the national average but broadly average when compared to the results of similar schools. The school's results in mathematics have been high for the last four years, in both key stages. Inspection findings show that most pupils attain standards which are above those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1; and overall attainment in Key Stage 2 is well above average.
5. In science, the results of the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, in 2000, were very high in relation to the national average and when compared to the results of similar schools. The results of the science SATs at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2000, were well above the national average and maintained the school's achievements in the previous three years. The 2000 results were also well above the results for similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that most pupils demonstrate attainment in science which exceeds the levels expected at the end of both key stages.
6. The school's achievement in enabling pupils to reach these high standards in English, mathematics and science is mainly satisfactory, given the above average standards that pupils generally demonstrate on entry to the school and at the age of five. Pupils achieve well in all these subjects in Year 6, as a result of particularly effective teaching, while their progress is sometimes restricted by weaknesses in the teaching

in Year 1. There are no significant differences between the achievements of boys and girls, across the school; and overall judgements about pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science broadly reflect those made in the last OFSTED inspection, in 1998.

7. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress both in and out of lessons, when they receive additional tuition from support staff. Their progress in lessons is otherwise sound, except in Year 6, where very good teaching enables them to make particularly good progress in relation to their starting points. Overall, they make steady gains in their learning as they move through the school; and few pupils fall below the expected standards for their age in English, mathematics and science by the time they are 11. The most able pupils do well in Year 6, but sometimes mark time in other groups when their work is not sufficiently challenging. The last OFSTED inspection, in 1998, also identified deficiencies in the progress made by these pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language are making sound progress, and their achievements are satisfactory.
8. In art and design, pupils' standards are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages, reflecting their satisfactory achievement. In design and technology, standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1, while pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 and demonstrate above average attainment. In geography, standards are a little above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In history, standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 1, and are well above average at the end of Key Stage 2 as a result of the good or very good progress pupils make in Years 5 and 6. In music and physical education, pupils demonstrate good standards, overall, in both key stages. The school has made good progress in raising pupils' standards in ICT, which were below average when the school was inspected in 1998. Pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 1, and their standards are above those expected nationally at the end of the key stage. Pupils' achievements are currently satisfactory in Key Stage 2, resulting in standards which are in line with national expectations at the end of the key stage.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. All pupils, including the youngest children, have very positive attitudes to learning. They clearly value education and are always willing to learn new skills or to apply what they have learned on previous occasions. Pupils are very well mannered and polite and, with very rare exceptions, they observe all the social conventions which make for orderly, purposeful lessons in which a climate for learning is securely established. They are always ready to answer questions, take turns appropriately in discussions, and listen with interest to their teachers and to others. When required to work independently, for example during the literacy hour, they apply themselves conscientiously to the tasks they have been assigned, and they make best use of any resources provided. Whatever their ability, pupils strive, in most lessons, to use their individual talents to good effect and to meet their teachers' expectations in terms of behaviour and attainment. They enjoy the visits planned by teachers to enrich their work, for example in history, and they respond with interest to the visitors who come into school to talk to them about their own experiences and interests.
10. Pupils are consistently helpful, friendly and outgoing in their behaviour. They establish trusting relationships with one another, with their teachers, and with all other adults who work with them. They behave thoughtfully and very well in lessons and in the playground, and are always sensitive to others' needs. For example, they are quick to

include a child who seems to be alone in the playground, and they speedily offer to help anyone who has been hurt. All pupils are guided by a strong moral code acquired in part from home, in part from their schooling, and in part from their religious faith. They are very familiar with the school rules and with classroom rules, and they understand very well what constitutes right and wrong behaviour, whether within or beyond the school environment. They have a strong sense of mankind's responsibility for the care of others and for the care of the environment.

11. The seriousness with which pupils respond to spiritual and moral issues is evident in assemblies and prayers, in their written work and in discussions. During the inspection, this same seriousness was particularly evident during a Year 6 drama lesson where pupils spoke, in role, articulating the very different thoughts and feelings of Jesus, Pontius Pilate and Barabbas, and of the Roman soldiers who taunted Jesus shortly before his crucifixion.
12. Pupils work well together. They are accustomed to working in pairs and small groups, and they happily participate as leaders or as followers, as circumstances require, without friction. When required to get things done, as in the drama lesson mentioned earlier, they organise themselves very quickly, share ideas constructively and rapidly achieve results. They value everyone's contribution and acknowledge each person's individual talents, irrespective of background or ability. Pupils with special educational needs are equal partners in any context, whether at work or at play. They are fully integrated into every aspect of school life, and are valued members of the community. Boys and girls work together harmoniously; and pupils from ethnic minorities are confident to play their full part in all aspects of school life. Incidents involving bullying or racist behaviour are exceedingly rare and are dealt with promptly.
13. Pupils of all ages undertake routine duties and responsibilities willingly and reliably, but most require more opportunities to develop decision-making skills and to use their initiative in lessons. They respond with compassion and generosity to the school's efforts to raise funds for local and global charities, sometimes taking responsibility for particular activities such as running a cake stall for 'red-nose day'. They can be trusted to complete their homework conscientiously and well and, when treated as equal partners in the learning process, as in Year 6, they enjoy the responsibility they are given and rise to the challenges it brings.
14. Attendance is good and there are low levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are completed in line with requirements. Nearly all pupils arrive in good time and sessions start promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The quality of teaching was satisfactory, or better, in 94 per cent of all lessons observed. Good, and occasionally very good, lessons were evident in just under half of all lessons; and these were nearly all in Key Stage 2. There are important weaknesses in the teaching in Year 1, while pupils in Year 6 benefit from teaching which is mainly very good and is otherwise good. The quality of the teaching in both Year 6 classes is a major strength of the school.
16. The last OFSTED inspection, in 1998, found that a similar percentage of lessons were satisfactory or better. It identified a slightly higher proportion of good or better lessons than the current inspection, but found the teaching did not always challenge

- the more able pupils. Except in Year 6, more able pupils still mark time in some lessons, and little progress has been made in rectifying this weakness.
17. All lessons seen in the Foundation Stage (in the reception class) were satisfactory but some included unsatisfactory features. Lesson planning is mainly sound, and reflects the national guidance. However, direct teaching predominates in all the areas of learning and there is an over-emphasis on written and pictorial recording from an early stage. Planning for play and other activities is not sufficiently precise and should sometimes be better informed by a knowledge of what children already know and an understanding of how young children learn and develop. Consequently, there are limited opportunities for children to explore and apply their learning; and to demonstrate what they know through well-planned practical experiences involving play and talk. Children are interested in their tasks and a positive working atmosphere is created in lessons. However, they often require more focused guidance from their teacher, through questions which are specifically tailored to meet their learning needs. A further weakness in the teaching is the limited opportunity provided for pupils to develop their creative skills, particularly through art.
  18. In English, in Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching is satisfactory overall, but is good in Year 5 and very good in Year 6. The teaching of reading is a strength throughout the school, as is the teaching of the 'secretarial' aspects of writing: handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Most teachers are more confident and effective when teaching these secretarial aspects, and when improving pupils' vocabulary, than they are in helping pupils to improve the overall structure, organisation and style of their writing. In Year 6, teachers are very confident in their own knowledge of the subject. This is very evident both in the sharply focused questions they put to their pupils, and in the constructive way they help pupils to improve and attain higher standards, whether in reading, writing or discussion. These teachers provide pupils with rich experiences in the subject, and develop pupils' imagination and creative talents as well as their technical skills in English. Weaknesses in the teaching of English include the lack of sufficiently demanding work for more able pupils in Key Stage 1 and in the younger half of Key Stage 2; and unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1 due to low teacher expectations and weak lesson organisation.
  19. In mathematics and science, the teaching is mainly sound in both key stages and enables most pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. However, in Year 1, the teachers' knowledge is not secure in either subject, and there is a lack of clarity about what pupils should learn from their lessons. As a result, teaching in Year 1 is unsatisfactory. The teaching in Year 6 is very good in mathematics and science, and all pupils progress well because they are working at the edge of their capabilities, and are able to develop their investigation skills by devising their own questions and lines of enquiry. While the teaching in both subjects is satisfactory, overall, and is based on sound planning and lesson organisation, most teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their decision-making skills in mathematics and science. Except in Year 6, more able pupils often need more challenging work in these subjects.
  20. The overall quality of teaching is good in music, in both key stages, and in geography in Key Stage 2. In physical education, the teaching is mainly satisfactory but is good or very good in Years 5 and 6. Insufficient evidence was available to make overall judgements about the quality of teaching in other subjects but evidence from an analysis of pupils' work, and from lessons which were observed, shows the teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory, or better, progress in their learning in these subjects.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally sound, though very good in one-to-one support sessions, and very good overall in Year 6. Pupils with English as an additional language also benefit from sound teaching. Teachers plan suitable work for both these groups of pupils at those times when they are required to work independently in class, for example during the literacy hour. They intervene appropriately, whenever possible, to make sure that the pupils complete tasks to the best of their abilities. Teachers know their pupils well, and are often able to direct specific questions at those pupils needing to develop particular skills, or for whom certain parts of a lesson are particularly relevant. They take great care to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are included at all points in a lesson, and in all activities. Individual education plans for pupils have precise, achievable targets. Pupils' progress towards these is carefully monitored, and new targets set whenever appropriate. One pupil in the school has a statement of special educational need and is working outside the National Curriculum. She benefits from the full-time support of a qualified teacher and a special educational needs welfare assistant, both of whom are fully committed to meeting her very complex learning needs. They are having a very positive effect on some aspects of her progress. However, the school recognises that it does not have the facilities, resources or specialist expertise to meet all of this pupil's most urgent needs in the longer term.
22. Across the school, teaching is characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Teachers' planning is generally sound, and the learning objectives of the vast majority of lessons are clearly identified. Satisfactory use is made of homework to extend what is learned in school. Teachers usually provide clear instructions and explanations for their pupils and organise their lessons effectively. Sound use is made of questioning by most teachers, while those in Year 6 use questions well to probe pupils' understanding and to assess their future needs. Overall, the staff have a sound awareness of the need for pupils to have equal opportunities to learn and make progress, but most give insufficient attention to the requirements of the most able pupils in their classes.

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

23. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage provides a secure basis for the National Curriculum, and is broadly satisfactory. However, there are weaknesses in provision for physical and creative development. There is also insufficient emphasis on learning through well planned play and talk. Opportunities for personal and social development are satisfactory overall but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop decision-making skills and to become independent learners. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy; and opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world are broadly satisfactory. Although the school makes use of the hall, playground and field, children do not have ready access to a sufficiently large outside play area and this limits opportunities for their physical development. The school recognises this and there are well-developed plans to remedy the situation in the near future. Provision for creative development is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to explore their own imaginative ideas and to represent what they remember, feel or observe, particularly through art and creative three-dimensional model making.
24. The previous inspection found that the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 was not sufficiently broad and balanced, due to weaknesses in whole school planning. There



were also particular weaknesses in the school's provision for ICT. There have been significant improvements in the curriculum, including in ICT, and it now meets statutory requirements. The school day is organised efficiently and the time available for teaching is in line with national guidance. Sufficient time is allocated for literacy and numeracy, and sound use is usually made of this time. There is a curriculum framework, which is appropriately supported by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) curriculum guidance. This promotes the progression of subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding from year to year, and ensures the whole curriculum is covered. However, the school should provide more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to develop their decision-making skills in Key Stages 1 and 2.

25. Provision for personal, social and health education is sound and, where elements are covered through the religious education syllabus, is often good. There is satisfactory provision for sex and drugs education.
26. Overall, the school makes satisfactory arrangements to ensure equality of access and opportunity to the whole curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language have full access to the curriculum. Timetables for short withdrawal sessions from class are carefully structured to ensure that each pupil's entitlement to the whole curriculum is not compromised. The one pupil for whom the National Curriculum is disapplied is encouraged to join in class activities whenever possible. More able pupils are identified, and a policy makes useful suggestions for ways in which their particular learning needs should be met. However, the implementation of the policy is not consistent, across the school, and these pupils often require more challenging work.
27. The school has established a wide range of links with other local primary schools. This ensures that pupils have plenty of opportunities to mix with others in sporting, arts and musical events and to participate in special celebrations such as the Diocesan Millennium Mass. Teachers benefit from participating in training days with staff from other primary schools and this helps to broaden their knowledge of curriculum initiatives. Although pupils transfer to a variety of different secondary schools, efforts are made to ensure that their needs are known to the staff at the receiving school, and this helps pupils to make a smooth transition. Because of the wide catchment area of the school, there are limited links with the many nurseries or playgroups that children attend before starting.
28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is sound overall, and is sometimes better. All pupils on the special educational needs register benefit from short sessions of one-to-one support from a special educational needs support assistant who provides work designed to help them meet the various targets in their individual education plans. While most targets are related to literacy, there is also some support for pupils with learning needs associated with numeracy, and also for a variety of social and emotional needs. Class teachers, the special educational needs support assistant and the special educational needs co-ordinator are all involved in designing relevant targets and in monitoring pupils' progress, and this teamwork is effective in meeting the pupils' needs. Whenever appropriate or relevant, the support of outside specialists is sought.
29. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities, which includes French, music and football is satisfactory. Good use is made of the local community and places further afield, such as Docklands and the Isle of Wight, to support the curriculum.

30. The school makes good use of the community to help enrich pupils' experiences and opportunities. Pupils have visited local shops, churches and woodlands as part of projects in geography, science and religious education and have used the data from traffic surveys in mathematics. Local residents have been invited to share their memories of the second world war, making the topic come alive for pupils. The school has benefited from gifts of equipment, such as microscopes, through links with businesses; and pupils enjoy the challenge of football skills sessions run by Wycombe Wanderers Football Club.
31. Provision for spiritual development is good. The Catholic faith is central to the school's life and ethos, as stated in the aims and missions statement. Pupils reflect about their faith, their lives and their relationships with others on a daily basis. Assemblies and daily opportunities for prayer are used well to promote pupils' spiritual development. Class discussions are often used effectively to help pupils to reflect on their feelings and emotions.
32. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are given a very clear sense of what is right and wrong, which is firmly rooted in the teaching of their Catholic faith. They are encouraged to apply these principles in a range of situations, for example, in thinking about how they should behave towards others, within their own families and within the school. They are given good opportunities to reflect on the dilemmas faced by others, for example, the difficulties for farmers and for vets in killing apparently healthy animals in the current foot and mouth outbreak. They also consider the constant struggles that exist between right and wrong and the dilemmas in making choices between them in their own daily lives.
33. Provision for social development is good overall. The school actively promotes sensitive and thoughtful relationships with others. Pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on when they find relationships difficult and on ways in which these difficulties can be overcome. They are encouraged to work well together, share equipment sensibly, play together constructively at break-times and respond sensitively to the needs of others. They are made keenly aware of appropriate behaviour in a range of social situations. As a result, they show a concern for social justice and are aware of some of the issues, for example, concerning world trade. The school supports an appropriate range of charities, and makes pupils aware of people less fortunate than themselves. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and use their initiative in the course of lessons and in the life of the school, and this is a weakness in the provision.
34. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to study western cultures through their work in art, music and literature. There are also good opportunities for them to learn about their own cultural traditions, through, for example, links with a local dramatic club and participation in events such as the Amersham Martyrs Community Play, which commemorates the martyrdom of seven local people. Opportunities to learn about the cultural traditions of other faiths represented in the British communities include Islam and Judaism, and result in raised awareness of the significance of events and celebrations within those faiths. Links with a school in Eritrea provide further opportunities to learn about different world cultures. Studies of Kenya, and visits by African and Asian dance troupes, also contribute well to pupils' awareness.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35. Teachers identify learning objectives for their lessons clearly and these are usually shared with pupils. In good lessons, these learning objectives are reviewed with pupils at the end of lessons. Good teaching is characterised by skilful questioning by teachers to probe and extend learning and to involve pupils in self-assessment of their learning. Teachers prepare useful termly summaries of pupils' progress and achievements to share with parents.
36. Throughout the school, teachers know individual pupils well and a variety of assessments and tests are carried out. However, the school has no clear systems in place for collating this data for individuals, or groups, which limits some of its usefulness. Some teachers make notes of assessments on their planning, but these are sometimes too general in nature to inform future planning. Baseline assessments are made but are not incorporated into ongoing assessments and observations of learning for the youngest pupils.
37. The analysis of statistical data from statutory tests is very good in English and is sound in mathematics and science. This has improved since the last inspection, and is having a beneficial effect on teaching and pupils' learning. A satisfactory start has been made in identifying and targeting the needs of classes in order to improve performance in English, mathematics, science and ICT. In English this is informed by teachers' knowledge of curriculum levels and good support and monitoring from the co-ordinator. In other subjects, staff confidence in assigning curriculum levels to work is less secure, and needs to be developed to ensure that target setting gains greater precision. The last inspection report noted that there were no whole-school recording systems; and in science, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education, history and geography there are still no systems in place for assessing the development of skills. Assessment in these subjects needs to improve in order to track pupils' progress and standards more carefully, and inform teachers' planning more effectively.
38. The clear marking policy is followed by some teachers. In these classes, marking is informative and notes achievement and progress within subjects. No overall monitoring of the quality of teachers' marking has been undertaken. Inspection findings indicate that marking is satisfactory, overall, although there is variation in quality across the school. The recently agreed assessment policy is not yet fully implemented in the school and the management of assessment needs to be strengthened.
39. The school lives up to its mission to be a caring and supportive Catholic community where each child is valued. Relationships in the school are based on mutual respect and good manners. Adults know the pupils well and take time to consider their personal as well as their educational needs. Parents are encouraged to share their concerns and are kept informed of any actions the school has taken. This good communication between home and school ensures that medical, educational or pastoral needs are known to staff and effective support can be provided.
40. The school successfully promotes very good standards of behaviour, across the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes good and unacceptable behaviour and enjoy the recognition given to them by staff for acts of kindness or helpfulness. Pupils develop high self-esteem and are confident that staff will listen sympathetically to any worries they might have. This ensures that the rare incidents of bullying or racist name calling quickly come to light and are dealt with promptly. The school also follows up such incidents by planning a particular focus in assemblies, or in personal and social education sessions, to teach why such behaviour is unacceptable.

41. The school staff have a good awareness of issues relating to child protection and have appropriate guidelines for following up concerns. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are sound, and efforts are made to encourage the few parents of latecomers to aim for an earlier arrival time. Appropriate regard is given to matters of health, safety and security, with regular inspections of the buildings and grounds. There are well established procedures for fire, accidents and emergencies. The school benefits from having several trained first-aiders but there is scope to improve the security, labelling and accessibility of specific medicines.
42. Children joining the school in September or after Christmas have the opportunity to make two visits to the school before starting in order to help them become familiar with the buildings and routines. The school has an appropriate programme of personal and social education, covering healthy living and drugs education as well as opportunities to reflect on attitudes and relationships. Safety awareness is promoted in lessons such as physical education, and older pupils attend a county programme which helps pupils to develop safe practices in challenging situations. These opportunities make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development and adds to their confidence in coping with all aspects of school life.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

43. The school and parents share common expectations about the school, and the good relations which are established are strengths of the partnership. Parents welcome the emphasis given to Catholic values and the fact that the personal as well as the academic needs of the pupils are considered important. Parents are pleased that the school successfully meets the high expectations of good behaviour and standards of work indicated in the home/school agreement. Parents find the staff and headteacher easy to talk to and they listen well to concerns. This leads to parents having strong support for the school, and a sense of ownership which does not preclude them from commenting on the school's weaknesses as well as its strengths.
44. Parents receive sound information about all aspects of school life. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents provide clear information about the school. Regular newsletters, which include summaries of what is to be taught each term, keep parents in touch with school activities and the curriculum. Occasional meetings are held to explain new educational strategies, such as for numeracy, or to seek parents views about changes to policies such as for sex education. Parents are also invited to class assemblies and to share in religious celebrations throughout the year.
45. The school has established positive links with the parents of all pupils with special educational needs. They are informed of their child's needs when these are first identified, and almost all parents are very keen to attend the subsequent meetings when their child's progress is reviewed and new targets are set. Almost without exception, parents play their part in helping their child by reinforcing work done in school. They help their children with reading and homework, and some help their children with work specifically related to their targets.
46. Parents have regular opportunities, throughout the year, to see their children's work and to discuss progress and targets for improvement. Annual written reports give good indications of pupils' personal and social development, including a summary of achievements outside school, but sometimes need to be more specific about the

academic standards pupils are achieving and the progress they are making. Day-to-day contact about work is maintained through home/school reading and homework diaries. Teachers are generally available before and after school to talk with parents about any immediate concerns.

47. For their part, parents give strong support for their children's learning. Very few parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time. Some parents help regularly in classes or with jobs around the school and they are willing to share their knowledge and expertise where this can be used in the curriculum. There is a long tradition of parents organising the cycling safety course for the oldest pupils. The flourishing parents' association is well supported and raises significant funds to provide additional resources for the school. The parents' commitment to the school sets a good role model for the children and fosters positive attitudes to school.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. The governing body provides sound support for the leadership and management of the school. This contrasts with the situation in 1998, when the OFSTED inspection found that governors were insufficiently involved in decision making and school evaluation, and that a range of statutory requirements were not fulfilled. The current governing body debates the results of statutory testing rigorously and has a good understanding of the school's performance in relation to the national average and the results of similar schools. The governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs are taking a keen interest in the school's provision for these areas. They meet with co-ordinators, study documentation and provide useful feedback to the full governing body. There are also governors for ICT, science and religious education; and all ensure they have a sound overview of provision. Overall, the governing body is significantly more effective than in 1998, and now works purposefully with the headteacher to secure further improvement in the school's work. It has a sound awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, and knows the challenges it faces. Statutory requirements are met.
49. The last OFSTED report also identified weaknesses in the work of the headteacher. He was not monitoring the school's performance with enough rigour, including the teaching and the quality of the curriculum provided for the pupils. When these deficiencies were considered, along with those identified for the governing body, the 1998 OFSTED inspection found the school had serious weaknesses in relation to its leadership and management. The headteacher, like the governing body, is now considerably more effective. He has established a programme for regularly observing lessons, and provides staff with valuable feedback which identifies strengths and weaknesses clearly, benefiting their professional development. He checks teachers' planning, examines examples of pupils' work and has been effective in improving the quality and range of the curriculum so it now meets statutory requirements. The headteacher ensures that the results of statutory testing are analysed carefully, and that sensible targets are set for pupils' results in future tests. He has also enhanced the quality of the school improvement plan. The last OFSTED inspection found there were insufficient details about individual initiatives on the plan, but this is no longer the case. It is formulated with appropriate involvement of staff and governors, and now includes action plans for individual initiatives which show how tasks will be undertaken, those responsible, costings, time-scales and success criteria. However, there is still scope for further improvement, since the current plan includes very little planning beyond the current educational year. The headteacher has fostered a positive team spirit among staff and, overall, his leadership and management of the

school are satisfactory. However, he needs to provide more focused support for subject co-ordinators to develop their roles, and has not ensured there is sufficiently rigorous monitoring of the school's policy for more able pupils.

50. The deputy headteacher is a key strength in the school. She provides a very good role model for her colleagues through her teaching and through her effective work as literacy co-ordinator. She is clear thinking and well organised; and the leadership and management of the school benefit from the effective working relationship between the deputy and the headteacher.
51. The role of subject co-ordinators was generally underdeveloped when the school was inspected in 1998, and this is still the case. Some improvements have been made, for example, the literacy co-ordinator has a good overview of provision in English as a result of her effective monitoring of teaching and pupils' standards, across the school. As a consequence, she provides pertinent feedback to staff and has a significantly beneficial effect on pupils' learning in English. However, the co-ordinators for other subjects generally need to develop their monitoring roles. Most co-ordinators check that teachers' planning is consistent with the frameworks provided by the schemes of work in their subjects, but provide little feedback to colleagues on the quality of their planning. Co-ordinators have very recently started to look at samples of pupils' work to judge pupils' overall progress and standards, across the school, but their analysis needs to be more rigorous in order to identify strengths and weaknesses. As a consequence, although co-ordinators have recently produced 'action plans' for their subjects, most are not sufficiently well informed to target precise areas for improvement. A significant proportion of the staff have taken on their subject co-ordinating roles at the beginning of this educational year, and all are keen to be effective. They now need specific guidance and support, from the headteacher, in order to develop more rigorous procedures for assessing provision in their subjects, and to inform their actions for improvement.
52. The 1998 OFSTED inspection found that financial planning was unsatisfactory. It found that the financial implications of the school improvement plan were not identified, and there were weaknesses in the work of the governors' finance committee and in aspects of the administration systems for budgetary control. The school has rectified these key weaknesses in financial planning and administration, and school procedures are now satisfactory. The school improvement plan is carefully costed, the recommendations of the auditor's report have been implemented and the finance committee has an acute awareness of the school's financial situation. In the previous financial year, a number of factors, including a reduction in the school roll and staff absences, caused the school to agree with the local authority to operate on a deficit budget. A recovery plan has been devised, and sound financial planning has enabled the school to make good progress in reducing this deficit while maintaining sound provision for its pupils. The governors will need to continue to ensure that the repayment of this debt does not have a negative effect on provision for pupils in future years. The school's sensible plan to operate with fewer classes in the next educational year will also help to establish the school on a more secure financial footing. The governors debate expenditure rigorously, and the school takes care to obtain value for money through the purchase of educational equipment and materials. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.
53. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision are sound. The special educational needs co-ordinator is relatively new to her role, but has quickly appraised herself of her managerial and administrative responsibilities. She has introduced appropriate new procedures, for example to ensure the early

identification of pupils with special educational needs at Stage 1 on the school's register. Having identified weaknesses in target setting in individual education plans, she organised appropriate INSET on this topic for all staff, and she continues to support teachers, when necessary, as they draw up pupils' targets. She has regular discussions with class teachers and with the support assistant in order to monitor the progress of all pupils on the special educational needs register, and she involves external agencies whenever this is appropriate to serve pupils' best interests. She has established effective liaison with parents and with the secondary school to which pupils transfer. She is very fortunate in being able to draw on the experience and expertise of a qualified special educational needs support assistant who has worked in the school for many years, who knows all the pupils well, and who is able to manage the day-to-day support programme for pupils exceptionally well.

54. The school has a good policy for equal opportunities but is still at the early stages of monitoring the progress of different groups of pupils because its procedures for tracking individuals is not well established.
55. There are sufficient teachers and, overall, they have the expertise and experience to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. However, there are some weaknesses in the reception teacher's understanding of the needs of children in the Foundation Stage, and in the subject knowledge and teaching skills of the Year 1 teacher. Sound arrangements are made for the induction and performance management of staff, and for staff development. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, some classrooms are quite small and the wooden building, which accommodates Year 2 and Year 4 classes, is outdated. There is no adequate outdoor area for reception pupils to develop their physical skills, for example by using wheeled toys or climbing apparatus in a secure environment, but the school has plans to rectify this weakness. Learning resources are satisfactory, overall, in all subjects of the National Curriculum.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

To improve the quality of teaching and learning, the headteacher and governors should include the following issues in the school's post-inspection plan:

- Ensure that more able pupils make better progress by providing them with tasks which are always sufficiently challenging. (see paragraphs 7, 16, 26, 67, 71, 79 and 86)
- Improve the quality of teaching in Year 1 by:
  - (a) increasing the teachers' subject knowledge in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science;
  - (b) raising expectations of pupils' potential standards;
  - (c) ensuring that lessons have clear purposes which are consistently addressed in the teaching. (see paragraphs 15, 18, 19, 72, 80 and 89)
- Develop the monitoring roles of most co-ordinators by ensuring that:
  - (a) explicit guidance and training is provided by the headteacher on effective monitoring and evaluation procedures;
  - (b) analyses of pupils' work and teachers' planning clearly identify strengths, weaknesses and key action points;

- (c) all teachers are provided with evaluative feedback from monitoring to aid their future development. (see paragraphs 51, 92, 98, 103, 108 and 131)



- Improve the quality of assessment by:
  - (a) collecting together all the assessment data and pertinent records currently held on individual pupils;
  - (b) enhancing the above data by ensuring that commonly agreed systems are used to assess and record pupils' progress and standards in science, ICT, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education;
  - (c) providing additional opportunities for staff to meet together to discuss samples of work to agree common interpretations of National Curriculum levels in all subjects, except in English, where teachers already have a secure understanding of these levels. (see paragraphs 36, 37 and 38)
  
- Improve learning opportunities, and elements of the teaching, in the Foundation Stage by:
  - (a) developing well planned opportunities for learning through practical experiences, including play;
  - (b) improving the teaching by ensuring that children benefit from well focused questions which are tailored to their learning needs;
  - (c) improving provision for children's creative development;
  - (d) improving provision for outdoor play, to develop children's physical skills. (see paragraphs 17, 23, 57, 58, 60, 62, 63, 64 and 65)

In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following less important weaknesses for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their decision-making skills in lessons, across the school. (see paragraphs 13, 23 and 33)
- Extend the school improvement plan by identifying priorities beyond the current year. (see paragraph 49)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	17	28	47	5	1	0

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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	214
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	15	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	28	29	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	14	14	15
	Total	28	28	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (100)	97 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### 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	17	19	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	17
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	33	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	89 (88)	97 (94)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	17
	Girls	17	17	18
	Total	33	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (100)	86 (91)	97 (97)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	187
Any other minority ethnic group	4

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	23.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	72

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	349,587
Total expenditure	385,198
Expenditure per pupil	1,690
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,827
Balance carried forward to next year	-30,784

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

	213
Number of questionnaires returned	110

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	5	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	37	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	38	13	5	0
The teaching is good.	54	37	3	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	37	15	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	24	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	31	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	38	13	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	31	14	5	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	39	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	41	25	3	0

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. Pupils enter the reception class at the age of four in either September or January prior to their fifth birthday. There are appropriate induction arrangements, including provision for the youngest children to attend on a part-time basis in the initial stages. On entry to the school, overall attainment is generally above average and a significant minority of children demonstrate standards which are well above average. The majority have attended some form of pre-school provision. They come into school speaking clearly and confidently and having had some experience of books. Many have developed a good awareness of numbers and can count up to ten and beyond. The curriculum that is provided is based upon guidance for achieving the Early Learning Goals for the end of the reception year. Children make steady progress, and achievement is satisfactory in relation to their starting points. As a consequence, pupils' academic standards, including in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics are mainly above, and sometimes well above, average on entry to Key Stage 1.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

57. Children's personal and social development is good, overall, and they are keen to learn. They are confident from an early stage and are able to concentrate well when their interest is engaged. They respond with interest to significant events in their own lives, such as birthdays, and the birth of a baby in the family, and show and express their feelings appropriately. They make good relationships with other children in the class and have positive relationships with staff. Their awareness of the needs of others is good and they empathise when their classmates are unwell or are feeling unhappy. Children work well together, help each other and take turns without being asked, for example when using a computer. Behaviour and self-control are very good. Children have a keen sense of right from wrong, and a developing understanding of the consequences of their actions on others. Their self-care skills are good. They can dress themselves independently, and tidy and put away equipment. Children are keen to learn, and sit and listen attentively to the teacher for extended periods. Although children can select and use resources for activities independently, when given the opportunity to do so, more needs to be done to promote personal responsibility, decision-making and the skills of independent learning.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

58. The communication skills of most children in the reception class are above average for their age. The children enjoy using spoken language for practical purposes such as negotiating rules during role-play, taking turns when sharing equipment and talking about their feelings and their needs with adults. They listen well, and this is evident when they ask questions of their own and make relevant comments during discussions or when listening to stories. They enjoy hearing stories, songs and poems, joining in when they can, and they particularly like hearing their own voices - for example when listening to a recording of the class singing. Most children speak clearly and confidently. They readily adapt their speech to match different social circumstances, a sign that they have already developed a good level of awareness of the need to adjust speech for different types of listeners. They can already speculate, for example to predict what might happen in a story or to infer what is meant, and they

use language to good effect to describe their imaginary ideas, for example when playing in the 'estate-agent's shop' in the role-play area of the classroom. Nevertheless, much of their language use in such circumstances arises spontaneously rather than as a result of pre-determined and planned opportunities. Overall, the teacher intervenes too little to make sure that children use spoken language to confirm their understanding, clarify their thinking and develop their ideas.

59. When sharing stories with their teacher or with other adults, children follow the direction of the print on the page easily. When asked, most can match word cards to words on the printed page, and the highest attaining children can already read simple texts accurately and fluently. All can recognise many letters by their shape and sound, and most are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds when they write to communicate their own ideas. The higher attaining children can already produce short written responses when asked to produce lists, instructions, notes and records. Their vocabulary is good for their age and, by using their developing knowledge of phonics, they can also produce very plausible spellings of some impressive words.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Most reception children can confidently use number names and have secure counting skills to at least ten; many are able to count well beyond ten. Their recognition of numerals from one to nine is good. Children use appropriate vocabulary, such as more and less, when adding and subtracting numbers between one and nine. Number songs and rhymes are used well to help consolidate pupils learning about number. There is a strong emphasis on recording. Whilst it is appropriate on some occasions, such as practising number formation or recording simple sums, other tasks such as drawing strips of unifix and colouring them in serve little purpose in terms of furthering children's mathematical understanding. More is achieved when the teacher's attention is closely focused on practical group work and there is appropriate questioning and guidance to develop children's mathematical thinking. There are opportunities for children to learn about the language of shape, and many can name two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. They can also use simple mathematical language with confidence when talking about weight and size, for example, heavier and lighter, longer and shorter; and can recognise and recreate simple patterns. Planning indicates that sand and water are to be used to support children's early understanding of the language and concepts of capacity. This provision is in the outdoor area, however, and its use is limited by inclement weather. Opportunities should be provided indoors in order to ensure that pupils do have access to these important practical experiences. There is also scope to develop other areas within the classroom, such as role-play, block play and construction, to give pupils opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills, and to understand important mathematical concepts, through play and talk.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

61. Evidence from children's work and from the teacher's planning shows that children in the reception class develop an understanding of 'past' and 'present' in relation to their own lives, for example by remembering past events and by recognising the changes that have taken place since they were born. They learn to recognise the passing of time in the course of a day, identifying 'morning', 'afternoon' and 'night'. They refer to 'yesterday', 'today' and 'tomorrow' when talking about things that have happened and those that are planned, and they notice the changing seasons and the passing months when they record the date each day and when they look at the changes

occurring in the natural world. They think about their own families and talk about the three 'generations' that they know. In relation to the wider world, they learn about the historical significance of special days on which we remember famous people and notable events. For example, they learn why we wear poppies on Remembrance Day, and why the flag of St George is flown from public buildings on 23 April. Children show a developing understanding of the area where they live. They have discussed their different types of homes and their journeys to school, different types of weather and changes in the seasons. Through role-play in the 'estate agents' they are having opportunities to consider differences in houses as buildings, and in differing locations.

62. Overall, reception children make satisfactory progress in the development of their scientific knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn that a range of common appliances use electricity, and that light can come from various sources. In a lesson observed during the inspection, most children made satisfactory gains when learning about magnetism, and some demonstrated a particularly advanced understanding. However, they would have benefited from more focused questioning by their teacher as they undertook their practical tasks; and evidence suggests the teacher was unsure about the specific observational and enquiry skills the lesson was promoting.
63. Children use computers with confidence. They operate a mouse with accuracy to place icons of vehicles on a map of a road. They can create pictures and patterns on screen and control their colouring in. In doing this they demonstrate very good hand eye co-ordination. They can control programmable toys, and this supports their learning about number, space and direction in mathematics. Children make satisfactory progress when correcting simple jigsaws, and when making models with construction kits. However, they require more opportunities to develop their creative and making skills by constructing models of their own design, using recycled materials.

### **Physical development**

64. Children are developing good control when handling pencils, scissors, puzzle pieces and construction equipment. They have two sessions of movement each week for the further development of large motor skills through the use of gymnastics and games equipment in the hall, or outside. Most of the children are developing good confidence, control and co-ordination of the movements of their bodies. They can move in different ways, can alter the quality of their movement for example move slowly or quickly using different parts of their feet, move in rhythm and sustain concentration and involvement in a lesson. They show a good awareness of space, and achieve standards in these lessons which are slightly above average for their age. However, the school recognises that provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory, and children do not have sufficient opportunities to develop their physical skills by using large wheeled toys or climbing apparatus.

### **Creative development**

65. Children enjoy singing and achieve well. They have learnt a range of songs by heart and can match simple movements to their songs. However, other important elements of their creative development are promoted less effectively. During the inspection period, no opportunities were provided for pupils to use paint, and evidence suggests they generally have few chances to respond creatively to what they remember, feel or observe. For example, current work which requires pupils to stick coloured shapes to teacher prepared templates of butterflies does little to benefit



either their artistic skills or creative development. There are also insufficient opportunities for children to create their own three-dimensional models, using recycled materials, and to demonstrate the creativity and vibrancy that young children often show through such work. Overall, the provision for children's creative development is unsatisfactory in reception.

## ENGLISH

66. The school's results in the national tests of reading and writing for seven year olds in the year 2000 were in the highest five per cent nationally, and were well above average when compared with the results of similar schools. In the same year, the results achieved in the tests for 11 year olds in English were well above both the national average and the results of similar schools. In line with trends nationally, pupils did better overall in reading than in writing. The school has maintained high standards in English at the end of both key stages for the past four years, and the proportions of pupils exceeding the expected standards for their ages have increased overall, with only slight variations, year-on-year, representing the strengths and weaknesses of different cohorts.
67. Inspection findings confirm the pattern of results already outlined above. Most pupils already attain standards which are above average for their age at the beginning of Year 1, the time when they are introduced formally to the National Curriculum. In relation to their starting points, they make sound progress overall in Years 1, 2, 3 and 4, good progress in Year 5, and very good progress in the two Year 6 classes. Their progress in lessons generally reflects the quality of the teaching in successive year groups, but attainment is well above average overall. However, although all teachers make sure that the routine skills involved in reading and writing are addressed thoroughly and are practised and mastered, not all lessons are equally challenging. In common with their class mates, more able pupils do particularly well in Year 6, but sometimes mark time in lessons in other years when the work they are set is insufficiently demanding. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in short sessions when they are withdrawn from class for one-to-one support with the special educational needs support assistant, and also when they benefit from her support in class. At other times, they make mainly sound progress but achieve particularly well in Year 6.
68. By the end of Year 2, all pupils have acquired a very secure foundation in initial literacy. They read simple texts aloud fluently and confidently, using an appropriate range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words. They observe the cues to phrasing and expression provided by punctuation, and they use inference well to tease out hidden meanings. They recognise the organisational and stylistic features of different kinds of texts. These skills serve them well when they produce writing of their own. For example, most pupils use capital sentences and full stops accurately, and higher attaining pupils use speech marks, apostrophes and commas with growing confidence. Most pupils can adapt the overall form of their writing to match different purposes, for example to write instructions, lists, stories and reports; and all can recognise, and reproduce, diagrammatic representations of information such as flow-charts and cyclic diagrams. Most pupils are quite adventurous and ambitious in their vocabulary choices when writing stories, and the more able pupils produce skilfully crafted stories to engage the reader. The stories written by pupils of average and lower attainment are competent and are usually punctuated correctly, but sometimes lack coherence and fluency, especially when pupils have not yet mastered the use of connectives to join ideas, and when their view of a piece of writing as a whole is not

secure. Most pupils spell well for their age in Year 2, and most are capable of producing very neat cursive handwriting, although they do not always choose to do so.

69. Most pupils in Year 6 have well developed skills in the critical analysis and appreciation of many kinds of fiction and information texts. They understand the organisational features of many different kinds of information text, and they understand how authors achieve particular effects when writing fiction, for example by using short sentences to create a feeling of suspense or tension. They read reasonably widely for their age in their own time, and they are able to justify their reading preferences, giving clear explanations of the genres and narrative styles they like best. When reading in class during the literacy hour, most pupils experience very few difficulties in any aspect of reading. They read aloud with great expression, and they are equally competent at following the plot, identifying the theme and explaining the nuances of meaning in a story as they are at identifying the differences between a balanced argument and a biased view in a report. The written work of many pupils in Year 6 is of a very high standard for their age. Their vocabulary is extensive, and they are able to choose their words carefully for their precision and impact. Year 6 pupils have a mature grasp of style which to some extent reflects the pattern of their reading, but which also owes much to the high quality of the teaching they receive and to their teachers' high expectations. Their work is almost always beautifully written and well presented, their spelling is of a high standard, and the language and style they adopt is, in most cases, well matched to the purpose and audience of the writing. Weaknesses in the written work of pupils of average and lower attainment are sometimes related to insecurities in the use of punctuation, grammar and spelling, but are more frequently linked to sentence structure and to the organisation and overall coherence of pieces of work.
70. Even the youngest pupils in the school use spoken standard English with confidence. Pupils' skills in both speaking and listening develop incrementally and well throughout their time in the school, even though opportunities for them to engage in sustained discussion need to be increased in some lessons. There are satisfactory procedures to support pupils who have English as an additional language, including opportunities to work alongside experienced English speakers. As a result, they make sound progress.
71. At the time of the last OFSTED inspection in 1998, more able pupils were not always sufficiently challenged. This remains the case overall, although the very demanding work set in Year 6 enables these pupils to attain very high standards in their work as they approach the national tests for 11 year olds and as they prepare for transfer to secondary school. Other issues related to English and raised in the earlier inspection have been addressed. All pupils now have ample opportunities to develop extended pieces of imaginative writing, and there are excellent examples of the use of ICT to support work in English, particularly in relation to writing and the presentation of work. Standards of handwriting and presentation are generally very high, although there are occasional lapses by some pupils, especially in Years 2 and 4.
72. The teaching of English is mainly sound, although good in Year 5, and very good in Year 6. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection, and this was in Year 1. The teaching of reading is a strength throughout the school, as is the teaching of the 'secretarial' aspects of writing: handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Other common strengths include: the planning and preparation of lessons; learning objectives which make clear what pupils are intended to learn; the communication of those objectives to pupils at the beginning of lessons; good relationships with pupils;

the promotion of good work habits, including the use of available resources such as dictionaries; and the encouragement of independent reading. Most teachers know each pupil well and are therefore able to ask relevant questions which address identified learning needs. In the best teaching seen, in Year 6, teachers are very confident in their own knowledge and understanding of the subject. This is very evident both in the sharply focused questions they put to their pupils, and in the constructive way they help pupils improve and attain higher standards, whether in reading, writing or discussion. A significant feature of the teaching in this year group, (and one which clearly distinguishes it from teaching which is basically sound) is the emphasis placed on giving pupils power over their own learning. Pupils in both Year 6 classes are well acquainted with the skills which will enable them to achieve higher standards in their work and with the specific criteria which will enable them to do their very best in the national tests. This essential knowledge is imparted not through narrowly focused work, but through a very broad English curriculum which is intellectually challenging and which appeals to pupils' imaginations and creative talents as much as to their aspirations for technical accuracy. Where teaching has both strengths and weaknesses, the weaknesses generally reflect some insecurities in subject expertise, particularly in regard to the teaching of writing. For example, some teachers reveal uncertainty in their approach when modelling writing or when trying to help pupils improve their written work. They deal effectively with surface features such as spelling, punctuation and handwriting, and they work hard to improve pupils' vocabulary and their knowledge about language. However, they are not always able to help pupils to organise writing for different purposes, and their impact on the overall structure, organisation and style of pupils' work is not always as effective as it might be. In some lessons, neither teachers nor pupils undertake sufficiently rigorous assessments of the written work produced; and, in too many lessons, the work planned specifically for the more able pupils is insufficiently demanding. The literacy hour is being implemented satisfactorily in most classes, although, as has already been suggested, intervention to support pupils in shared and guided writing sessions is not always completely effective. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen neither tasks nor pupils were managed well.

73. In a wider context, all teachers take good care to develop pupils' technical and specialist vocabulary when teaching subjects outside English, and there are some excellent examples of written work produced, for example, in history. However, this strength is by no means universal, and the over-reliance on worksheets by some teachers, in history and geography in particular, constrains opportunities for pupils to develop and practise skills such as reading for information, note-making and expository writing for real purposes.
74. The deputy headteacher is the co-ordinator for English. In her relatively brief time in the school she has had a significant impact on developments in English. She has established effective assessment procedures which inform the setting of targets for individuals and for cohorts, and has provided training for teachers to make sure that there is a common understanding of National Curriculum levels of attainment. She has monitored teachers' planning and their teaching, and has given them very pertinent and helpful feedback on their performance as well as practical support with the implementation of the literacy hour. She has sampled pupils' work and analysed the results of national tests thoroughly in order to discover relative strengths and weaknesses in performance, and these are currently being addressed. Her influence is seen in the smooth running of the literacy hour and in the high achievement of very many pupils by the age of 11. Furthermore, she provides a very good role-model indeed as a teacher of English.

75. Resources for English are of good quality and are broadly adequate in quantity, although the school would benefit from additions to its stock of Big Books for use with younger pupils, of small sets of books for shared reading, and of general fiction to support pupils' independent reading. The school benefits from the support of parents who regularly hear their children read at home, an arrangement which has a very positive impact on pupils' progress. The school library, situated in small open area used as a thoroughfare, is currently used as a teaching-base for a pupil for whom the National Curriculum is disappplied and, as a result, its use is inevitably subject to certain restrictions.

## **MATHEMATICS**

76. On entry to Key Stage 1, the mathematical skills and understanding of most pupils are above average, and a significant minority are well above average. The school's results in the standard assessment tests have been high for the past four years. The results of the 2000 SATs, in Key Stage 1, placed the school in the top five per cent when compared to national figures and were also very high when compared to the results of similar schools. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results, and show that most pupils demonstrate standards which are higher than those expected nationally at the end of Key Stage 1. Results of end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2000 are well above national figures and show that both boys and girls perform better than their counterparts nationally. When compared to similar schools results are average because fewer pupils attain at the higher levels than other similar schools. The evidence of the inspection shows that current attainment is well above average, overall, at the end of Key Stage 2, Current inspection findings about pupils' standards, in both key stages, broadly reflect the judgements in the last OFSTED inspection.
77. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use a good range of mathematical language in the course of their work. Younger pupils use the language of ordering and place value when counting numbers up to 100. As they become more familiar with number in Year 2 they move on to explaining place values of numbers up to 1,000. They are able to describe number patterns, and predict and identify number sequences, such as counting in tens and fives. Pupils demonstrate that they know and can recall mathematical facts in the course of mental oral starters and show that they recognise the inverse relationship between addition and subtraction, multiplication and division. Their command of number facts is also evident in recorded work. Higher attainers use decimal notation in the course of money problems and recognise when two simple fractions have the same value. When tackling number problems they use a range of different mental strategies, including estimating to the nearest ten, counting forwards or backwards, and applying their knowledge about the properties of number, for example, odd and even. Pupils show that they have a basic understanding of length, weight and capacity when working with non-standard measures and are beginning to apply this understanding and develop their skills in using metric measures. Pupils know the names of a range of common two and three-dimensional shapes, and know something about their properties, for example, that squares have four sides of the same length and corners which are right angles. Year 2 pupils use ICT effectively to support their work in mathematics. For example, they collect information about children in the class, enter it on a simple spreadsheet, and print out block graphs to show the results. The standard of presentation varies in Key Stage 1, being unsatisfactory in Year 1 and satisfactory in Year 2. Pupils satisfactorily apply their knowledge of number in other subjects of the curriculum, for example, in design and technology and in science.

78. In Key Stage 2, pupils make sound progress in Years 3 to 5, and progress well in Year 6, where some higher attaining pupils are working within the Key Stage 3 Programmes of Study and are making good progress towards Level 6. (Level 4 is generally the expected level for Year 6 pupils.) Attainment is well above average by the end of the key stage. Pupils have a well developed mathematical vocabulary to describe the properties of numbers and number sequences. This was evident, for example, when pupils in a Year 6 class tried to identify a hidden number by a process of logical reasoning. They asked whether it was a prime number, how many factors it had and whether it was a square number. They use a wide range of mental strategies in the course of reaching accurate answers at the start of lessons. Year 5 pupils demonstrate that they can round up decimals to one place; and Year 3 pupils use addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in a range of ways to arrive at the correct answer as they take part in a 'number journey'. In the course of their written work pupils demonstrate that they know a range of different ways of seeking solutions to number problems. They measure, calculate and draw, for example in Year 4 where pupils have carried out investigations involving the angles of triangles. In Year 6 pupils are exploring the rules of divisibility, using all four number operations to two places of decimals and calculating fractional and percentage quantities. Pupils have a good understanding of shape, space and measure. They can classify two and three-dimensional shapes and measure and draw angles to the nearest degree, using language applicable to angles such as reflex, obtuse and acute. Pupils make satisfactory use of information communication technology in the course of their work. For example Year 5 and 6 pupils enter data that they have gathered onto a spreadsheet and produce graphs to represent their findings. Younger pupils produce patterns and sequences using the computer.
79. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, when their starting points are taken into account. All achieve well in Year 6, while weaknesses in the teaching in Year 1 sometimes restrict pupils' progress. More able pupils also do well in Year 6, but sometimes mark time in other year groups when they are not sufficiently challenged by their work. Pupils with special educational needs make sound overall progress in mathematics and achieve well in Year 6. There are satisfactory procedures, using the school's own resources, to support pupils who have English as an additional language and ensure they have access to the curriculum. They make sound progress, overall, as a result.
80. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 2 through to Year 5. In Year 6 teaching is very good, but in Year 1 the teaching is unsatisfactory. The best teaching is marked by extremely high expectations. Planning is precisely based on a clear understanding of what pupils can already do and what they need to learn next. The Year 6 teachers have a thorough grasp of the mathematics Programmes of Study and of the numeracy guidance; and use this to inform their highly skilled interactions with pupils. Explanations and demonstrations are clear, and good open questioning techniques encourage pupils to think for themselves and apply their mathematical skills to a range of situations. In these Year 6 lessons, pupils make good gains in their learning because they are working at the edge of their capabilities, and are interested in the work provided. Unsatisfactory teaching is marked by insecure subject knowledge and low expectations of both work and behaviour. This leads to poor planning, a lack of clarity about what pupils are to know, understand or be able to do as a result of the lesson, and weak match of work to the differing needs and abilities of the pupils. Pupils are then not sure of what is expected of them, there is a lack of challenge for the majority of pupils, and they fail to make enough progress, as a result. In Years 2-5, although teaching is satisfactory, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the skills of independent learning by, for example, devising their own

mathematical questions and lines of enquiry, communicating their mathematical thinking orally to others, and making their own informed decisions about the selection, use and organisation of mathematical equipment. Marking varies between classes. It is good in Years 2 and 6, where constructive written comments are used well to help pupils improve their work, and is otherwise broadly satisfactory.

81. The school has a range of satisfactory assessment procedures including optional national tests, which are used to give information about individual progress and achievement and analysed to raise school improvement issues. Opportunities for ongoing assessment are built into short-term planning and, in the best teaching, are used well to inform future work. The school recognises the need to ensure the accuracy and consistency of assessment and plans to provide opportunities for teachers to examine samples of work to agree common interpretations of National Curriculum standards. The organisation of pupils' assessment and progress records presents a confusing picture, however, and is insufficiently systematic for pupils progress to be tracked as they move through the school. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in evaluating their own work and progress, and in setting their own targets.
82. Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of the National Numeracy Strategy and this is making an effective contribution to attainment and progress, particularly in Year 6. In some lessons there is an over use of worksheets; and there is scope to plan more systematically for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. Parents take a keen interest in their children's progress and give very good encouragement and support to ensure that homework is done. This has a beneficial impact on pupils' progress. Resources for mathematics are adequate, overall, although they vary between classes in both quantity and quality.
83. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, led training for staff, and observed lessons. She keeps up to date by attending appropriate training and passes on information gained to other members of staff.

## **SCIENCE**

84. On entry to Key Stage 1, the scientific knowledge and understanding of most pupils are above average. The results of the statutory teacher assessments in 2000, at the end of Key Stage 1, were very high in relation to the national average and when compared with the results of similar schools. The results of the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2, in 2000, were well above the national average and maintained the school's achievements in the previous three years. The 2000 results were also well above the average results of similar schools.
85. Inspection findings show that pupils' overall achievements in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory in relation to their starting points; and most demonstrate standards which are above those expected nationally at the end of the key stage. However, the achievements of Year 1 pupils are sometimes limited by weaknesses in teaching. In Key Stage 2, pupils make sound overall progress in science, but Year 6 pupils achieve well as a result of particularly effective teaching. At the end of the key stage, most pupils achieve standards which exceed the expected level in science.
86. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make sound progress, overall, in the school. However, the most able

pupils sometimes mark time in lessons in Key Stage 1 and in the lower half of Key Stage 2. Their progress is generally good in the older Key Stage 2 classes.

87. In Year 1, pupils are able to recognise and name the main external parts of the human body; and understand that some things are living and some have never lived. They can identify a range of sources of light and sound, and understand how their senses enable them to experience the world around them. However, Year 1 pupils make unsatisfactory progress when they are unclear about the purpose of their work; and when they are given inappropriate tasks, for example to copy sentences about the orbit of planets, under a photocopied diagram. An analysis of pupils' completed work shows that the progress of most pupils is just adequate in Year 1, but more able pupils underachieve. In Year 2, pupils recognise that some materials occur naturally while others are made, and can describe different ways of sorting materials into groups according to their properties. All pupils make satisfactory progress when conducting simple experiments to discover the conditions required to promote the healthy growth of seeds; and learn about the importance of healthy eating. They are able to describe how some materials are changed by such processes as heating or stretching. In one lesson seen, the teacher made good use of a range of questions to challenge all pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs, and enabled all pupils to achieve well, as a result.
88. In Year 3, pupils know that some materials are particularly suitable for specific purposes, and make sound progress when testing the strength of different carrier bags and paper towels. In Year 4, pupils know that exercise increases their pulse rate, and make satisfactory progress when learning about the human skeleton and the function of muscles. They carry out systematic investigations prescribed by their teacher and record their results carefully, for example when learning if there is acid in lemon juice or the effects of different conditions in the growth of plants. In Year 5, pupils understand that the earth moves around the sun, and can explain how they know this to be true. They make sound progress when learning about liquids and gases, and demonstrate a good understanding of the principle of fair testing when investigating the sound insulation properties of different materials. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the main functions of the most important plant organs; and appreciate the feeding relationships between animals and plants in a habitat, describing them in terms such as food chains, predator and prey. They learn about the dangers of drug misuse; and how micro-organisms can affect the food they eat. Year 6 pupils demonstrate good investigation skills when conducting experiments, for example, to clean muddy water by filtration or to investigate the factors which affect the descent of parachutes.
89. The quality of teaching in science is mainly sound, in both key stages, and enables pupils to make satisfactory overall progress in the subject. Pupils benefit from the most effective teaching in Year 6, but teaching is unsatisfactory in Year 1. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge and the Year 6 teachers are particularly well informed. Lessons are generally planned satisfactorily, and are part of coherent programmes to develop pupils' knowledge and skills in the subject. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers introduce and reinforce appropriate scientific vocabulary, provide clear explanations for pupils and organise their lessons effectively. They usually make sound use of questions to probe pupils' understanding; and skilful questioning is a characteristic of the best lessons. Across the school, pupils are taught to undertake systematic investigations in science and to record their results carefully. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are encouraged to hypothesise and to develop their decision-making skills in science. In some lessons, however, younger pupils require more opportunities to devise their own simple investigations and to

decide how to record their findings. More able pupils sometimes need more challenging tasks in Key Stage 1 (especially in Year 1) and in Years 3 and 4. In the single unsatisfactory lesson observed, the key weaknesses were the insecure subject knowledge of the teacher, and the lack of challenge for all pupils and of a clear purpose in the work set for them.

90. In some important respects, the overall judgements in the last OFSTED report, in 1998, reflect current findings about science. These include pupils' standards on entry to Key Stage 1 and at the age of seven and 11. However, current findings are not quite as favourable about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, which were both judged to be good in 1998.
91. Across the school, pupils have positive attitudes to science, and their behaviour is usually very good. They listen attentively to their teachers and persevere with their tasks whether working as a class, in groups or independently. Teachers identify assessment opportunities in their planning and sometimes record useful notes about pupils' significant achievements and learning needs on their planning sheets. However, there is no system to ensure that regular assessments are undertaken and provide an on-going profile of pupils' standards and progress in the subject. As a consequence, assessment information about science often lacks the coherence and rigour to inform target-setting effectively. Teachers have yet to meet to agree common interpretations of National Curriculum levels in science, and the school appropriately recognises this is also an area for attention.
92. The science co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic. She has recently reviewed the science policy and checks teachers' planning to ensure they are using the guidance provided by the QCA. She has also analysed the 2000 SATs results in Key Stage 2; and organises science resources effectively. The co-ordinator has started to examine samples of pupils' work, from across the school, to develop an overview of pupils' standards and progress. However, she appropriately recognises that her analysis needs to be more rigorous in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance clearly, and to target areas for improvement. At present, the co-ordinator has not observed teaching by her colleagues, although there are firm plans for this next term. She would benefit from clear guidance from the headteacher to help her to develop the procedures for monitoring the subject, including advice about undertaking lesson observations and work-sampling.
93. Resources for science are satisfactory.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. Overall, pupils make broadly satisfactory progress in their learning in art and design, and their standards are mainly in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages.
95. In Year 1, pupils make sound progress when creating abstract paintings and representations of snowdrops. Their pastel pictures and paintings of an amaryllis plant represent good achievement. In Year 2, pupils' collage pictures are satisfactory; and they make sound progress when creating charcoal and chalk drawings after studying black and white photographs of town scenes, and the work of L S Lowry. Year 2 pupils develop their observational skills when studying the features of the local church, and their drawings demonstrate sound skills.



96. In Year 3, pupils achieve satisfactory standards when investigating patterns and drawing self-portraits; and Year 4 pupils make sound progress when creating masks after discussing African art. Year 5 pupils demonstrate confident drawing skills when making strong still-life pictures, using pastels and charcoal; and Year 6 pupils make sound progress when creating landscape paintings and vibrant pictures, using paint and collage techniques, to illustrate the story of the Jabberwocky.
97. Insufficient lessons were observed in art and design to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. Overall, teachers provide pupils with a sound range of art experiences, and are making satisfactory use of the recently introduced guidance provided by the QCA. The requirements of the National Curriculum are now met, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. However, pupils' progression in the development of key skills is not fully secure, and procedures for assessing pupils' standards require further development.
98. The art and design co-ordinator took on her role in September 2000, and is enthusiastic about the subject. She has reviewed the art and design policy and recognises she now needs to develop more rigorous procedures for analysing pupils' standards and progress, across the school. Resources for art and design are satisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology in Key Stage 1 and achieve standards which are in line with those expected nationally. In Key Stage 2, their progress in the subject is good, overall, and standards are above average. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' standards in the last OFSTED inspection.
100. In Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress when making models from construction kits and recycled materials. They create their own very simple musical instruments and learn to make vegetable soup. In Year 2, pupils achieve satisfactory standards when designing and making lunchboxes; and they create sound designs for model vehicles.
101. In Year 3, pupils are able to make sandwiches, having carefully decided on the ingredients, and have a good understanding of the need for hygiene when handling food. They judge the success of their sandwiches, and make sensible proposals for improvement. Year 3 pupils achieve well when designing and making monsters which have a moving part, facilitated by pneumatics. Their models are imaginative and well made. In Year 4, pupils create beautifully made money containers with precise stitching. They also achieve well when making models which incorporate a simple electrical circuit; and their torches, lighthouses and ceiling lights demonstrate good standards. Year 5 pupils achieve good standards when designing and making slippers. They make their slipper patterns to the size of their own feet, and consider comfort, safety and cost when evaluating their finished products. In Year 6, pupils' designs for fairground rides, which incorporate the use of pulleys and cams, are carefully thought out, and above average.
102. Insufficient lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, the lesson seen in Year 3 was good, and enabled pupils to achieve well when using pneumatics. Teachers are using guidance from the QCA effectively to inform their planning. The requirements of the National Curriculum

are met, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. Discussions with pupils show they have very positive attitudes to design and technology lessons. However, there is no system for assessing and recording pupils' progress and standards in the subject.

103. The co-ordinator took on her role in September 2000. She has revised the design and technology policy and has organised resources carefully. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has started to look at examples of pupils' work from other classes. However, her monitoring strategies are still at an early stage of development, and she would benefit from informed guidance to increase the rigour of her analysis. Resources for design and technology are satisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. A review of pupils' work and discussions with pupils shows that standards in geography are just above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils have a good knowledge of the locality and other places; and recognise similarities and differences between their locality and a Scottish island. In the lesson observed, they listened carefully to information about living in a different climate, asked and answered questions, and displayed good general knowledge. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning in geography in Key Stage 1. However, good progress is made in Key Stage 2, and pupils generally achieve particularly well in Year 6. As a result, standards are above average at the end of the key stage.
105. Teaching in geography is well planned, especially in Key Stage 2 where the development of geographical skills is emphasised. No judgement on the quality of teaching can be given in Key Stage 1, but teaching is good in Key Stage 2, and is sometimes very good at the end of the key stage, where teachers' good questioning skills help pupils to consider and analyse carefully. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and teaching objectives are clearly defined at the start of lessons, so pupils are clear about what they will be learning. Teachers return to these objectives at the end of lessons to review what has been learnt. In one Year 6 class, the pupils had an opportunity to use their previous knowledge of a study of mountains to research in role, as different members of a Lake District local community, the issues linked to tourism at Scafell. They presented their viewpoints in a class debate which provided opportunities for them to balance different arguments and perspectives. This involved the study of geographical evidence, questioning and judgements linked to interpretation of environmental impact and sustainability. The conclusion to their debate, where they voted on issues, was linked to the evaluation of their own learning at the end of the lesson.
106. Teachers introduce pupils to a good range of geographical vocabulary across the school. In their discussion groups in Key Stage 2, for example, when discussing similarities and differences in occupations in a Kenyan village, pupils use appropriate geographical terms. In both key stages, they have a positive attitude to their work, concentrate well, co-operate well in group activities, and are learning to pose appropriate questions. For example, the Year 5 class who were designing a questionnaire to consider the impact of market day on local consumers were redrafting their questions to agree a class questionnaire.
107. The units of work have been carefully planned to cover a balanced range of topics to cover curriculum requirements. At the time of the last inspection, the team found that

insufficient use was made of information technology to support the teaching in geography. The school has since acquired a range of CD-ROMs to support some of their geography study units. The use of ICT to support geographical enquiry, for example in data handling of climatic information, is good in Key Stage 2, and contributes effectively to the subject. Visits and field study trips support the work in geography, for example the proposed trip into Chesham on market day and the Docklands visit. Sometimes geography features as a homework task, which enables pupils to develop skills to draw upon a wide range of resources, for example Internet, local interviews, maps and books, in order to gain information.

108. The co-ordinator has ensured a balanced programme for studying geography is in place, based on the QCA's scheme of work, and he checks planning for coverage. He is extending the range of geography resources, and these are currently adequate to teach the subject. The geography action plan outlines some monitoring activities and the co-ordinator has undertaken some preliminary sampling of pupils' work. However, he now needs support in making use of this knowledge to develop teaching and learning further. There is no system in place to record assessments of the development of geographical skills to show the learning progress being achieved through different study units. This was also identified as a weakness in the previous inspection.

## **HISTORY**

109. As a consequence of timetabling arrangements, few history lessons could be observed, and there is therefore insufficient evidence on which to base a secure judgement about the quality of teaching overall. Nevertheless, evidence from the three lessons observed, from the scrutiny of pupils' written work, from teachers' planning and from discussions with staff shows that pupils make generally sound progress in history in Years 1 to 4, and good progress in Years 5 and 6. Most pupils attain standards which are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and are well above average for their age by the time they leave the school. However, the amount of recorded work produced by pupils varies significantly from class to class. The relative emphasis placed on the acquisition of historical knowledge and on the development of key historical skills also varies, and it is only in Year 6 that pupils' work shows very clear evidence of a well balanced approach to teaching and learning in this respect.
110. Nevertheless, through the various periods and topics they study, pupils acquire a sound or better grasp of historical knowledge, historical language and chronology in all year groups. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about the lives and times of famous people such as Florence Nightingale and Louis Braille. They learn about the value to historians of both 'primary' and 'secondary' sources of evidence, and they begin to appreciate how influential the work of such talented individuals has been in changing the lives of ordinary people, whether by initiating changes in hospital conditions and in the training of nurses, or whether by developing a system of communication that has transformed the lives of the blind.
111. Pupils in Year 3 use relevant dates and terms when learning about the lives of famous Greek philosophers, and they display a range of knowledge which is a little above average for their age when answering questions about the legacy of the ancient Greeks, for instance in language, sport and architecture. In Year 4, pupils learn in considerable detail about settlers and invaders in Britain, developing an extensive knowledge base about Celts, Romans and Anglo-Saxons. In more challenging work, pupils in Year 5 are asked to weigh up evidence and to suggest plausible reasons for

the sinking of the famous ship 'The Mary Rose' in Tudor times; on another occasion, they reflect on Henry VIII's impact on religion, considering events from both Catholic and Protestant perspectives. Evidence from the work of Year 6 pupils on the Victorians demonstrates the purposeful development of key historical skills alongside the acquisition of knowledge. Pupils have benefited from both primary and secondary sources of evidence, and have asked, as well as answered, historical questions. They are aware of different interpretations of the past and, in their own writing, they have explored different perspectives. Whereas much of the work seen in other year groups is worksheet based, pupils in Year 6 read and write for a variety of genuine purposes in history. By so doing, they develop their skills as readers, note-makers and writers, as well as learning to undertake historical research and to organise and communicate their findings effectively.

112. At the time of the last OFSTED inspection in 1998, there was no scheme of work and provision for history was judged to be unsatisfactory. Since that time, the school has introduced the framework produced by the QCA which provides teachers with suitable guidance for their planning. In spite of some imbalances in the quantity and quality of the history curriculum offered to pupils from year-to-year, provision is now broadly satisfactory, and is very good in Year 6. The headteacher has very recently assumed responsibility for the co-ordination of history after the previous post-holder left the school. He is well qualified for the role and has already developed a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses in provision by monitoring planning, sampling pupils' work, and observing some lessons. He is aware of the need to ensure that pupils develop key historical skills systematically and incrementally year by year. He is also conscious that assessment in history, in most classes, is neither regular enough nor rigorous enough to help teachers when they plan future work or when they attempt to make judgements about pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses in the subject.
113. Resources for history are broadly satisfactory. Visits to places of historical interest and visitors to the school are used to good effect to bring history to life, and the use of ICT to support work in history and to present pupils' individual investigations is developing satisfactorily. At the time of the inspection there is little evidence of the use of ICT for data handling, although work of this kind is planned for the autumn. Little of the work seen during the inspection related to the history of the local area, but plans are also in hand to develop this aspect of the history curriculum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

114. In the last inspection pupils' standards in ICT, were unsatisfactory, and the subject was not promoted effectively in the curriculum. The school has made good progress in implementing many improvements and the school now meets the statutory requirements for ICT. Pupils who enter Year 1 can use computers confidently in the course of their work in art, mathematics and English. They make good progress and by the end of Year 2 are attaining standards above those expected nationally. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 6 attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from working collaboratively with other more experienced users of English in the course of collaborative work on the computer, and they make sound progress. Pupils make mainly satisfactory use of their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects.

115. In Key Stage 1, pupils confidently enter data into the computer and, through a series of instructions, can print out simple block graphs. They know how to use ICT to access sources of information, and work well with each other to import it and save for later access. They change images on screen by placing them in different positions, know how to change the size, colour and styles of fonts and can use the spell check. They apply these skills in the course of their work in English, mathematics, art and science. Pupils review and modify their work while writing, and when, for example, composing pictures in the styles of Jackson Pollock and Mondrian.
116. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their skills and knowledge of an increasing range of ICT applications using computers. They use word-processing skills in the course of their work in English, for example, when composing limericks they select fonts, colours and borders. They identify appropriate images to illustrate their work and import them onto the screen. They use email with confidence, for example, Year 5 pupils have sent emails to younger pupils in the school. Pupils access the Internet and information banks to help them with their work. For example, pupils found information about the River Trent to support their work in geography. Pupils use 'Textease' and move on to 'Powerpoint', to organise, refine and present information in different forms, through text, sound and pictures. All pupils have their own disc and use this to store their own work. They also keep a record of the skills that they are learning in an exercise book. This provides a useful developmental record, although there are no obvious links with assessment.
117. Insufficient ICT lessons were observed to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, the QCA scheme of work is used well to support planning and teachers have grown in confidence as a result of effective training. Work is appropriately targeted within National Curriculum levels. There is limited differentiation within year groups although outcomes are sometimes varied according to pupils' interest and capability. In most lessons, the organisation and management of pupils give appropriate opportunities for pupils to plan and collaborate together. They respond well to this and work sensibly together, sharing equipment and discussing ideas. There are usually good opportunities for pupils to make decisions and choices as they practise and apply their skills. When given opportunities for research and discussion, for example, in developing a 'Powerpoint' presentation, pupils make good progress because they deepen their understanding through the analysis, synthesis and evaluation of information as their work progresses. Learning is constrained to superficial levels when tasks are over-directed by the teacher and pupils work in isolation from each other.
118. The management and leadership of the subject are good. The work of the co-ordinator has had a significant impact on the improvements that have been made in the subject. The QCA scheme has been adapted to fit the school's needs and there are ongoing reviews to ensure that it is reflected in practice. The co-ordinator is well qualified for the subject and attends regular meetings with other ICT co-ordinators at the computer centre. He uses the information well for the benefit of the school. He is self-motivated and the initiatives that he has started have been appropriately supported. The recently devised assessment and record-keeping system is good. It now needs to be collated into a secure and well organised whole-school system through which pupils' individual and overall progress can be tracked as they progress through the school.
119. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. A specific classroom has been developed as a computer suite and the school is awaiting the imminent networking of computers in classrooms.

## **MUSIC**

120. Standards in music are generally good and pupils make good overall progress in the subject. All pupils join in singing as part of the celebration of their faith and also participate in class music lessons. They sing in tune, with expression, and recognise the way music reflects differing intentions. In Year 1 pupils can identify high and low sounds; by Year 6 they are composing melodies to accompany their own lyrics.
121. Teaching in music is generally good. Teachers have clear learning intentions for lessons, adequate subject knowledge, and good ideas for developing music knowledge and experience. In one Year 6 class, pupils were working in groups composing their own melody to accompany lyrics they had written. They were well supported by the class teacher who circulated offering each group help, encouraging them to talk about their compositions, using correct musical terminology. The groups worked well collaboratively, performed their compositions and evaluated the work of others. At the end of the lesson they carefully considered what they would like to improve in their melodies next week.
122. Acts of collective worship contribute to the musical curriculum. Pupils listen to music quietly as they enter, and their singing of hymns is tuneful, often accompanied by child musicians playing with the teacher. There are weekly hymn practices, and pupils sing well as a large group, with older, more experienced singers leading younger classes.
123. The co-ordinator leads and organises whole-school musical events; and the school has an established tradition of performances of a high standard each term. The school has an adequate collection of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, some from a range of cultures, and some keyboards for classroom use. The co-ordinator also offers some advice on class teaching of music. The school is currently trialling the QCA units of work for music.
124. The co-ordinator runs two after-school 'music-makers' clubs which the pupils enjoy attending. There is also a recorder club led by another member of staff. Some of the pupils who attend these clubs are having private instrument tuition and are developing high level musical skills, which are shared within the school. A small number of pupils have instrument lessons provided in school. Musical expertise is also provided by another member of staff; who supports the classroom teaching of music in Key Stage 2.
125. The co-ordinator's class has music notebooks which are starting to support the assessment of pupils' progress in musical skills. However, there is currently no school system in place for tracking pupils' attainment and progress in the subject.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. Evidence from the lessons observed show that pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve good standards in movement and games, and pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve good standards in gymnastics, games and athletics. Pupils enjoy physical education, listen carefully to instructions, work well with partners and practise to improve their skills. Pupils' progress in physical education is sound, throughout the school.

127. The quality of teaching in physical education is generally satisfactory throughout the school but is good or very good in Years 5 and 6. The use of movement tapes, and some teacher led sessions, provide well structured lessons, but allow limited opportunities for pupils' creativity and oral commentary on their movements to be included, and very limited time for evaluation of performance. Pupils in Year 2 move with good co-ordination, respond to rhythm and work well co-operatively. Good teaching allowed more opportunities to discuss improvements for instance when designing sequences of movements linking to tempo and style.
128. In both key stages, pupils talk knowledgeably about the effects of exercise on their bodies and show a knowledge of the health implications of exercise. Pupils are well managed and always well behaved in physical education lessons. They are always appropriately dressed, as are most staff.
129. A varied programme of lessons was observed for physical education, covering dance, games, gymnastics and athletic activities. Lessons were well planned with a clear warm up, teaching activities and cool down. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory, in both key stages. In Key Stage 2, there is sharing of staff expertise for physical education and music which enhances the quality of teaching. In the best lessons, pupils discuss and evaluate the quality of their movements and make good suggestions for improvements, for example when planning their movement sequences to music.
130. All pupils aged ten years and over are reported to be able to swim at least 25 metres before leaving the school. A residential visit also allows opportunities for some adventure activities. After-school clubs offer a range of sports, for example football, netball and cricket; and the Parent Teacher Association organises inter-school running events.
131. The school has adequate space for physical education with a good-sized hall, two hard play areas and a paddock. The equipment for internal and external use is appropriate in range, but an increased quantity of balls is required. The co-ordinator is responsible for equipment and has an action plan to support the development of physical education. However, there is no agreed whole-school method of assessing and recording skills development in physical education, or any current monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the subject.