

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's C.E. Primary School

Purton. Swindon

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126350

Headteacher: Mr B. Knock

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Bamber
15064

Dates of inspection: 5th-8th February 2001

Inspection number: 207964

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 Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4-11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: College Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body, St Mary's CE Primary School
Name of chair of governors: Jean Thomas

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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15064	Paul Bamber	Registered Inspector	Mathematics, Physical Education	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school managed?
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
13164	Pauline Allen	Team Inspector	Provision for Foundation Stage, Science, Design and Technology, Geography	
26961	Michael Taylor	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs, Information and Communication technology, History and Music	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
11227	John Moles	Team Inspector	Equality of Opportunities, English as an Additional Language, English, Art, Religious Education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's C.E. Primary School serves a village community near Swindon. Most pupils come from the school's immediate catchment area and live in a mixture of private and rented property. There are 285 full time pupils on roll, twelve more girls than boys (about average). Around eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals (less than average). Fifty-nine pupils (21%) of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs (about average), five of whom have Statements of Special Educational Needs (average). Since the previous inspection, six new teachers have joined the school and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed. The school has a higher than average rate of pupil mobility. Attainment on entry is average. There are six pupils who use English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Mary's is an effective school with a strong sense of community. The school is very well led and managed. The quality of teaching is good; pupils behave well and have very good attitudes to their learning. By the time they leave the school pupils attain standards above the average in English and science. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain above average standards in science throughout the school and in English by the time they leave the school.
- The quality of teaching is good in just over two-thirds of lessons.
- As a result of the very good relationships, pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. Behaviour is good in lessons because teachers manage pupils well.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school very effectively and positively. This provides a strong sense of shared commitment to improving standards and a very positive view of the school by parents.
- The school develops pupils' sense of morality and social skills very well and, because of this, pupils take responsibilities willingly and treat each other and their environment with respect.

What could be improved

- Standards in the foundation subjects have not improved to the same extent as in literacy, numeracy and science.
- The brightest pupils are not always sufficiently challenged.
- Pupils do not use information and communication technology sufficiently to support their learning in all subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school's previous inspection was in November 1998, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. More recently in 1999, Her Majesty's Inspectors reported that the school had made satisfactory progress towards meeting the key issues from the previous inspection. Since that time, good improvement has been made in the quality of teaching, the effectiveness of the school's management and leadership, the impact of the governors' work in the school and in the analysis of test data to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	B	B	B
mathematics	D	E	D	D
science	E	E	B	B

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The information shows that in 2000, the school compared well with all and similar schools in English and science but less well in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining higher standards, than typically expected for 11 year olds was above average in English and science but below in mathematics. Improvements have been most marked in science over the last three years. Pupils' standards in reading are high. The school's successful implementation of the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies has brought about improvements in both of these subjects.

The findings of this inspection are that the oldest pupils in the school achieve above average standards in English and science and now attain average standards in mathematics. This reflects teachers' higher expectations of the pupils and the success of the school's introduction of setting pupils by prior attainment. The school's test data indicates that over the period 1998-2000 boys out performed girls in the national tests in mathematics and science. There was no evidence of significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils attain standards in all other subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education, which are typically expected for their age. The school has set realistic and attainable targets for the national tests in English this year. A much more challenging target has been set in mathematics. Standards in Year 2 are above average in science. They are average in English and mathematics. Standards in other subjects are similar to that found in other schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to the school. They enjoy lessons and the other experiences on offer to them and they work hard. This contributes well to the good standards they achieve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils usually behave well in class but do not always maintain such high standards in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are confident, relate well to each other and adults and assume responsibilities willingly and maturely.
Attendance	Attendance rates are above the national average and unauthorised absences are lower than that found nationally.

A strength in the pupils' personal development is their sense of responsibility and independence. These have a significant impact upon the very positive ethos in the school. A higher than average number of parents take their children on holiday during term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Of the sixty lessons observed, all were at least satisfactory, twenty per cent were very good and forty-eight per cent were good. Very good planning and the wide range of activities on offer exemplify the good teaching for children in the Foundation Stage. This ensures that they have a good start to their education. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and establish very good relationships. As a result, lessons are conducted positively and purposefully. Overall, teachers in Key Stage 2 expect high standards and that pupils will work at a good pace. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good in science. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is a strength in Key Stage 2. However, teachers do not encourage pupils to write widely enough in many subjects nor do they make sufficient use of information and communication technology to support learning across the curriculum. A particular strength in pupils' learning is their concentration and knowledge of what they need to do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. There are particular strengths in the school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage. In mixed age classes, where there are no setting arrangements, the oldest, brightest pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Within the limited funding available the school makes good provision to support these pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons and this contributes to the good progress they make.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The school ensures that such pupils play a full part in lessons and in the range of opportunities the school offers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. It is very good for their moral and social development. The school could do more to help pupils be more aware of a wider range of cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and child protection are good. Newly introduced, rigorous assessment procedures have contributed positively to improvements in pupils' attainment. Policies to promote good behaviour and to eliminate bullying are effective.

The school makes very good links with parents, who contribute well to their children's learning and hold the school in high regard.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is a strength of the school. As a result of the strong and positive leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the school's standards, by the end of Key Stage 2, have improved significantly over the last three years. Other key staff fully support them in their work to strive to improve the school still further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are very aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and many play an active part in monitoring standards. The governing body fully participates in school development planning and target setting.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Extensive monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and of pupils' work has led to improvements in standards, particularly in science. The school has used its analysis of test data well to set targets for individuals, year groups and for overall school improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the school uses its resources well. Financial control is rigorous and value for money is sought in all aspects of spending. Funds available to the school to support pupils with special educational needs are used well to improve their standards in literacy and numeracy.

The school's staffing and learning resources support the work of the school well. Much of the accommodation is in good order and spacious. However, the nature of the school's split site means that some difficulties arise in providing all pupils with access to key resources in music and information and communication technology. The school always seeks value for money when purchasing goods and services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like the school. Teaching is good. The school sets high standards. Pupils make good progress. Behaviour is good. Links with and information for parents are good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wider range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors concur with the positive views of the parents. The range of extra-curricular activities on offer to pupils during the school year is similar to that of most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests for 11 year old pupils in 2000, the school's performance, compared with all schools and similar schools, was above average in English and science. It was below average in mathematics, compared with all and similar schools, mainly because a lower proportion of pupils attained higher levels than in English and science.
2. Over the period 1996-2000, the school's rate of improvement has been above that found nationally. The best improvement has been in science, with the least improvement in mathematics. During the same period boys' improvements in standards has been more rapid than those of girls. Compared with national trends, girls in the school perform less well than girls nationally in mathematics and science. During the inspection there was no evidence that might explain these differences either in the school's provision or in teaching.
3. The school has set very challenging targets for improvement in its performance in the 2001 national tests in mathematics. The targets set for improvements in English are realistic, but would only represent a slight improvement on the school's results in 2000.
4. The findings of the inspection are that the percentage of pupils in Year 6 attaining standards typically expected for their age, is above average in English and science and average in mathematics. This represents similar standards compared with last years test results in English and science, and an improvement in mathematics. Compared with the findings contained in the report written by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 1999, standards have risen in English and science and remained the same in mathematics. Standards in literacy and numeracy reflect those in English and mathematics. In other subjects of the National Curriculum pupils attain standards in line with those typically expected for their age. Compared with the findings of the school's 1998 inspection, standards have improved in history, design and technology and physical education. This has been due to better teaching and curricular planning. Standards in all other subjects have remained the same.
5. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, the school's performance matched that of all schools and similar schools, in reading and writing. In mathematics, the school's standards were below that of all schools and well below that of similar schools. Teachers' assessments in science show that standards were below average.
6. Over the period 1996-2000 the school's improvement has been broadly in line with that found nationally. On average, seven-year-old boys have not performed as well as boys nationally in reading and mathematics and girls have performed better than girls around the country in writing.
7. The findings of the inspection are that the percentage of pupils in Year 2, attaining standards typically expected for their age, is average in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, standards are above average. Compared with the 2000 national test results this indicates similar standards in reading and writing and better standards in mathematics and science. Improvements in mathematics and science are linked to better planning and teaching.
8. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress from the time they enter the school, with average standards, to the age of seven. In science, they make good progress. Between the ages of eight and eleven they make good progress in English and maintain their above average standards in science. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory and there is evidence, from the inspection, that pupils now make more rapid gains in this subject due to more rigorous teaching.

The school has recognised difficulties in the rate of progress within different age groups and has highlighted the need to further improve standards in mathematics. Previously in mathematics especially, brighter pupils have not achieved the high standards they attain in English and science. Now more challenging teaching of mathematics, for Year 5 and 6 pupils particularly, is helping to raise the standards older, brighter pupils achieve. Younger, more able pupils are still not achieving the high standards of which they are capable because they are insufficiently challenged.

9. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. However, they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment when they are supported in their learning. Pupils' work is carefully monitored so that planning for the next stage is appropriately matched to individual needs. Individual Education Plans are reviewed each term and in most cases parents are involved in discussing new targets. Pupils also benefit from the school's arrangements for setting by prior attainment in literacy and numeracy. This enables the school to make the most effective use of learning support assistants to help these pupils in vital subjects. However, during a number of lessons in other subjects, support is not available and pupils with special educational needs progress less well. The progress made by pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory throughout the school.

10. Older pupils read well. Many are fluent readers by the time they leave the school, reading with good expression, perceptively describing characters and explaining why they prefer books written by authors such as Enid Blyton or J.K. Rowling. Seven-year-olds read accurately and vividly describe events from books they read. Throughout the school, pupils' handwriting and spelling has improved since the previous inspection, although pupils still do not always present their work well when they have to use unlined paper. Eleven-year-olds write grammatically correct sentences, using punctuation, such as hyphens and colons correctly and to good effect. Strengths in their writing are the imaginative vocabulary they use to enliven their stories and their logical use of sentences. Seven-year-olds write clearly punctuated sentences and higher attaining pupils of this age use speech marks correctly, which is above the expectation for their age. Pupils with special educational needs show good progress when they identify sounds which are the same, despite letters in words being different, such as 'eigh', 'ay' or 'ey'. Throughout the school pupils speaking and listening skills are a strength. Many, particularly higher attaining pupils, express themselves clearly using a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs speak up confidently in lessons and much of the good progress they make is because they listen attentively to teachers and to the learning support assistants who often work more closely with them. Pupils who use English as an additional language make good progress in their understanding of the language because they listen carefully in lessons and confidently contribute in oral sessions.

11. Strengths in pupils' mathematics include their understanding of place value and in their use and selection of standard units of measurement. Both eleven and seven year olds use a range of mental strategies well to solve addition and subtraction problems. Seven-year-olds are relatively slower to recall basic number facts than eleven year-olds. The oldest pupils have a good understanding of factors and multiples and use this well to order fractions with different denominators. A major weakness throughout the school is that many pupils fail to solve word problems successfully. This, together with weakness in interpreting and compiling tables and graphs, has been recognised by the school and is included as a priority for development. Too many of the brighter seven-year-old pupils fail to achieve the standards of which they are capable. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in number work and in measuring length because they use practical aids such as number squares and cubes to help them calculate and estimate.

12. In science, the oldest pupils' particular strengths are in their knowledge and understanding of forces and materials and in their ability to set up their own investigations using a number of variables and ensuring reliability in their results. Throughout the school pupils have

improved the way in which they record their scientific enquiries. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of the need for a test to be fair and use scientific vocabulary accurately. The breadth of the curriculum offered and the good quality teaching contribute well to the above average standards pupils attain.

13. In art, eleven year-olds sketch well and develop their skills in painting appropriately. As they move through the school pupils become increasingly discerning in their appreciation of styles of famous artists such as Van Gogh and Paul Klee. In design and technology, pupils progressively become more proficient at using tools safely so that by the time they reach Year 6 they construct toys, shelters and working models. By the time they are eleven, in geography, pupils' strengths are in their use of co-ordinates and symbols to locate features on ordnance survey maps. They make good connections with their work in mathematics when using co-ordinates and with information and communication technology when they use the Internet and e-mail to find information about the weather in Australia. In history, pupils make satisfactory progress through the school in their knowledge of key figures such as Guy Fawkes and Christopher Columbus and the oldest pupils use their literacy skills well when writing accounts of the experiences of evacuated children in the 1940s. The youngest pupils' understanding of chronology is well developed when they use 'before', 'long ago', 'yesterday', and 'old and new' as they compare the age of toys. Pupils throughout the school have made recent good improvement in their use of information and communication technology. Strengths in pupils' attainment, throughout the school, include word processing, graphics and in their use of the Internet, scanners and digital cameras to enhance their work in other subjects such as history and geography. Weaknesses exist in provision for 'making things happen' aspect of the curriculum for information and communication technology in Key Stage 2, which impacts directly upon standards. Apart from history and geography pupils make too little use of information and communication technology to support their learning and this is a weakness across the school.

14. In music, eleven and seven year olds, have good knowledge of the names and sounds of musical instruments. However, as a result of some limitations in teachers' subject expertise, the pupils' use and knowledge of musical notation is too limited. By the age of eleven in physical education, higher attaining boys dribble a football at speed with good control, whilst most pupils pass and shoot a netball accurately. Seven-year-olds attain satisfactory standards in dance, with higher attaining pupils using their arms and legs and facial expressions creatively to enhance dance movements. Within Key Stage 1 pupils with physical impairment make good progress in dance lessons because teachers and learning support assistants make special efforts to include them fully in physical activity. A strength in pupils' attainment in religious education, is their ability to identify those common themes, such as prayer, forgiveness and humility which characterise many faiths.

15. Particular strengths in the attainment of children in the Foundation Stage are in their personal, social and emotional development and in their creative development. The youngest children appear confident and secure, follow routines happily, share resources amicably and are capable of choosing activities sensibly. They use their imagination well when painting, drawing or modelling, sing nursery rhymes with good recall of lyrics and time, and act out roles with good expression. In other areas of their learning, they communicate their feelings very well and relate their experiences using a good variety of vocabulary. This good use of language contributes to their good ability to form mathematical sentences. For example, to describe an addition sum. In other areas of their mathematical development children make satisfactory progress, counting being a strength. As a result of the good provision, children progress well in their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They use technology, such as tape recorders and computers confidently, understand that materials differ in texture and strength, and know the names of different types of weather. The children learn to manipulate scissors, pencils and paint-brushes and control moving toys early in their time in the Foundation Stage, and they use these well in other areas of their learning. The children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Assuming the same rate of progress over the next few months, most are likely to

achieve the Early Learning Goals set for them nationally.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. St. Mary's is a happy community and the attitudes of all pupils, including children in the Foundation Stage, which were praised during the previous inspection, are very good. Pupils are keen and eager to come to their school. Parents who completed the parents' questionnaire endorsed this view.

17. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their work. At the start of the day pupils of all ages settle quickly and quietly and get on with the day's first tasks. Throughout the day, pupils work hard both on their own and in groups. In a Years 5/6 lesson in information and communications technology, for example, pupils showed that they could work and learn independently. Other pupils, in a Years 3/4 mathematics lesson, worked in pairs to solve problems.

18. Pupils enjoy responsibility. They work well together and willingly help with the smooth running of the school through, for instance, their roles as register monitors. Pupils operate equipment at assemblies and help move things around the school. The members of the School Council take their responsibilities very seriously. They have recently contributed, not only to the development of good behaviour and no-bullying codes, but also to the redesign of the playgrounds, the pool and nature conservation area.

19. Rules and codes of conduct are prominently displayed throughout the school and pupils know what is expected of them. Behaviour in class is very good but around the rest of the school and in playgrounds it tends to be more boisterous. If any behavioural problems do arise they are dealt with promptly and supportively. Parents and children confirm that bullying is very much a minor problem at St. Mary's. They are confident that if any bullying does occur it is quickly and fairly sorted out. No bullying was observed during the inspection.

20. Pupils respect each other's needs and points of view. They are tolerant and have a good sense of fair play. An example of this was in personal and social education lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6, dealing with choices and dilemmas, when pupils maturely shared and commented on each other's ideas. Pupils in a Year 1 and 2, religious education lesson behaved in a similar way when they shared their thoughts about caring.

21. Punctuality is good. Attendance is slightly above the national average and authorised absences are in line with national averages. Many of the latter are due to parents withdrawing their children for term-time holidays. There have been no exclusions during the last school year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. Of the sixty lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was very good in twelve, good in twenty-nine and satisfactory in nineteen. In no lessons was the quality of teaching and learning unsatisfactory. This quality of teaching has made a significant contribution to the improvements in standards made by the school, especially in mathematics. It also represents a good improvement since the school's previous inspection in 1999.

23. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good in English, (including literacy), mathematics (including numeracy) and science. In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is good in science and satisfactory in English (including literacy) and in mathematics (including numeracy). The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school in art, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. It was not possible to make judgements about the quality of teaching in design and

technology, geography or history.

24. The quality of teaching and learning for the Foundation Stage is good, with particular strengths in the teaching of personal, social and emotional development and of creative development. This quality of teaching ensures that children entering the school make a good start to their education. Other strengths of the teaching in the Foundation Stage are the high expectations, the stimulating environment in which the children learn and the way in which teachers plan to promote the children's reading and writing skills, their confidence and good behaviour. Teachers and support staff work well together to develop the children's abilities in all areas of their learning.

25. There are common strengths in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and establish very good relationships with them. This ensures that pupils listen attentively and work harmoniously in a positive atmosphere. Class teachers plan their lessons well, and use their day-to-day assessments of pupils' progress to ensure in the main, that pupils with different levels of attainment are set work to challenge them. This is a particular strength in the Foundation Stage. However, this is not always the case in the rest of the school, especially in Key Stage 1, for the brightest pupils, or in Key Stage 2 within subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Teachers and learning support assistants prepare and use well, a wide range of interesting resources to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and to reinforce their understanding. This is particularly effective in promoting the progress that pupils with special educational needs make throughout the school. Teachers generally use homework well to reinforce and extend pupils' literacy and numeracy standards. In Key Stage 1, they set work which require pupils to learn spellings and multiplication tables. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue with similar tasks but as they get older, teachers require them to complete lengthier and more complex tasks which demand that pupils use their research skills. Some opportunities are lost to promote higher attaining pupils' investigative skills, especially in mathematics.

26. A weakness identified at the time of the school's inspection in 1998, was the teacher's use of the first half an hour of the school day. Teachers now use this time very productively, especially in Key Stage 2, to set high expectations of the levels of work pupils should aim to achieve. This was particularly effective for Years 3 and 4 when teachers required them to identify what they needed to do to attain the different National Curriculum levels in science. Pupils were clearly motivated to strive to attain the highest level they possibly could as a result of this. Those pupils who experience more difficulty than most in literacy are well supported by learning support assistants during this part of the day and make good progress as a result.

27. The main differences between the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are in the pace of lessons and in the level of challenge set for the higher attaining pupils. Teachers in Key Stage 1 are sometimes insufficiently rigorous in pushing along the pace of learning when pupils work independently or in pairs. In Key Stage 2, teachers more often give pupils specific amounts of time in which to complete tasks and this means that the pupils have a clear target to aim for. As a result, the pace of learning is often quicker in Key Stage 2.

28. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. As a result, overall, they make satisfactory progress but, when supported by adults they often make good progress. Class teachers and learning support assistants, who work closely with these pupils, plan work to help pupils achieve the specific targets set for them in their Individual Education Plans. This is particularly effective in literacy and numeracy and in practical work in science. The quality of teaching for pupils who use English as an additional language is satisfactory. Appropriate support is provided for these pupils, to enable them to play a full part in lessons and to make progress at the same rate as other pupils in their class.

29. Strengths in pupils' learning throughout the school include the degree to which they are

aware of their own progress and the effort they put into their work. Pupils enjoy working towards the individual learning targets set for them by their teachers and strive hard to achieve them. Because the teachers make the pupils aware of the standards they should achieve, they want to improve and take pride when they match these. In mathematics, the pupils' response to lively and well-paced mental mathematics sessions has contributed significantly to improvements in their competence in the subject. In science, pupils' good sense of enquiry and ability to work independently and sensibly means that they gain significantly from the practical investigations they undertake. This contributes well to the good standards they achieve.

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

30. The school provides pupils with a satisfactory curriculum that is generally both broad and balanced. However, provision and the development of key skills in history, music and information and communication technology are not as well developed as in the other subjects. Since the school's previous inspection, there have been significant improvements made in the curriculum planned for mathematics, English and science, whilst the physical education curriculum, previously described as weak, has been developed and is now satisfactory. The first half -hour of the morning session is now productively used to target practice in aspects of language, number skills and science. There was insufficient evidence to allow any judgement to be made concerning the school's efforts to make improvements in the provision for design and technology which was also identified as a weakness in the curriculum at the time of the previous inspection.

31. Since the previous inspection the step by step development of pupils' knowledge and understanding, throughout the curriculum, has been improved by the effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the adoption of national schemes of work for other subjects. The locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education is followed and assemblies meet statutory requirements. The school plans the curriculum carefully, using key objectives within schemes of work as a focus for lessons and ensures that in most cases, pupils who spend two years in the same class, do not duplicate work. Teachers' short-term plans, however, do not always take account of the needs of the oldest, highest attaining pupils in the mixed age classes. The quality and range of opportunities provided for children in the Foundation Stage are good. Children aged under five experience a rich and vibrant curriculum that is carefully monitored and implemented. This enables them to make good progress towards the Early Learning Goals and also to be well prepared to move on into the National Curriculum. In the Reception classes, a well-planned curriculum ensures that there is a suitable balance between activities directed by the teachers as well as opportunities to develop personal and social skills, such as co-operation and independence. Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has made a significant impact on standards, whilst the setting of pupils by prior attainment, in these subjects enhances teachers' capacity to promote pace in lessons, matching work to individual needs. Pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, also benefit from this organisation being supported by well-qualified classroom assistants. As a result they make satisfactory progress when supported by an adult. Pupils with special educational needs often achieve a good standard for their prior attainment. However, the level of challenge provided for more able pupils is not always sufficient and gifted and talented pupils are not as yet identified by the school.

32. A range of visits and visitors extend pupils' experiences. There is, for example a weekly "visitors' assembly" which is supported by a variety of local people, including the Vicar and also a former deputy headteacher of the school. These contribute well to the pupils' moral and cultural development. The school's annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight contributes significantly to older pupils' personal, social and cultural development. The visits made locally contribute well to the pupils' development of geographical, scientific and historical knowledge

and understanding. The provision for personal, social and health education, including sex education is good and is suitably integrated into the curriculum. Children share ideas and have the time and space to allow each other to talk. In Key Stage 2, personal and social education is allocated specific sessions on the timetable, during which pupils participate in 'circle time' activities. They are taught effectively how to deal with moral dilemmas such as what to do when faced with the temptation of keeping a wallet that has been found. There is no written policy for drugs education but this topic is appropriately planned into the school's health education programme. Governors make a strong contribution to the curriculum, actively participate in the review of policies and monitor subject action plans to ensure that appropriate developments take place.

33. The provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Pupils are currently offered opportunities to participate in netball, football and guitar clubs. Some of the school's very good provision for peripatetic music tuition takes place before school and at lunch times. A number of other clubs are seasonal and are in operation at different times during the year. Parental concerns about the lack of such provision were judged to be unjustified by inspectors.

34. Provision for special educational needs in both key stages is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage it is good, with the closely targeted support of classroom assistants. The school demonstrates a firm commitment to these pupils and there is also strong support from the governor with responsibility for special educational needs who is actively involved in the school and well informed. Pupils have full access to an appropriately balanced curriculum. Individual Education Plans are clear and effectively matched to pupils' abilities, although a small number of these have objectives that are not sufficiently specific. Provision is monitored by the headteacher, who is currently the co-ordinator. He is effective in ensuring that good planning and resourcing enable the school to comply with Statements of Special Educational Need and with the Code of Practice. However, the income specifically available for provision for special educational needs pupils has been subject to severe reductions in recent years. This means the co-ordinator is negotiating for additional support from the local education authority. The school makes good use of a wide range of services from outside agencies to support pupils. Although specialised teaching and resources are provided for pupils who use English as an additional language, there are times when they experience difficulty in accessing the curriculum. This is because specialist support is not available on a full-time basis and it is not always possible to provide help from classroom assistants.

35. Overall the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. This is a strength of the school. Children are encouraged to respect and to co-operate with one another. Pupils respond positively when asked to take responsibility for tasks and are also involved in charity collections, as well as the distribution, in a large wheelbarrow, of harvest gifts. There are opportunities to participate in team sports and other extra-curricular activities to help to develop pupils' social experiences. Pupils, who participate in the School Council develop a keen sense of responsibility and citizenship. Pupils benefit from very good development of a positive moral code throughout the school. Moral issues are explored during personal, social and health education and a very effective, positive behaviour code is regularly reinforced in assemblies as well as in classes. This contributes well to the school's orderly community. The School Council takes a strong lead in ensuring that pupils' rights are respected. For example, effectively promoting 'no bullying' and also 'no ball days' when children use the playground free from the hazard of being struck by a football.

36. There is satisfactory provision for spiritual development. Assemblies make a positive contribution, emphasising, for example, the need for guidance when making choices and providing the pupils with opportunities to reflect on decisions they have made in the past. There is also a celebration of talents in monthly 'red letter days'. Further opportunities are provided for pupils to consider how the values and beliefs of others and themselves affect their lives, within

the school's religious education curriculum.

37. Overall, the provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' experiences of their own cultural traditions are developed through visits to the local museums and places of interest that are the focus of their studies in history and geography. The presence of Japanese pupils in the school is celebrated and helps children to appreciate the benefits of a culturally diverse society. Pupils benefit from studying Japanese culture and traditions. However, pupils do not have a sufficiently wide range of opportunities to learn about other cultures as a result of their work throughout the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. St. Mary's takes good care of all its pupils who spend their school days in a safe and secure environment. Teachers and a group of experienced support staff closely supervise pupils throughout the school day. The governors and headteacher pay great attention to health and safety. Arrangements for risk assessment are good and there are two members of staff trained in first aid, on site during school hours. Child protection procedures are good and involve all the appropriate local authorities.

39. There are very good arrangements for monitoring attendance. If any problems do arise with, for example, unauthorised absence, there are effective arrangements for dealing with them. The headteacher and governors work with parents to try to reduce the number of authorised absences for in-term holidays with limited success.

40. Everyone at St. Mary's expects pupils to behave well. The school's effective approach to bullying and promoting good behaviour and discipline is based on a recently developed code of conduct to which pupils, parents and all staff have contributed. Pupils throughout the school accept this code. They know and understand what is expected of them.

41. Teachers know their pupils well. They are aware of individuals' strengths and weaknesses and help them to learn and work hard by rewarding and recognising achievements. Rewards such as stickers and certificates are given out and daily assemblies include praise and congratulations for achievements both inside and outside school. Outstanding achievements in areas such as effort, behaviour and homework are recorded in St. Mary's *red letter book*. Once a month there is a whole-school assembly in which the achievements of the latest entrants into this special book are celebrated. Pupils respond positively to these procedures and strive to do their best in lessons and in contributing to school life generally.

42. Since the previous inspection, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science have improved. Thorough assessments are made of each pupil's attainment at the beginning and end of the Foundation Stage. The results of these are used effectively to identify areas in pupils' development that require specific attention, both within the Foundation Stage and early in Key Stage 1. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers maintain careful records of pupils' achievements in national and school tests. For example, in reading and mathematics and against particular questions in non-statutory tests. These are helpful in identifying which set in English or mathematics would be most appropriate for the pupil. These records enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress during the year and so move pupils between sets to ensure that they receive the best level of support for learning. Samples of pupils' work are kept in portfolios and are assessed against the levels of attainment in the National Curriculum. Information gathered in this way is used well by staff to make adjustments to their termly and weekly planning and to set targets in literacy and numeracy for English and mathematics and for the whole set or class. Pupils' individual targets in these subjects are attached to their books and are on display on the classroom walls. The targets are precise, require a good level of improvement to reach them, but are set in sufficiently small steps to be achievable. Once achieved new targets are set. These procedures have had a significant

impact in improving pupils' motivation and standards of work, in English, science and mathematics. Not all teachers are matching tasks in group activities sufficiently to set high enough expectations for some of the higher attaining pupils within their set. The school's analysis of its Standard Assessment Test data has led to a focus on improving writing and standards in numeracy throughout the school with positive results. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science teachers compile portfolios of pupils' work and grade these according to national criteria. This helps to ensure consistency when pupils' work is marked. However, the school does not use assessment information in these subjects to consistently set work that matches the needs of all pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents are delighted to send their children to St. Mary's. They believe that it is a successful and caring community, which has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Parents also feel that the teachers know their children well. They know that their children are expected to work hard and are helped to become responsible and mature. Parents admire the headteacher and have confidence in his ability to manage the school well and ensure that it continues to improve.

44. The school helps parents to support their children's learning and to cope with their homework by providing a useful homework diary, a comprehensive reading record and through the home-school agreement. Unfortunately a number of parents take their children out of school for holidays. The headteacher and governors appreciate that this is sometimes unavoidable but they are very concerned by the impact which such absences have on pupils' progress. They are doing what they can to discourage it.

45. Formal arrangements for informing parents about their children's progress are very good and fully meet statutory requirements. There are two meetings between parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress each year and detailed reports are sent home every half term. Reports include new learning targets for pupils and contain a section in which parents may respond in writing to the contents of the report. At the end of the year there is also a general report which includes a contribution from pupils. There are regular briefing sessions for parents on developments in the curriculum.

46. Regular newsletters keep parents in touch with what is going on in school and relevant information is regularly posted on parents' notice boards at the main entrances of both school sites. Formal documents, such as the school's prospectus and the Governors' annual report to parents, are very well produced and represent good use of technology. They contain a great deal of up to date, relevant information, although the current edition of the prospectus does have some minor omissions.

47. Parents are welcomed into the school. They know that they can contact the headteacher at any time and that he will listen to them. Formal contact with class teachers normally is through a straightforward appointments system but opportunities for less formal contacts occur all the time. For example, parents, particularly in the Early Years and Key Stage 1, come into school to deliver and collect their children at the beginning and the end of the school day and often use this as an opportunity to exchange information with the class teacher.

48. Teachers and governors value the contribution which parents make to the life and work of St. Mary's. Some of the support staff are parents of pupils in the school. Another thirty adults provide a wide range of voluntary help. For example, they come into school to hear children read, help with clubs, swimming, trips, cooking and major projects such as the recent refurbishment of the swimming pool. There is a very active parent and teachers association, which not only organise community events, throughout the school year, but also raises

significant funds for extra equipment, such as the new music centre in the junior school hall.

49. Some of the parents who completed the parents' questionnaire feel that there are not enough activities outside lessons. The inspection team found that the range of such activities is similar to that found in most schools.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The quality of the leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is a significant strength of the school. This represents a very good improvement since the school's last inspection in 1998 and represents good improvement since Her Majesty's Inspectors report of 1999. Their most important contribution has been in raising the expectations of all staff about the standards the pupils should achieve. There is now a real sense of shared commitment to continued improvement in standards of attainment and behaviour. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy headteacher and other key staff, has responded well to the issues highlighted in both the school's previous inspections. As a result, the school has made good progress in addressing pupils' underachievement and the weaknesses in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2.

51. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, year team leaders and subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science also promote improvements in standards through analysing test data, evaluating pupils' work and monitoring teaching. This has enabled key staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and to set rigorous targets for improvement, resulting in good improvements in standards of attainment and in the quality of teaching and learning, in English, science and mathematics. The school has recognised that numeracy and the development of information and communication technology throughout the school, are major priorities and this is reflected in the school's concise and relevant school development plan.

52. The governors' contributions to the school's efforts to raise standards are good. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses very well, as a result of the thorough analysis of the school's data and through rigorous monitoring of standards. Those governors responsible for overseeing the provision of literacy, numeracy and special educational needs observe lessons and monitor provision. This enables them to obtain first hand knowledge of the school's work and of the standards achieved. All governors have a responsibility for overseeing an aspect of the school's curriculum. Governors are fully involved in setting priorities for development and ensure that criteria are set for evaluating the effectiveness of their decisions. Individual governors attend relevant training courses to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their role. This has been particularly effective in enabling the governing body to establish rigorous procedures for managing the school's performance. As part of this process the governors have set challenging and relevant targets for the headteacher to achieve over the next twelve months.

53. A further strength of the school's management is the arrangement made to support newly qualified teachers and for other members of staff new to the school. At present, the school has four newly qualified members of staff in their first teaching posts. Experienced members of staff have sensitively, but rigorously supported these young teachers. The expertise and confidence with which they teach is testament to the quality of the support and guidance they have received and the good use of funds provided for inducting new staff.

54. The school's financial planning is well focused upon the priorities in its coherent and concise development plan. For example, extra resources have been provided, with good effect, to support targeted improvements in pupils' attainment in mental mathematics and in the provision for information and communication technology. The school's budget is rigorously monitored both by the school's administrative officer and by governors, to ensure that spending is in line with forecasts. The school uses the specific grants made available to fund special

educational needs and training effectively. This ensures that pupils with special educational needs are well supported in literacy and numeracy lessons and that teachers appropriately acquire knowledge and skills in those areas of the curriculum in which they feel less confident. The school makes good use of new technology in its administration, for assessment purposes and in the information it provides for parents. The school seeks best value for money when it purchases services, consults with parents and pupils, the latter via the school council, constantly challenges itself about the standards it achieves and compares its performance with that of schools nationally, locally and those of similar type. This has enabled the school to set challenging targets for improvement.

55. The management of special educational needs provision is satisfactory. The policy meets legal requirements and is clear about arrangements for assessment. Statutory requirements for reporting to parents are met. The governor for special educational needs meets regularly with the co-ordinator and conducts a termly review of the special educational needs register. He has visited the school to evaluate the progress of initiatives and has particularly focused his attention on the supporting role of learning support assistants. However, at present the headteacher is co-ordinator for the special educational needs provision and this limits the time he has available to monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school.

56. Teachers are very aware of pupils in their class for whom English is an additional language. They do all they reasonably can to target appropriate work and support to these pupils and work closely with the outside agencies to ensure their level of learning is satisfactory.

57. The school has sufficient staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The staff has a good combination of experienced and newly qualified teachers, who are organised so as to make the very best use of their expertise. Since the previous inspection a deputy headteacher, who has specific responsibility for Early Years and Key Stage 1 has been appointed. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to meet the needs of their pupils.

58. The administration team uses up to date computer-based systems. Through its competent and efficient work it makes a major contribution to the smooth running of the school. The lunchtime supervisory staff are very experienced and takes good care of the pupils. The caretaker and cleaners are also valued members of the school team and keep the buildings and the site tidy and clean. All the non-teaching staff know the children well, contribute very positively to the pupils' good standards of behaviour and their very positive attitudes to learning.

59. The accommodation in both the upper and lower sites is spacious, well cared for and used to support learning effectively. Classrooms are generally well laid out but because some classes are open-plan, the level of noise can some times intrude making it more difficult for pupils to hear and concentrate well. There is a hall on each site and both are well used during the course of the school day for assemblies, physical education, lessons, lunches and clubs. There is also a swimming pool on site, which having recently been refurbished, is in very good condition. A carefully planned rolling programme of redecoration and refurbishment is successfully tackling outstanding problems such as the leaking windows in the upper school hall.

60. The school does what it can to minimise the inherent difficulties of operating a split site, which were referred to in the previous inspection, but problems do arise which effect the delivery of the curriculum. An example of this is the well-equipped computer suite, which is sited in the lower school building; some minutes walk away for the older classes. Because of this, Key Stage 2 teachers cannot include, as easily as they would wish, information and communications technology in their lessons. The problem is partially solved by the sharing of computers in one of the Year 5 and 6 classrooms but overall the computer suite is under-used and this contributes to a weakness in the school's use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in most subjects.

61. The outside accommodation is good and tidy. The lower school's playground is equipped with playhouses and a climbing frame. The upper school is on a large site, which includes playing fields, a playground and climbing equipment. The environmental area and pond are still in the neglected state referred to in the previous inspection but there are now definite plans to refurbish them both.

62. Learning resources, including those to support pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, have improved since the previous inspection. They are very good in the Foundation Stage with books, games, equipment and displays covering all areas of the curriculum. There are sufficient good quality computers to support the use of information and communication technology throughout the school but their siting restricts their full use. Resources for Key Stage 1 and 2 in mathematics, science and English are good. There has been a significant improvement in the range and quality of library materials since the previous inspection and they now match the school's needs. Resources in other areas of the curriculum such as music, history, geography and physical education are at least satisfactory although some of the large apparatus which is used to support gymnastics in Key Stage 2 is old and in need of replacement.

63. WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Foundation subjects are those apart from English, mathematics and science which are termed core subjects.

In order to raise standards further the governors and headteacher should:

1. Improve standards in foundation subjects to the same level as the school now achieves in core subjects by :

- reviewing the time allocated for foundation subjects;
- providing training for teachers in those foundation subjects in which they feel less confident;
- implementing quickly the new systems which have been established to assess pupils' attainment and progress in these subjects;
- more rigorously monitor the provision and the quality of pupils' work in foundation subjects.

(paragraphs number 13, 14, 29, 112-151)

2. Ensure that the brightest pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1 are fully challenged by:

- identifying more closely who these pupils are and then setting appropriate targets for their higher attainment;
- ensuring that all teachers maintain sufficient pace in lessons and expect pupils to achieve their very best;
- planning more rigorously to ensure that the oldest, brightest pupils in mixed age classes acquire and use appropriate key skills in foundation subjects.

(paragraphs number 8, 25, 26, 30, 41, 86, 89, 147)

3. Use information and communication technology more to support learning in all subjects by:

- ensuring that all teachers have the skills and knowledge to direct pupils in the use of information and communication technology in supporting learning throughout the curriculum.
- planning more opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology in all subjects;
- reviewing the use and siting of existing information and communication technology resources.

(Paragraphs number 13, 29, 50, 59, 61, 117, 132-136)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	20	48	32	0	0	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)		285
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		22

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		59

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	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	16	22	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	19	17	19
	Total	31	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	82 (82)	79 (84)	87 (92)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	13
	Girls	19	18	19
	Total	30	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (84)	74 (92)	84 (96)
	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	19	10	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	17
	Girls	8	5	8
	Total	24	21	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (85)	72 (63)	86 (76)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	7	3	4
	Total	20	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (51)	62 (59)	62 (60)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	246
Any other minority ethnic group	7

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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	488953
Total expenditure	460265
Expenditure per pupil	1693
Balance brought forward from previous year	24566
Balance carried forward to next year	53254

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	204
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	38	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	44	52	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	62	6	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	60	16	2	2
The teaching is good.	44	52	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	52	6	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	38	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	54	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	58	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	38	8	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	48	4	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	46	18	4	8

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

63. The provision made for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall. This results in children making a good start to their education. The overall good quality teaching has a positive impact across the breadth of children's learning and provides a firm foundation in all areas of learning for each child. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage, plan effectively, with clear aims and use stimulating activities to meet the needs of all the children. The children aged under five are grouped into two classes within the Early Years Unit. The children are admitted in September and January. The majority attend playgroups and spend valuable time in school prior to their full time attendance.

64. Children are tested in all areas of learning after seven weeks in the school. This baseline assessment provides good quality information. This is used well by teachers to plan suitable activities for each child. The children enter the school with average attainment. By the time the children move to Year 1, the vast majority attain the Early Learning Goals in mathematics, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. This is the result of good teaching and the rich variety of activities that are planned. In personal, social and emotional development and in creative development, the quality of teaching is very good and almost all the children exceed the expected goals. The samples of work, display and lessons observed during the inspection, indicate that nearly all the children in the Foundation Stage at present should attain or exceed the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning at the age of five.

65. Teachers and other support staff provide a high quality, stimulating and exciting learning environment. It is safe, secure and challenging for the children and promotes high standards. There are good, lively interactions between adults and children which result in good learning as well as enjoyment, involvement and the promotion of very high standards of behaviour and other social skills. The teachers' careful use of questioning draws out key points to help children extend their vocabulary and knowledge. Both teachers have a good understanding of the needs of the children, which enables them to plan a range of well-matched and interesting activities. The children respond positively and work well in the attractive environment. Learning support assistants and other adults provide opportunities for the children to develop skills through purposeful activities, such as with sand and acting out real life and imaginary situations.

66. The school uses baseline assessments of the children's attainment very effectively to plan the curriculum for each child and also uses this information to set targets for attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Individual children's records of achievement are kept to enable the teachers to assess each child's progress. The school's partnership with the parents is very good and the flow of information has a very positive influence on children's development. This is a strength of the school. The school's relationship with the local playgroups is very good and children from them are frequently given opportunities to join in school-life. These strategies ensure that the entry to school is smooth and happy for children and their families.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. The children's personal and social development is very good and all achieve the Early Learning Goals. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Children are constantly praised and encouraged to feel confident and comfortable in their surroundings. They dress quickly after physical education lessons, take turns when playing games, are polite to adults and

each other and show enthusiasm for learning. Children play well together in the playground when they use large toys, in the toyshop and when they select from a number of activities. They respect class rules and make sensible decisions about their choice of activity. All adults promote independence by expecting the children to accept responsibility, tidy up and put resources away correctly. Children sit and listen very well during literacy and numeracy sessions and join in enthusiastically in singing, reciting rhymes and answering questions. Behaviour is very good and the children move around the school in a quiet sensible manner.

Communication, language and literacy

68. The standards are above average. The quality of teaching and learning is good. By the end of the Reception Year, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals. They enjoy listening to stories, poems and songs. At break time and when engaged in discussion and in group activities, adults provide good role models. They exchange ideas with the children, ask questions and listen to what the children say, allowing them time to think and respond. As a consequence, the children are always very keen to answer questions, talk to adults about what they are doing and as a result develop their vocabulary well. Role-play, in the toyshop, provides the opportunity for the children to develop negotiating skills and to be introduced to and practise using new words. The literacy framework is used effectively by both teachers. The teachers are technically competent in teaching phonics. The children have a love of books, willingly share them and enjoy reading to an adult. They know that print conveys meaning, is read from left to right and they handle books correctly. Almost all the children recognise their own name and initial sounds and most read an increasing number of words by sight and understand simple texts. The higher attaining children read books fluently and accurately.

69. The children develop their writing skills well. Teacher's imaginative use of a range of different media, such as icing initials and names on biscuits, tracing, painting, forming letters with playdoh and plasticine, consolidates and extends the children's letter formation very effectively. Most of the older children write their own name unaided and copy simple sentences.

Mathematical development

70. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children develop counting skills, number recognition and mathematical language appropriately. By the end of the Reception Year most children should achieve the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. The children count forwards and backwards between nought and 20, recognise numbers up to ten and are aware of larger numbers. Younger children make appropriate progress through a series of effectively planned activities, aimed at introducing early addition. The older children are taught to 'speak the sum' as they make mathematical sentences using number cards. A number of the older, higher attaining children add and subtract numbers to ten. In a lesson for older children, the teacher made good use of on-going assessment when she realised that many had not fully grasped the newly introduced method for addition. By regrouping the class and going over the method again many more children gained success when they 'tried again'.

71. Mathematical terms are introduced and used effectively by teachers at every opportunity. For example, counting the number of children having a cooked lunch or packed lunch. The children paint long and short lines and know the meaning of "more than" and "less than". They use mathematical vocabulary appropriately when they discuss the number patterns made by threading different coloured beads, and the length needed to make a necklace to fit round their neck. The children enthusiastically take part in action counting rhymes and enjoy buying toys in their toyshop.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The children develop a good knowledge and

understanding of the world around them and a sense of place. They explore their surroundings on walks around the neighbourhood and experience and observe the variety of animals to be found locally and in the zoo. The interesting range of activities provided enables children to build on their previous knowledge and understanding about materials. They explore the properties of materials and how they may be used in different ways. For example, when using wet and dry sand and making shapes with playdoh. The children know that changes occur when baking bread. Good teaching provides many opportunities for children to initiate their own learning and to use what they already know in problem solving activities, such as 'how to move teddy'. They demonstrate a sound understanding of the skills and techniques needed to use construction kits and of other materials to make vehicles for pushing, pulling and balancing teddy. Children use scissors, glue, paint, fabric, card and paper safely and with increasing control. The children make models of different types of transport for teddy and they design and make a variety of puppets.

73. Children operate cassette recorders confidently to record stories and rhymes during their daily literacy hour. They effectively use a keyboard for word processing in the computer suite. Computers, however, are insufficiently used in the classroom as a tool for learning. Adults support children well in developing their understanding of their own beliefs. The children develop a sense of time when they talk about occasions that have already happened and through displays about their birthdays.

Physical development

74. The quality of teaching and learning is good. By the age of five most children's physical development is above average. They use space during warm-up times and acquire hand-eye co-ordination, for example, when throwing and catching large balls. The children move in response to action rhymes and they use outdoor climbing equipment and large wheeled toys in the playground to develop control with hand and foot. The well-organised Early Years classroom allows the large number of children to make good use of the space around them and to consider the needs of others. All adults who support them, teach fine motor skills and spend time with individual children and ensure that they use tools, such as scissors, pencils and brushes correctly and with reasonable control. This has a positive impact on children's learning and the work that they do.

Creative development

75. The children's creative development is well above average, due to the very good quality teaching they receive. They work imaginatively when they paint, draw or model with dough and when they use a variety of materials to make collage pictures of their faces. They respond positively to opportunities to sing and move. A good quality role-play area is set up as a toyshop and this allows children to develop their imaginations and expressive language, as well as their social skills.

76. The children respond very well to the good teaching. They settle very quickly into the routine of the day. They enjoy their activities, become thoroughly involved in the tasks, listen carefully to their teachers and to each other, and are keen to answer questions and make contributions. The children are always busy and interested in what they do and as a consequence move quickly to reach the Early Learning Goals. They behave very well, share resources and handle them with care. They relate very well with all the adults with whom they come in contact.

ENGLISH

77. Analysis of the school's 2000 national test results for eleven year olds shows that compared with all schools and with similar schools, standards are above average. The

percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels was also above the national average.

78. Over the period 1996-2000 boys' performance has improved significantly from well below the national average for boys to well above that average. Girls' improvement has been less marked but broadly in line with that of girls nationally. Recent good improvements have resulted from the school's initiative to improve the quality of pupils' writing and its successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.

79. The findings of this inspection are that the proportion of pupils in the present Year 6, attaining the national expectation for age is above average. This is in line with the standards indicated by last year's national test results and represents an improvement upon the findings of the 1999 inspection. The school is likely to meet its target for eighty four per cent of the Year 6 pupils to attain the national expectation for age in the 2001 national tests.

80. In speaking and listening, standards are above average. Pupils express opinions clearly and respond well to open questions, they use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and relate what they have to say to facts previously learned. They articulate an argument clearly. All pupils show that they have listened carefully to their teacher by the way they respond with appropriate answers, suggestions or arguments. For example, some pupils described mythical beasts and other class members challenged the speakers to say how such a terrible creature might be killed and what was the weakness in this creature that the hero could exploit? Behaviour is good and coupled with mature argument pupils develop ideas thoughtfully and demonstrate sophisticated points in their writing.

81. Many eleven year-old pupils demonstrate reading and comprehension abilities above that expected for their age group. Pupils read fluently and with good expression. Most pupils describe the plot of a story, comment on characters and make reasonable predictions as to how the story will develop. Older pupils use the classification system in the library to locate reference material. They use the contents and index sections of books well to find specific information.

82. Standards in writing have improved significantly since the previous inspection and are now at least in line with the national expectation for age. By the age of eleven, pupils use grammatical structures and punctuation correctly. Their vocabulary is frequently imaginative and they write sentences which develop themes consistently. Boys' writing has improved and is now broadly equal in quality that of the girls. Pupils who use English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Pupils' handwriting and spelling have improved since the previous inspection. Handwriting is now generally satisfactory, although there is still some variation in quality as a result of teachers' different expectations. The school is aware of this and is dedicating time to the improvement of handwriting. Most pupils use a fluent joined style.

83. In the school's 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils achieved average standards in reading and writing in comparison with all schools and similar schools. A higher percentage of pupils attained higher than the level expected for their age in reading and writing.

84. Over the period 1998-2000 boys' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, in reading and writing, has fallen behind that of girls', more significantly in writing. However, compared nationally, boys have performed as well as other boys. Girls have performed better than their peers nationally in writing.

85. The findings of this inspection are that seven-year-old pupils attain similar standards in reading and writing to those indicated by last Year's (2000) national tests. This is a similar judgement to that made in the 1999 inspection. By the age of seven, most pupils read with accuracy. They express opinions about the text and select parts of a story that particularly

interest them. For example, they explain that the arrival of a mountain rescue helicopter to air lift an injured climber to safety, is particularly exciting for the young boy who has found and cared for the climber. Since the previous inspection the quality of writing has improved. Pupils now write in sentences. Some pupils use a good range of punctuation that includes the use of speech marks. This is above the expectation for pupils of this age. Hand-writing has in general improved since the previous inspection, but presentation is inconsistent and too dependent upon whether pupils are using lined paper, line guides or plain paper. The quality of handwriting is unsatisfactory when pupils use plain paper. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average. For example, they put dramatic emphasis on parts of story they recount and modulate the pitch in their voice to a whine to represent the mean Rumpelstiltskin or deepen it to represent the King. They listen well to instructions from their teachers and start work on activities with the minimum of repetitive questions. Pupils who use English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.

86. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good. The school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the introduction of setting pupils by prior attainment have been successful in raising standards. Throughout the school the good teaching is characterised by challenging work, accurately matched to pupils' prior attainment, especially those with high prior attainment. Pupils' achievements in such lessons is marked by a good pace of learning, successful completion of the planned tasks and learning objectives. Pupils understanding of what they learn and the reason for it is good. This enhances their learning very well. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils and most return to these at the end of the lesson to analyse, with the pupils, whether they have achieved them. The results of this analysis provide a focus for what pupils need to do next. Some teachers are less successful than their colleagues, at maintaining the pace of the lesson and the level of challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils, in the activity part of the lesson. It is this element that consistently distinguishes good teaching from satisfactory teaching.

87. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. In some classes they are very good. Linked with overall good teaching this has a significant impact on the level of learning experienced by pupils. Teachers engage in a wide range of lively discussion. They explore, for example, the reasons why people behave as they do in a story and this extends and develops pupils' narrative writing. They use innovative ideas to extend pupils' non- narrative writing, for instance by requiring pupils to write a letter of persuasion to the headteacher. Pupils behave in a sensible manner and the mature responses they make raise their knowledge and understanding of different styles of writing well. This, coupled with the improved quality of teaching, has contributed significantly to the improvement in the quality of pupils' writing since the previous inspection.

88. The curriculum for English is appropriately broad and balanced. However, the use of writing in subjects, other than science, is limited. This is an area for improvement. The use of information and communication technology for drafting work and to support extended writing is also underdeveloped. There is a satisfactory range and quantity of resources to support classroom teaching. The libraries in the main teaching areas contain books of good quality but of limited range. Pupils in Year 6 use the adjacent secondary school's library and this is a useful resource and prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. Some classrooms, in both school buildings, are open to the corridor or other classrooms. Sometimes teachers' voices and the replies of pupils impinge on the work of the other classes causing teachers to repeat instructions or information. The additional literacy support is used well to raise standards, especially in recognising letter sounds. Booster classes are used to provide extra support to older pupils who are attaining standards below those typically expected for their age.

89. The subject is managed well by two knowledgeable co-ordinators who have, through their monitoring of teaching and analysis of test data, made a significant positive impact on

maintaining the overall standards in speaking and listening and reading in the school, and on raising the standards in writing. Procedures for assessment are good. Teachers use key objectives from the National Literacy Strategy as criteria to assess pupils' attainment and progress and to set short-term targets for individual pupils. Teachers also gain further expertise in assessment by meeting colleagues from other local schools to compare pupils' written work. However, not all teachers use assessment data accurately to match the work to the needs of the highest attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2.

MATHEMATICS

90. Analysis of the Key Stage 2 national test results shows that the school's performance was marginally below average compared with all schools and with those with similar intakes. Although an average percentage of pupils attained the nationally expected Level 4 or above, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was less than that found nationally.

91. On average, over the last three years, the school's improvement in the subject has been less than that found nationally. The performance of boys has been broadly in line with boys' nationally, but girls have achieved much less well than other girls across the country. There was no indication within the teaching or provision which might cause this difference. In 2000 there was an unusually high proportion of girls on the school's register of special educational needs, which would have been likely to lower the girls' average performance.

92. The findings of this inspection are that an average proportion of pupils in the present Year 6 is attaining the national expectation for their age. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's 1998 inspection and similar to that made by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 1999. Improvement has been brought about because teachers now have higher expectations, the school has introduced setting by ability and overall, the National Numeracy Strategy is implemented well.

93. Strengths in the oldest pupils' attainment is in their ability to calculate quickly mentally, for example, doubling large numbers and using a range of 'short cuts' to multiply and divide, and in their general understanding of number work. Pupils' standards in algebra are above average and their understanding of multiples and factors is good. They measure length, capacity and time accurately, using standard metric units and both analogue and digital clocks. Relative weaknesses in their standards are due to some degree to a lack of practise, are their ability to investigate number and to draw and interpret data in tabular or graphical form. Too many pupils struggle when faced with word problems.

94. The school has set a challenging target for the 2001 national tests. Inspection evidence indicates that, given pupils' present attainment and the school's plans to provide specific support for those pupils who are at present on the borderline of achieving Level 4, this target is achievable. The 2001 target, if achieved will represent a considerable improvement on the standards achieved in 2000.

95. Analysis of the Key Stage 1 national test results for 2000 show that the school's average performance was below average compared with both all schools and with similar schools. Some difficulties with staffing contributed to this under performance. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher Level 3 was below the national average.

96. Over the last three years, the school's improvement has been slightly less than that achieved nationally. Boys have performed less well than girls, especially in 2000, when factors, already referred to, contributed to some under performance amongst lower attaining boys.

97. The findings of this inspection are that an average proportion of pupils in the present Year 2 attain the nationally expected level for age. This is a similar judgement to that made in the

school's previous inspection in 1998 and in the report made by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 1999 and represents an improvement compared with the 2000 national test results. The school's introduction of setting by prior attainment has contributed significantly towards these improvements. Pupils attain good standards in their understanding of place value. Higher attaining pupils add three digit numbers accurately and when they calculate change, in solving money problems. Pupils confidently use 'lighter than', 'the same as' and 'heavier than', when comparing weight, but in general find difficulty expressing their mathematical thoughts sequentially. Pupils use their previous knowledge to estimate short distances in centimetres and metres sensibly. Their ability to investigate number patterns is limited because they are given too few opportunities to explore mathematical relationships independently or in pairs.

98. Throughout the school standards in numeracy are improving as a result of more challenging teaching. However, teachers provide pupils with too few opportunities to use information and communication technology to increase their mathematical knowledge and understanding. As a result, pupils' standards in data analysis and in using graphs are lower than in number and measure. As they move through the school, pupils make the best progress in number and measure. In Year 1, pupils' strengths are in counting on in ones and in tens and in making direct comparisons of length and weight. In Year 3, pupils use tallies confidently to record frequency but are less sure when identifying numbers missing from simple equations. By Year 4, pupils' strengths are evident in adding three digit numbers and choosing the most appropriate standard unit to measure. However, they still have difficulties subtracting numbers in which the lower value has a larger units digit than the higher value. In Year 5, pupils have difficulties adding fractions to make a whole number but interpret Venn diagrams accurately and plot co-ordinates to indicate reflective symmetry. Because teachers plan different levels of work, within sets, almost all pupils are suitably challenged, especially at Key Stage 2. However, teachers still sometimes fail to challenge the very brightest pupils sufficiently. This has contributed to the school's below average performance at higher levels, particularly at Key Stage 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain good standards for their prior attainment. This is the result of good planning and teaching which is focussed upon meeting the specific numeracy targets set for them. These pupils and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to most pupils in the school, and are ably supported by well-trained learning support assistants.

99. Overall, at both key stages, pupils have very good attitudes to their lessons and behave well. They particularly enjoy mental mathematics sessions, especially when they are conducted at good pace and there is a competitive element to the activity. Pupils want to improve, co-operate well, especially when they work in pairs and they listen carefully to instructions. This has a significant impact upon the quality of their learning in mathematics.

100. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, it is satisfactory. A strength in the teaching at both key stages is the teaching of number. Teachers encourage pupils to learn number facts. Most lessons begin with a short pacy session designed to reinforce pupils' previous knowledge of number bonds, tables or to develop strategies to help them calculate more simply. Throughout the school, at the beginning of lessons teachers share learning intentions with pupils and subsequently reflect upon whether they have been achieved during whole class summaries at the end of sessions. This helps pupils have a clear idea of what mathematical knowledge they should have acquired or consolidated, by the end of the lesson and whether they have achieved this. In a Year 5 / 6 lesson, for higher attaining pupils, this contributed significantly to their understanding of the use of the lowest common denominator when ordering fractions. At both key stages, teachers use well-prepared resources effectively to help pupils understand mathematical concepts. This is particularly effective for pupils with special educational needs. In a Year 3 / 4 lesson, for lower attaining pupils, the teacher encouraged pupils to use a 100 square to reinforce their understanding of methods for subtracting 9 and 11. This resulted in many pupils making good progress in their ability to use new strategies for subtraction. Teachers deploy support staff

well, carefully planning how they will support pupils especially those with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language. As a result, such pupils make similar progress to their peers. The overall quality of teaching is better in Key Stage 2 because teachers inject more pace in mental mathematics sessions, at the beginning of lessons and challenge higher attaining pupils more effectively.

101. At both key stages teachers are not always rigorous enough in promoting pace throughout the lesson. Whilst most teachers maintain a lively pace at the start of the lesson, the tempo drops during the middle part when pupils work either independently or in pairs. This means that pupils do not always get enough work done. This is more evident at Key Stage 1 and contributes to the lower than average percentage of pupils who attain higher levels at this key stage. Teachers insufficiently encourage pupils to speak and write mathematical sentences. This results in them having difficulties in developing strategies to solve word problems. Teachers use homework well to reinforce pupils' basic number work in Key Stage 1 and to extend the pupils' understanding of what they learn in class, in Key Stage 2.

102. Overall, the school teaches the National Numeracy Strategy well and this has contributed to the improvements in pupils' standards especially at Key Stage 2. There is a satisfactory balance in the mathematics curriculum. Up to now, the school has rightly placed more emphasis upon basic number work and in developing pupils' skills in measurement. It now acknowledges the need to promote the pupils' understanding and use of data and their ability to recognise patterns in mathematics further. At present, information and communication technology is insufficiently used to support the pupils' work in this aspect of the subject. The subject is managed and led well by joint co-ordinators who work productively together to raise standards and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They have rigorously analysed test data and pupils' work and have observed many lessons. This has enabled them to identify strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' standards throughout the school and in particular year groups and in aspects of teaching. This information has been used to set challenging targets for improvement within the subject action plan. The subject contributes well to the pupils' social development when they work in pairs or in groups to carry out activities. However, some opportunities are missed to promote the pupils' cultural development. The use of numeracy in other subjects is underdeveloped, although in science lessons teachers reinforce pupils' understanding of measurement and require them to use tables to organise data. The quality of resources to support teaching and learning is good and they are used well to motivate pupils' interest.

SCIENCE

103. Analysis of the school's 2000 national tests, at the end of Key Stage 2, show that standards were above average in comparison with all schools and similar schools. A higher proportion of pupils attained the higher level than that found nationally.

104. Over the period 1998-2000, boys improved their average attainment in line with boys nationally but girls have lagged well behind other girls. Boys attain significantly higher standards than the girls. Present provision, classroom organisation and teaching methods provide no evidence to suggest why this might be.

105. The findings of this inspection are that an above average proportion of pupils, in the present Year 6, attain standards expected for their age. This is a good improvement on the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. Strengths in the oldest pupils' attainment are in their use of scientific processes and measurements, for instance, when they use a Newton meter to measure forces when a shoe moves on different surfaces. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of whether changes in materials are reversible or not. Throughout the key stage pupils develop an increasing appreciation of the need to ensure that any scientific tests they carry out need to be fair, if their results are to be reliable. Higher

attaining pupils understand that some materials are more difficult to classify than others. As the pupils get older they record their observations and conclusions in more detail. By the time they are eleven, pupils understand the need to hypothesise before they investigate and also that scientific knowledge is applied to the food they eat and the clothes they wear.

106. The teachers' assessments of the attainment of Year 2 pupils in 2000 indicate that a below average proportion achieved the overall standard typically expected for age. However, the percentage attaining at higher levels was above the national average. Pupils' attainment was weakest in their knowledge and understanding of life processes.

107. The findings of this inspection are that an above average proportion of the present Year 2 pupils attain the level expected for their age. This is an improvement on the standards achieved last year and is the result of better planning and teaching. By the age of seven, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, have a good breadth of knowledge and a clear understanding of how to behave as scientists. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the fair tests that they carry out during a study of forces. They appreciate that there are different forces and have experienced these through a number of observation and exploration activities, including using elastic bands, blowing through straws, and squeezing sponges and playdoh. Some record their findings in tables and charts, such as the distance items can be blown. All label drawings and diagrams correctly, including pupils using English as an additional language, who use both English and Japanese words. Pupils ask questions and effectively use books to support their learning.

108. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, partly through comprehensive training and partly through changes in staffing. Teachers in Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key Stage 2 now have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of science. They require pupils to provide explanations for their answers to questions to challenge their scientific thinking. The pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, learn well when teachers, for example, stop the lesson to review the work covered so far, reinforce learning and remind pupils of the objectives for the lesson. In Key Stage 1, overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers introduce and use appropriate scientific vocabulary effectively, and spend valuable time ensuring that pupils appreciate that they behave as scientists in their work. Pupils are encouraged to predict what will happen when they test materials, to observe living things closely using lenses and to discover where they are found out of doors. However, teachers do not plan sufficiently to use information and communication technology to enable pupils to develop their research and enquiry skills. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 and 4. A successful strategy introduced by teachers has helped pupils appreciate and use a systematic approach when planning, carrying out a fair test and considering what they have found out. Pupils appreciate that they raise the standard of the investigation by basing their conclusions on previous scientific knowledge. Teachers use discussion and lively questioning techniques to improve pupils' understanding of scientific facts. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good. This enables pupils to achieve high standards and a very good quality of learning. Teachers are well informed, enthusiastic and appropriately meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils find the work challenging and work with a high level of concentration. Pupils work independently in a very busy, working atmosphere in classrooms.

109. The pupils' attitudes to learning are at least good and they behave well. Their co-operation in groups is always good and they carry out practical work carefully and safely. These good attitudes and responses enable pupils to gain from lessons and to learn effectively.

110. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is taught as part of a two-year-cycle. Discussion with pupils and analysis of their work indicates that there is breadth and balance across each key stage. Pupils recall work from the previous years, for example, they spoke

enthusiastically about the 'disgusting bits' from last year, when they learned about the digestive system. The use of information and communication technology has yet to be developed sufficiently to extend the pupils knowledge through research, and as a means of recording. The scheme of work ensures that pupils make progress in their acquisition of knowledge and understanding across the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and 2.

111. The quality of the leadership and management of the subject is good. Pupils' work and teachers plans are effectively monitored. Pupils have a subject profile that contains targets. A new policy for the subject is currently pending. The provision for science has improved since the previous inspection through the efforts of the staff and the guidance of the subject co-ordinator. Planning is now clear and assessment procedures are firmly in place. The information obtained informs future planning effectively and has made a positive contribution to the improvement in standards throughout the school.

ART AND DESIGN

112. The pupils aged eleven achieve standards that are in line with those expected for their age. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. From lessons observed and analysis of teachers' plans, lessons have clear objectives, which teachers share with the pupils. They identify key skills and set out an appropriate structure to enable pupils to build on each element sequentially. In one lesson observed, where teaching was judged to be very good, the teacher introduced the lesson with a clear explanation of the work to be covered. She drew skilfully on their sketch work showing how various elements could be drawn together in an overall finished piece of work. Techniques from the National Literacy Strategy were very well used to extend pupils' skills of speaking and listening when pupils discussed their work. Pupils worked freely on their drawings, extending their knowledge from sketches to finished work. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language learn well and make satisfactory progress and attain standards in line with that expected for pupils of their age.

113. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Key Stage 1 and therefore, it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. However, analysis of displays and portfolios of work, indicate that attainment is in line with that expected for pupils of this age. The school has maintained its standards since the last inspection.

114. Younger pupils produce recognisable pictures of their favourite toys. They make studies of natural objects such as tree roots and use view-finders to help reduce the area of study to a manageable one. They make collages from a variety of materials. They work collaboratively to produce large display figures of Goldilocks and The Three Bears. Older pupils carry out longer-term projects that involve sketching buildings and objects in the village. They develop these into large paintings and incorporate fine detail from their sketches.

115. Throughout the school, pupils including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, learn and apply new skills successfully. Pupils use a wide range of media including thickened paint to work in the style of Van Gogh. They use mixed media in seascape pictures combining paint, charcoal and collage. Pupils also learn about the different grades of pencil available and their properties such as using hard pencils to draft outlines for painting and soft pencils for shadowing, for example between the stones in a Cotswold wall.

116. Pupils' attitudes towards art and design are good. In what are often exciting lessons pupils work sensibly. Such mature attitudes enable teachers to spend time discussing work with the whole class, groups and individual pupils which enhances their understanding of the

techniques they use.

117. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The subject contributes well to the spiritual and social development of pupils. They appreciate the wonder of nature when they draw naturally occurring objects, as well as gaining an understanding of how humans may influence the environment for the better or worse. They gain an understanding of their own and others talents and learn to work well together. The subject provides a good grounding in two-dimensional artwork. However, the teaching of three-dimensional work is limited, as is the use of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject. Whilst pupils study the work of famous artists these are mainly artists from Western culture. The school has yet to set in place assessment procedures. This has been identified by the co-ordinator as a priority for development. There is an appropriate range of resources that are readily available for use. The careful display of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors of the school clearly demonstrates that their work is valued. Such respect makes a substantial contribution to the overall ethos of the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. During this inspection, due to timetable restrictions it was not possible to observe many design and technology lessons. It is not possible, therefore, to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. However, evidence from a lesson observed, analysis of pupils' work, displays around the school, discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that overall, pupils probably achieve standards in line with the national expectation for their age by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This is an improvement on the unsatisfactory standards reported upon at the time of the previous inspection.

119. Discussions with pupils, at both key stages, indicate their enthusiasm for the subject and the range of interesting projects that they have completed. At both key stages pupils cover work that is expected for their age. By the age of eleven, pupils make a range of products including pop-up books and toys, using fixed and moving pivots, pneumatics and construct shelters. Skills are taught through planned tasks, such as how to construct mechanisms. The pupils investigate and evaluate products, such as varieties of biscuits from different countries and create their own designs based on their findings. Pupils use an increasingly wide range of tools, equipment and materials safely and accurately. There is a design and technology club which enhances the topics taught.

120. By the time the pupils are seven years old, they attain standards typically expected for their age and effectively use a range of materials and tools and begin to appreciate the design process. For example, they evaluate toys old and new, make sandwiches, use textiles for purses and make tie-dye bandanas, puppets and use construction kits.

121. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of how to develop the subject. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work is used to provide a structured approach throughout the school and to give breadth and balance to the knowledge, skills and understanding involved in the design process. Recent training for teachers has resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. The range and quality of resources to support teaching in the subject are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

122. Due to timetable organisation it was not possible to observe any geography lessons during the inspection. Therefore it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. However, from analysis of teachers' plans, pupils' work, school displays

and discussions with pupils and staff, it is possible to judge that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who use English as an additional language, probably achieve standards in line with the national expectation at the end of both key stages. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection.

123. In Key Stage 2, pupils study rivers, weather, settlements and spend valuable time on an in depth study of Australia. They use information and communication technology (Email and the Internet) effectively to make enquiries about weather conditions in Australia, to scan images and create radio bulletins. Pupils extend their map skills very well. They create their own maps using symbols and keys and locate features on Ordnance survey maps by combining four co-ordinates.

124. Pupils in Key Stage 1, develop their knowledge and understanding of changes in their locality and of places near and far. The use of the CD-ROM about the journey of Barnaby Bear around the world and a weather watch program provide pupils with good opportunities to develop key skills and knowledge such as a sense of their own and other localities and which features make it different to others.

125. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The scheme of work has improved since the previous inspection. The quality of leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has made a satisfactory start on monitoring pupils' performance in the subject and setting in place procedures for assessment. The quality and number of resources to support teaching are satisfactory and the use of information and communication technology to support learning in the subject is good.

HISTORY

126. The school's curriculum planning for the subject identifies two, half-term blocks for study in each year group. This meant that several classes did not have lessons in the subject during the week of the inspection. However, evidence from observations of two lessons, one in each key stage, analysis of pupils' work and from discussions with pupils and teachers it is possible to make the judgement that pupils attain standards typically expected for their age at the end of both key stages. This represents an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.

127. In Key Stage 2, Year 6 pupils are given opportunities to experience empathy with evacuees and the teacher skilfully communicates the realities of a wartime environment. Pupils have a good knowledge of this period of history and of different historical sources. They illustrate this by the use of extracts from wartime journals to provide a context for writing their own accounts of what it might have been like to have been an evacuee. Younger pupils in the key stage indicate satisfactory understanding of chronology, constructing time lines to place key historical events in order. They plan sensible lines of enquiry to find information about the traditions, cultures and lifestyles of people from the past.

128. In Key Stage 1, children develop an early understanding of chronology by identifying similarities and differences between old and new toys and frame questions to help them decide which are old or new. They correctly use phrases that relate to the passing of time, such as 'before', 'after' and 'long ago' and begin to show an understanding of the way in which people in different periods lived. However, higher attaining pupils often work at tasks which are too easy for them. As a result, they rarely attain the higher standards of which they are capable. Higher attaining pupils and those with average attainment do not sufficiently develop skills and concepts in the subject because the tasks they are set frequently focus on the development of language rather than historical skills.

129. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory overall

and is sometimes good in Key Stage 2, particularly when information and communication technology is used to support learning. For instance, to find information about World War 2. However, some teachers set tasks which involve colouring, labelling or creating lists drawn directly from printed information on maps, so that pupils do not develop the ability to consider cause and effect, conflict of opinion or cultural diversity. Teachers value pupils' contributions and enrich activities when they use the local environment, such as the church and the local museum. Teachers identify cross-curricular links and the recent musical production of 'Christopher Columbus' provided strong motivation for learning as well as involving former pupils in Year 7 at the nearby secondary school.

130. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and encourage children's thinking through the use of effective questioning.

131. Pupils generally behave well and concentrate on their work. They volunteer suggestions and collaborate with one another. They are eager to answer questions and listen well. When tasks are well matched to their abilities, pupils are enthusiastic and respond to the challenge provided. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to show initiative or to develop greater independence in their work.

132. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted a nationally recognised scheme of work. There is a curriculum plan which identifies all the aspects of the subject that are to be covered but the detailed provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is not yet clear on this document. The subject co-ordinator is on maternity leave and the teacher covering her absence is co-ordinating the subject. She is supported by a governor who is aware of the action plan and who is also knowledgeable and eager to be involved. The temporary co-ordinator is aware that the time the school presently allocates to the subject is at the minimum. She acknowledges that this restricts opportunities for pupils to develop key historical skills progressively and for the brighter pupils to attain the above average standards of which they are capable. Resources have recently been replenished and are satisfactory with regard to both quantity and quality. Improvement since the previous inspection has been gradual. However, good systems are to be put in place to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and pupils' work. Strategies to identify pupils' progress have been identified but not yet implemented.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

133. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards appropriate for their age. There has recently been good development in the subject and this has had a positive impact on standards. However, there are still insufficient opportunities to ensure that pupils reach their full potential because not all areas of the curriculum for the subject are fully covered. Computers are not used effectively to support learning in other subjects. The installation of a bank of Internet linked computers in a Year 6 classroom has greatly improved opportunities but this facility is not easily made available to other year groups. The school also has to cope with the difficulty of having its computer suite located in the building for Key Stage 1 some 500 metres away from the Key Stage 2 site. This creates significant problems with regard to accessibility. The headteacher is aware of this and plans are in place to further extend the provision of hardware where it is most needed.

134. By the age of eleven, pupils combine text and graphics independently, make use of the Internet to research information and download the content they require for their project. Pupils are also familiar with a variety of hardware, make good use of scanners and digital cameras to transfer images into files for later use. However, pupils' standards are lower in their use of programs to model and simulate because until very recently the equipment necessary to carry out such activities was unavailable.

135. Seven-year-old pupils build upon the very good introduction to 'mouse' control and basic keyboard skills that they are taught in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, they learn simple features of text editing and apply these in relevant situations. For example, pupils are introduced to web-sites and teachers log on to one that involves a familiar book character, Sebastian Swan. Pupils compose e-mail messages that may later be sent to Sebastian. Pupils use data handling software confidently to produce simple graphs and they use paint programs to produce art- work in the style of Pollock. A group of the oldest children recently won an award for creating a screensaver design. Planning in the key stage shows that pupils are introduced to the concept of control using a floor turtle. Also modelling activities involving the investigation of different ways of dressing a teddy bear are displayed in the Reception classroom. However, no music software or adventure simulations are used.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers make limited use of the cross-curricular application of information and communication technology and often only where computers are immediately available. In a Year 5 /6 history lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to use the Internet to browse through a web site to look for pictures and text that they might use in a project on World War 2. In other year groups, however, opportunities are missed to use CD-ROM to provide information for science, or the use of spreadsheets and other data programs to challenge pupils in problem solving activities. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported so that they make satisfactory progress. For many of the more able pupils, tasks are not always challenging enough and pupils are sometimes required to wait patiently while stations are set up for them. This occurs because the nature of the split site and the shared use of the suite place severe restrictions upon teachers' ability to prepare software in advance. However, pupils work well individually and in pairs. They eagerly discuss their activities with one another and demonstrate positive attitudes to their work.

137. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of all aspects of information technology and is aware of the need to develop the use of the curriculum for the purpose of supporting other subjects. The headteacher is a local authority accredited trainer in the use of computers. He is presently providing good quality training for the staff. All staff are currently involved in a training initiative supported by the National Opportunities Fund. These initiatives have promoted better teaching of information and communication technology skills. There is at present no effective strategy in place to track the progress pupils make or to assess their skills. The school recognises this weakness and is at present implementing new assessment procedures. The newly drafted scheme of work, has been welcomed by teachers as a useful tool to help them implement the subject's curriculum. There has been some improvement in the standards pupils' achieve and the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The school is now in a position to move forward at a faster pace.

MUSIC

138. Overall, attainment for both eleven and seven year olds is in line with the national expectation for their age. However, there are some weaknesses, particularly in respect of the breadth of knowledge pupils acquire in the subject. There is very good peripatetic teaching provided and pupils are offered the opportunity to learn keyboards, flute, clarinet and violin. In addition, planning documents provide direction for comprehensive coverage of all elements of the National Curriculum and there are several instrumentalists on the staff. Nevertheless, some teachers are inhibited by their lack of confidence in the subject.

139. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good awareness of formal musical notation, which they use to read music. By the time they leave the school an above average proportion of pupils play recorders competently. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn the dynamics of music and

confidently use untuned, percussion instruments to explore ways of communicating ideas and themes. Teachers introduce vocabulary such as 'tempo' and 'timbre' to the pupils and they show good awareness of both of names and properties of instruments. However, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to write their own 'invented' music or to discuss different styles of music of well-known composers from different cultures.

140. By the age of seven, pupils are well aware of the variety of sounds made by percussion instruments. For example, they experiment with shakers that they have made and collaborate well with each other when they refine their ideas on how to produce different sounds, loud and soft, fast and slow. Pupils know the names of a range of percussion instruments and simple musical terms such as 'rhythm' and more complex terminology such as 'moderato' and 'tempo'. Pupils recognise beat patterns and clap rhythmically in time.

141. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They participate enthusiastically and listen well. Behaviour is generally good, although a few pupils sometimes become over excited and do not concentrate as well as they should in group activities. Most pupils listen very attentively to the range of music played as they enter and leave assemblies. They know the composer of the music and the instruments played. Pupils who receive additional, peripatetic tuition make very good progress. Many of these sessions take place during the lunch-break or before school begins to avoid the withdrawal of pupils from lessons.

142. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The scheme of work provides good support for teachers who do not have specific skills in the subject. However, the lack of confidence of some teachers in their subject knowledge, currently restricts the provision of a well-balanced music curriculum, despite the breadth of planning that is evident in the scheme of work. All pupils have the opportunity to be involved in musical productions and experience performing to a variety of audiences. The most recent production, 'Christopher Columbus' also involved former pupils of the school and was written by two of the school's teachers. Guitar lessons are provided weekly by a member of staff within an after school club.

143. The deputy headteacher is the co-ordinator for the subject. She works alongside a newly qualified teacher, who is an instrumentalist, so that he may take over the role of co-ordinator on completion of his first year of teaching. The school has documentation to record the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum but these have yet to be used. Some assessment is carried out in the form of tape recordings, which are kept in the music room. However, no continuous record of pupils' progress is maintained and this restricts the ability of teachers to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils. Resources are of reasonable quality, are accessible and well organised on trolleys in the music room. As this is sited in the Key Stage 1 building, pupils in the Key Stage 2 have restricted access to some key resources. There have been good attempts to address the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection. For example, in the development of an overall curriculum map and in the setting out of procedures for monitoring pupils' work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. It was only possible to observe dance lessons in Key Stage 1 and indoor games lessons in Key Stage 2. Evidence from the lessons indicates that, in these areas of physical education pupils attain standards in line with the national expectation for their age. This is an improvement in Key Stage 1 and a similar judgement to that made at the time of the previous inspection in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 dribble a football with satisfactory control through cones set two metres apart. Higher attaining pupils, mainly boys, use the outside, inside and instep of their foot to achieve good control at speed. Lower attaining pupils fail to master techniques and often lose control of the ball. When shooting a ball into a hoop many pupils use chest passes or one handed loop passes to achieve a trajectory that will send the ball accurately to score a point.

Higher attaining pupils include both boys and girls in equal measure.

145. In Years 1 and 2, pupils interpret words and music to create their own movements and dance sequences to represent different types of weather. They use their arms, legs and trunks to convey lightning and their fingers to represent rainfall together with rolling to simulate thunder. Higher attaining pupils move with a good sense of rhythm and balance.

146. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to competition and opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. They work sensibly together and understand the need to work safely and to respect the resources they use. Pupils form teams without disputes and celebrate each other's success by applauding personal demonstrations.

147. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for dance in Key Stage 1 and for games in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 2, teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils warm up and cool down before and after activity and before they use resources. A strength in the teaching of games is the instruction given to pupils on how to improve their techniques for passing, evading, catching and shooting. The impact of this upon improving pupils' skills in these areas was evident in a Year 3 /4 lesson in which they used newly acquired techniques in a game they invented. In the same lesson, pupils' quality of learning was good, in that they used their initiative in applying previous knowledge about scoring and rules, to invent their game. Teachers enthuse pupils by injecting a sense of fun into lessons and encourage pupils through personal demonstration and by dressing appropriately. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils work safely and this results in pupils acting sensibly and with due regard for others. Although teachers encourage individual pupils to demonstrate, to the whole class, a model of good practice, they rarely point out what pupils should specifically note nor do they require pupils to evaluate their own or others' performance. This means that pupils' knowledge of their own learning and progress is less good than it might be. Pupils with physical impairment are well supported by the learning support assistants in lessons and are fully included in activities.

148. Teachers' plans, schemes of work and lesson observations indicate that the pupils physical education experiences are broad and balanced. The school has its own swimming pool, which has been recently been refurbished and all pupils in the school swim during the school year. By the time they leave the school all pupils swim 25 metres safely. The subject contributes well to the pupils' moral and social development when pupils learn to play in a team, follow rules and to accept victory or defeat gracefully. Pupils have the opportunity to attend after-school clubs in football, netball, cricket and athletics and to compete against other schools. Boys and girls are included in all clubs. The subject is satisfactorily managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has worked successfully to improve the quality of the resources available to support games teaching. Pupils' attainment and progress is reported upon annually to parents, but teachers have no systems for recording the progress that pupils make in the subject. This means that few lessons are planned to meet the specific needs of pupils, for example, higher and lower attaining pupils. During the school's annual residential visit, to an outdoor pursuits centre, pupils in Years 5 and 6 experience adventurous activities such as canoeing, rock climbing and abseiling. This makes a significant contribution to their personal and social development and their sense of cultural awareness.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

149. The pupils attainment is in line with that expected, in relation to the locally Agreed Syllabus, for seven and eleven year old pupils.

150. Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject and behave well. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers, are mature, sensible and sensitive when they discuss various issues. They show respect for each other's views. These mature attitudes allow detailed and deep discussions, which have a significant impact on pupils' learning and their personal development.

Pupils write rules for their own lives and study the lives of famous people, both ancient and modern. They consider what messages the lives of people such as King David and Martin Luther King may have for them.

151. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and in one lesson observed it was very good. In one Year 5 /6 lesson the teacher introduced pupils to the Psalm 23. She cleverly linked this Psalm of King David, to the story she read to the class about David who had escaped from a concentration camp but lost his compass and thus his way. The question was skilfully debated with the class: whether the Psalm, perhaps in a modern version could replace that compass in helping the boy find his way in life? This led to very deep debate amongst the pupils. Such thoughtful discussion and reflection made a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

152. There is a knowledgeable and well-qualified co-ordinator who provides useful support to staff. The resources are adequate, but in order to make full use of them careful timetabling is required in this split site school. The school follows the locally Agreed Syllabus. The scheme of work is organised on a two year rolling programme. This scheme expects pupils to study an appropriate range of the major faiths of the world such as Judaism and Islam as well as Christianity. Currently the school does not teach Judaism and Islam as they are in the second cycle of the programme and it is thus not possible to make a judgement on this aspect of the curriculum. As part of their work in religious education, pupils visit the local church and the vicar regularly comes into school to talk about his work and the services he conducts. The co-ordinator is undertaking a trial of assessment procedures in Key Stage 1 and the school has planned in-service sessions to review and set up an action plan for the development of religious education within this academic year.