

INSPECTION REPORT

OXFORD ROAD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Reading

LEA area: Reading

Unique reference number: 109786

Headteacher: Mr Gary Saul-Paterson

Reporting inspector: Mr George Crowther
18814

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th June 2001

Inspection number: 213961

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: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 146 Oxford Road

READING

Berkshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Sian Webb

Date of previous inspection: June 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
George Crowther <i>Registered inspector</i> 18814	Mathematics Art Design and technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils? What should the school do to improve further? Equal opportunities
Deborah Pepper <i>Lay inspector</i> 9454		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?
Paul Ducker <i>Team inspector</i> 18488	Science Geography History Information and communication technology	How well is the school led and managed? Special educational needs English as an additional language
Jo Harris <i>Team inspector</i> 3678	Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage English Music Religious education	Assessment

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oxford Road is a medium-sized, community primary school for boys and girls who are 4-11 years old. It has 176 full-time pupils and 43 who attend part time in the nursery. The school is situated in a socially-disadvantaged area, near the centre of Reading, and serves many families whose social circumstances are much less favourable than national averages. Overall, pupils' attainment when they start school is well below average, particularly in their language and social skills. Across the school, 51 pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behavioural difficulties, of whom five have a statement. The proportion of pupils needing additional support is above average. About 50 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, the largest group being of Pakistani origin. Eighty-seven are learning English as an additional language, of whom 63 are at the early stages, a high proportion compared with the national picture.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oxford Road is an improving school. It is not yet fully effective in all aspects of its work, but its strengths outweigh its weaknesses and the committed staff team is determined to raise standards of teaching and learning. There is a positive, happy atmosphere within the school that supports pupils' learning effectively. Many pupils start school with significant weaknesses in their knowledge and skills, but they achieve in line with their abilities during both key stages and across almost all subjects. Attainment in Year 6, however, is still well below national expectations in English, mathematics and science, partly owing to the large proportion of pupils with special needs or who are learning English as an additional language, and partly because recent improvements in achievement have yet to be reflected in the standards reached by the oldest pupils. While many teachers are new to the school, the quality of teaching is sound overall, and good or better in a significant proportion of lessons. The curriculum is broad, balanced, well planned and generally well matched to the needs of the pupils. Strong leadership by the new headteacher, in partnership with his deputy, has created an enthusiastic staff team and focused the school on raising pupils' attainment. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Good leadership by the headteacher is enabling the staff team to raise the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching is good or better in a significant proportion of lessons.
- The pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs is organised very effectively.
- Good relationships with parents are actively encouraged.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science is not high enough.
- There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching in a few lessons.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and the use of this information to match work to pupils' needs are not in place in a number of subjects.
- Governors do not play an active enough part in monitoring the quality of education, or

in planning future improvements.

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

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HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

When it was inspected last in June 1999, the school was judged to provide an acceptable standard of education, but there were serious weaknesses in leadership and management, the quality of teaching, the breadth and balance of the curriculum and, therefore, the standards attained by the pupils. Since then, the school has made good progress in addressing most of the action points and no longer has serious weaknesses. The quality of teaching has improved considerably, with a number of new appointments, including a very capable deputy headteacher. The curriculum is now organised and planned far more systematically, and subject co-ordinators are beginning to provide a strong lead in raising standards. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is now satisfactory. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are now in place so that strengths can be shared and weaknesses identified and tackled. As yet, these measures have resulted in only marginal improvements in pupils' attainment in national tests, but the new staff team has only been together for a relatively short period of time and there is already clear evidence that pupils' achievements are improving. The school is continuing to improve, and has a good capacity to raise standards further.

STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E*	E	E	D	highest 5% of A* schools well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E lowest 5% of E* schools
mathematics	E*	E	E*	E*	
science	E*	E*	E*	E*	

Attainment on entry to the school is well below average compared with what is expected nationally. Pupils' achievements (the progress they make in relation to their prior attainment) are satisfactory during their time at the school. Results in national tests for 11 year olds reflect the low attainment of many pupils when they join the school, and are further depressed by a high turnover of pupils. Changes in the teaching staff have also disrupted pupils' progress. Results in the year 2000 tests were well below the national average in English, and in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally for mathematics and science. Early indications of results for 2001, based on teachers' assessments and inspection evidence, show that pupils'

attainment has improved in mathematics and science, and is about the same as last year in English. The school met its target in national English tests last year, but fell well below its target in mathematics.

Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 6 is well below national expectations in English, mathematics and science. In all three subjects, however, pupils are making satisfactory progress across the school. Overall, pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy are well below average throughout the school and, in Key Stage 2, they are not used and developed sufficiently through work in other subjects.

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STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS (continued)

In religious education, pupils' achievements are satisfactory during both key stages, and attainment matches that expected by the locally agreed syllabus. In information and communication technology and music, pupils' achievements are sound and standards of attainment in Year 6 are close to those expected for pupils' ages. In art, design and technology, geography and history, however, attainment in Year 6 is below national expectations, even though pupils' achievements are satisfactory, bearing in mind the high proportion who have special needs. In physical education, attainment in Year 6 is close to national expectations, but progress across the school is unsatisfactory because lessons lack sufficient challenge. Pupils' achievements in English, mathematics, science, religious education, art and history have improved since the last inspection.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Across the whole school, the great majority of pupils are enthusiastic in lessons. They generally listen carefully to their teachers and are willing to work, which provides a good basis for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils behave well all the time and respond positively to the consistent guidance provided by the staff. Pupils move around the school sensibly. There has been just one temporary exclusion in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with adults are very good. Whatever their background, pupils generally work and play well together. They respond positively when given opportunities to take on responsibility, but they do not readily show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance has improved considerably over the last year, but is still below the national average and poor for a few pupils. The late arrival of a significant minority of pupils disrupts their learning and that of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of good features. It was very good, occasionally excellent, in 16 per cent of the lessons observed, good or better in 57

per cent, and at least satisfactory in 95 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in five per cent of the lessons seen. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is good in the Foundation Stage because the organisation of activities and the effective support provided by adults enables the children to be confident in their learning. Throughout the school, careful planning, positive management of pupils' behaviour, and the use of a good range of teaching methods are strong features of most lessons. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and make good gains in learning. Where teaching was very good or excellent, enthusiasm, imaginative strategies and challenging activities all promoted rapid progress. Where teaching had weaknesses, a lack of pace and challenge, often caused by the teachers' lack of knowledge of the subject, resulted in pupils not making the progress of which they were capable. In a few lessons, pupils' behaviour was not managed effectively enough, so time was lost ensuring that they remained focused on their work. Teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special needs and those learning English as an additional language.

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OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school provides a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum, which is well planned and organised. There are relative weaknesses in a few subjects, but the quality of the curriculum is improving. Setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6 are effective. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities, mainly for the older pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The needs of these pupils are identified clearly. They are given appropriate work and support in lessons. The co-ordinator organises provision very effectively.
Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language	Good. Teachers are very aware of the needs of these pupils so they receive good help in lessons, often from skilled support teachers and assistants. Their progress is monitored carefully.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Provision for pupils' personal development is regarded as a high priority, but the school lacks an overall policy. Provision for pupils' social and moral development is good, and there is sound provision for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils Assessment	The school provides good care and support for its pupils, mainly through a range of effective but informal procedures. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good in English and mathematics; teachers use the information to track pupils' progress across the school and to plan appropriate work for them. Procedures are weak for other subjects and in the Foundation Stage.
How well the school works in partnership	The school has a good partnership with parents because it encourages them to be involved in the work of the school and

with parents	their children's learning. Parental involvement is growing.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear focus on raising standards. The deputy headteacher is very effective in leading a number of aspects of the school's work. Subject co-ordinators are playing an increasingly effective role in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities	Governors are very supportive, many are experienced, and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They have a good appreciation of recent improvements in morale within the school and make valuable contributions in areas such as finance and building management. As yet, however, they do not have sufficient involvement in monitoring the work of the school or in planning future improvements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED (continued)

Aspect	Comment
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. There is considerable monitoring of pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching and learning. As yet, this is not specific enough to identify exactly what the school needs to do to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and management are sound. The school makes good use of its funding and plans ahead. It pays due regard to the principles of best value.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed. Teachers and classroom assistants are a committed, enthusiastic and hard working team. The school building is old, adequate but in need of refurbishment. There is no grassed area for games. Learning resources are adequate for most subjects, but the quantity and quality of books in the library and classrooms is weak.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Their children enjoy going to school and make good progress. ▪ Teaching is good. ▪ They are kept well informed about their child's progress. ▪ The school is very approachable if parents have 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some parents feel that there are not enough activities outside lessons.

concerns. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school expects children to work hard, achieve their best, and helps them to become mature and responsible. ▪ Behaviour in the school is good. ▪ The school works closely with parents, and the amount of homework children receive is about right. ▪ The school is well led and managed. 	
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Only a small proportion of parents returned the questionnaire or attended the meeting. The great majority of these parents are very pleased with most aspects of the school's work, and inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons, mainly for the older pupils, and inspectors disagree that this area is a weakness.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There is a wide range of attainment amongst the children who join the nursery but, overall, it is well below average compared with what is expected nationally, particularly in language and literacy skills. Currently, over half of both the morning and afternoon children are learning English as an additional language (EAL). As a result of good teaching in both the nursery and reception classes, the children make good progress in all areas of learning. The great majority are likely to attain the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. However, only about half attain the goals for mathematical development, and less than half in communication, language and literacy. This reflects the low attainment on entry in these skills, and the high proportion of children with EAL. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make similar progress to other pupils.

2. In the year 2000 end of Key Stage 1 assessments for seven year olds, results in reading and writing were in the lowest five per cent compared with the national picture. Results in mathematics were well below the national average, even though about 80 per cent of the pupils reached the expected Level 2 of attainment. Very few pupils reached the higher Level 3 of attainment in either English or mathematics, which depressed the school's overall performance. Based on teachers' assessments, attainment in science was well below the national average. Comparisons with similar schools show that the 2000 results were well below

average. However, in all three subjects, there has been a steady improvement in results since the last inspection.

3. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in the current Year 2 is well below national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Many pupils begin Key Stage 1 with skills that are well below average compared with what is expected nationally. In English, pupils' achievements are good during the key stage, owing to consistently good teaching of basic skills in literacy. In mathematics, science and most other subjects, pupils' achievements during the key stage are sound overall, regardless of their prior attainment. In physical education, however, pupils make unsatisfactory progress because the teaching does not provide sufficient challenge in a subject where many pupils are quite able. Overall, attainment is about the same as reported at the last inspection, and pupils' achievements are now better in art, history and religious education.

4. In the year 2000 end of Key Stage 2 assessments for 11 year olds, results in English were well below the national average, and results in mathematics and science were in the lowest five per cent compared with the national picture. Results in English and science improved significantly, but there was a decline in mathematics. Early indications of likely mathematics results for 2001, based on teachers' assessments and inspection evidence, show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 will increase by about 50 per cent. In each year group, about 40 per cent of the pupils are attaining below, or well below, the expected standard because they have special educational needs or because they are learning English as an additional language. Consequently, comparing the school results to those achieved nationally creates a very negative picture that does not reflect the pupils' achievements.

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5. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that attainment in the current Year 6 is well below national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Given that many pupils start Key Stage 2 with well below average skills, achievement during the key stage is sound, and recent improvements in the quality of teaching are ensuring good progress in many lessons. In most other subjects, pupils' achievements are sound across the key stage, even though attainment in Year 6 is below expectations for pupils' ages in art, design and technology, geography and history. In physical education, standards are close to expectations, but pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory during the key stage because there are weaknesses in teaching. Overall, attainment is about the same as reported at the last inspection, but pupils now make better progress in English, mathematics, art, history, music and religious education.

6. Most of the time, pupils of all abilities achieve appropriately. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their initial attainment. In lessons where work is well matched to their needs, such as literacy, they make good gains in learning towards the targets set for them. They make good progress both when they are withdrawn for focused support, and in lessons where teaching assistants work closely with individuals or groups. Pupils with special educational needs made particularly good progress in lessons seen in Year 5 and 6 where they

are grouped together and teaching was very effectively targeted to their needs. In a significant minority of lessons, however, higher-attaining pupils were not challenged sufficiently by the work they were given and made unsatisfactory progress. There are no significant variations in pupils' achievements by gender.

7. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, both when they are withdrawn for focused support and in lessons, particularly where specialist teachers work closely with individuals or groups. This is because work and teaching is matched closely to pupils' needs, particularly in developing key literacy skills. A number of pupils supported by an African-Caribbean underachievement project are making satisfactory progress.

8. Attainment in all aspects of English is well below national expectations. Most pupils listen attentively in lessons, though a few find this difficult. A few pupils are confident, articulate speakers, but many have a limited vocabulary and lack the skills to express their ideas fluently. Pupils enjoy reading. By Year 2, more able pupils read fluently, with expression, but less able pupils read hesitantly. By Year 6, the most able are reading challenging books with good expression and comprehension, but few pupils are reading at this level. The pupils undertake a good range of writing throughout the school, but the limited vocabulary of many pupils affects their style of writing, which often lacks imaginative language. Year 6 pupils' biographies of a friend are of a good standard. They have presented them in chapters, having researched the facts with their friend in detail. Pupils often do not take sufficient care with the presentation of their work and few are regularly using a neat, joined handwriting style.

9. Attainment in mathematics is well below national expectations. In Year 2, a small group of higher attainers work confidently with numbers to 1000 and appreciate the significance of the place value of digits. Average attainers are confident working with numbers to 100, counting in 2s, 5s and 10s, and performing a range of simple calculations. Lower attainers count and perform simple calculations to 20, but still have difficulty doing so reliably. By Year 6, a small group of higher-attaining pupils show confident skills in a range of calculation, such as work

with fractions and decimals, and multiplication by two-digit numbers. Average attainers also have sound skills in calculating, though their grasp of the place value of digits is less secure. As in Year 2, about 40 per cent of the pupils are working at a level below or well below that expected for their ages. They are still consolidating skills such as rounding numbers to the nearest 1000, multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100, and working with simple fractions.

10. Attainment in science is well below national expectations at the end of each key stage. For example, many Year 2 pupils have a growing understanding of the different properties of materials, but only a few higher-attaining pupils can identify materials that have been adapted or changed by a physical process, for example clay into bricks and wood into paper and card. Many Year 5 and Year 6 pupils understand that light travels in a straight line and is reflected from surfaces such as

mirrors and polished metals. They can record their observations accurately and, for a particular outcome, provide the correct explanation, using scientific language. The significant proportion of lower-attaining pupils, most with special educational needs, have weak recording skills and sometimes struggle to explain their ideas orally.

11. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievements have improved considerably, largely because the planning of the curriculum and the quality of teaching are now much better. These improvements, however, are recent and have yet to be fully reflected in pupils' attainment, particularly in the results of national tests. The school has a large proportion of pupils in each year group who are lower attaining and, whilst their achievements are good, they are unlikely to reach the nationally expected standard by Year 6. The rate of improvement has been good since the last inspection and the school is well placed to raise standards still further.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils show good attitudes to their work, and these support their learning and achievements. Parents say their children like coming to school and pupils themselves said that they felt confident and secure in school.

13. In the large majority of lessons, across the whole school, pupils concentrate well, listen carefully to the teacher and each other and join in well. Where the teaching is lively and enthusiastic, pupils show rapt attention and are eager to contribute. In a lesson in the reception class, the children were desperate to identify the story character described by the teacher using three 'clues'. Pupils particularly enjoy oral work, for example in numeracy lessons. They had lots of ideas in a lesson when they were asked to imagine what might be in the book of spells carried by an ancient Egyptian on his journey to the afterlife. They are sometimes less confident when they move to group or individual activities, and they often need support from adults to begin work. A minority of pupils can be slow to settle and are easily distracted. Pupils take an active part in extra-curricular activities including football (led by Reading Football Club), short cricket and playing in the steel band.

14. Pupils behave well in lessons, around the school and in the playground on all but a few occasions. Their good behaviour supports their learning. Parents were unanimous in their view that behaviour at the school is good. Pupils are generally polite to each other and to adults. They understand the use of rewards and sanctions in the behaviour policy. The behaviour

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of pupils with special educational needs is generally good as teaching and support staff make skilled use of strategies to maintain pupils' attention and interest. However, the behaviour of some pupils, particularly in one class, is unsatisfactory on occasions and obstructs their learning and that of others. There has been one temporary exclusion in the past year.

15. There is little bullying at the school. Parents and pupils both felt confident that any bullying which arose would be addressed quickly and effectively. Very isolated incidents of racist language are speedily addressed.

16. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy very good relations with their class teachers, who genuinely like and respect them. All pupils get on well together and, when asked to form pairs or groups, choose partners regardless of ethnic background. The school is a harmonious community and values the contribution of all pupils.

17. The standard of pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Strengths include pupils' respect for the values and beliefs of others. In a discussion between three pupils and an inspector, pupils showed interest, understanding and respect as each spoke of their different faith. In a religious education lesson, pupils valued and showed keen interest in contributions made by others of different faiths in a lesson on birth ceremonies. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the impact of their actions on others as, for example, when a teacher reminded a class that talking over another pupil showed a lack of respect. Pupils co-operate well in groups and pairs and work constructively together, for example whilst making collages in a Year 2 class.

18. Pupils respond well to the fairly limited opportunities to take responsibilities at class and whole-school level. They carry out small tasks such as returning registers and handing out books and equipment. Prefects take their responsibilities for supervising younger pupils seriously. A school council has recently been set up. Many older pupils respond well to taking personal responsibility for organising their reading books and homework tasks, but some pupils struggle to do this.

19. Attendance for 1999/2000 was 86.3 per cent, which is very low, compared with national averages. A small number of children account for much of the absence. However, rigorous monitoring has significantly raised attendance this year and attendance levels are currently about 95 per cent. The great majority of pupils always arrive punctually for school, but a small minority is late too regularly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of good features. It is good in the Foundation Stage because the organisation of activities and the effective support provided by adults enables the children to be confident in their learning. Throughout the school, careful planning, positive management of pupils' behaviour, and the use of a good range of teaching methods are strong features of most lessons. Where teaching was very good or excellent, enthusiasm, imaginative strategies and challenging activities all promoted rapid progress. Where teaching had weaknesses, a lack of pace and challenge, often caused by the teachers' lack of knowledge of the subject, resulted in pupils not making the progress of which they

were capable. In a few lessons, pupils' behaviour was not managed effectively enough, so time was lost ensuring that they remained focused on their work. Each class contains a significant proportion of pupils with special needs or who are

learning English as an additional language, so teachers have to be skilled to ensure that all pupils make gains in their learning.

21. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of the lessons observed. It was good or better in 57 per cent, and very good, occasionally excellent, in 16 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in five per cent of the lessons seen. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when 18 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall, and was good or better in a significant proportion of the lessons observed, and English is taught particularly well in Key Stage 1. In the lessons observed, the teaching of religious education was at least satisfactory, which is a marked improvement since the last inspection when pupils made unsatisfactory progress in this subject. Teaching of physical education, however, was weak in three out of five of the lessons seen, largely owing to the teachers' weak subject knowledge. Teaching of all other subjects is sound.

22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers are involved in devising individual education plans for these pupils, and targets are specific, easily implemented and, as a result, very effective. Learning is planned carefully to address these targets. In a number of lessons, pupils with special needs made very good progress because teachers know their pupils' needs well and teach in a lively, enthusiastic and challenging fashion. The practice of setting each morning in Years 5 and 6 forms a group of pupils with special needs who receive skilled and enthusiastic teaching. In literacy and science lessons, teachers usually meet the special needs of pupils well, using a combination of work matched to their ability and extra adult support. Across the school, a number of pupils have individual or small-group support from a classroom assistant. Where these assistants manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and actively intervene to guide learning, they are effective.

23. The quality of specialist teaching for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is good. Learning is carefully and sensitively planned to address the needs of these pupils. They make good progress because the teacher knows her pupils' needs well and she ensures that work is interesting and challenging. Activities are practical and encourage the development of key language skills. Liaison between the specialist teacher and other teachers is good.

24. Teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. In the nursery, effective planning ensures an appropriate balance between whole-class sessions and a good range of self-chosen activities. Children learn to be independent and make choices. Within each session, there is a focus on learning particular skills with an adult, such as exploring three-dimensional shapes or printing with paint. This creates many opportunities for discussion, develops children's language skills, and strengthens personal and social skills. The staff have very good relationships with the children that support learning. In the Reception class, learning is fun. The day is more structured, with subject lessons such as literacy and numeracy, but the teaching is lively and well matched to the children's needs. As a result, the children are very involved in their learning and their skills develop steadily.

25. Throughout the rest of the school, teachers have a confident knowledge of most subjects. Where teaching is very good, subject expertise supports pupils' learning. For example, in a religious education lesson for Years 5 and 6 about ceremonies, the teacher's confidence in the subject led her to select a brainstorm as the start to the lesson. The pupils thought of a wide range of examples from many faiths, some celebrations and some ceremonies, and the teacher was able to help them to tease out the differences and appreciate the symbolism. In a few mathematics and physical education lessons observed, however, weaknesses in teachers' knowledge resulted in activities that did not extend pupils' skills and understanding.

26. The teaching of basic skills is effective. Reading is taught methodically, using a structured scheme, so pupils' make good progress during Key Stage 1. Letter sounds, spelling and punctuation are all taught well in literacy sessions, and this strengthens pupils' ability in reading and writing. In mathematics, counting and calculating skills are taught effectively in most lessons. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils learnt how to calculate the 'difference between' two numbers using a row of cards from 0 to 10 and taking turns to identify numbers with a difference of two. Teachers know that many of the pupils need constant reinforcement of their basic skills.

27. Teachers plan thoroughly for most lessons, particularly for literacy and numeracy. They identify clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils so that they know what they are trying to achieve. Many use WILF (What I'm looking for) to phrase the learning objective in a way that pupils understand. For example, in a science lesson for Year 4, the objective "To find out if snails prefer to eat twigs or cabbage" was continually reiterated as the pupils planned their experiment, and this helped them to focus on the idea of designing a fair test. For subjects other than literacy and numeracy, planning is briefer, and this is sufficient where teachers have the subject expertise to expand the plan. In a few lessons, the lack of a more detailed plan, including the structure of the lesson, resulted in weaknesses in teaching.

28. Where teaching is very good or excellent, teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and teaching and learning move at pace. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils investigated the way that light reflects off different surfaces. The teacher explained the learning objectives, her expectations and the structure of the lesson clearly but quickly so that the pupils could start their activities straight away. The tasks were exceptionally well matched to extend the pupils' existing understanding, with harder work for those who were capable. As a result, all the pupils made excellent progress during the lesson and their understanding of reflection was advanced considerably. Where teaching was good or better, work was well matched to pupils' needs. In a few lessons where teaching had weaknesses, work was pitched to meet the needs of the average-attaining pupils. It was too easy for the higher attainers, or sometimes the task was too routine to allow these pupils to extend their own learning.

29. Most lessons are well organised and teachers use a good range of methods and strategies to promote learning. For example, in music lessons for both Year 2 and Year 4, very good organisation of a range of activities involved all the pupils in listening to and playing instruments. As a result, Year 2 pupils made very good progress in understanding a simple musical score, and Year 4 pupils learnt how to play two patterns of beats simultaneously. All teachers explain tasks and ideas clearly, and many do so in a lively and interesting way that holds pupils' attention and encourages them to respond. For example, in a design and

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technology lesson for Year 3, it was the teacher's imaginative demonstration of pneumatic power that captured pupils' interest. The whole-class parts of lessons are usually a strong feature. Teachers have good skills in questioning pupils and leading discussions. Group and individual work, however, is not always as productive because teachers do not always ensure that pupils settle quickly to their tasks, and they do not monitor progress closely enough. In a number of lessons, a good review at the end helped pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

30. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour effectively, despite the fact that a significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural special needs. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes, they praise good work and behaviour and, for the most part, pupils respond by listening attentively, concentrating on their work and behaving well. In a few lessons, particularly in one class, weaknesses in the teacher's management of pupils' behaviour slowed their learning. Time was used well in most of the lessons observed. Where teaching was very good or better lessons moved at a brisk pace. For example, in a numeracy lesson for Years 5 and 6, the concept of rounding to the nearest 1000 was explained through a rapid question and answer session, and then pupils had to estimate the answers to the sum of two four-digit numbers. Not a minute was lost as the pupils moved to their group work. A weakness in some lessons was that whole-class introductions were too slow, they lasted too long, and this did not leave enough time for the pupils' tasks. The good skills of classroom assistants are used well in many lessons, for example working with a group, or supporting an individual.

31. Most teachers use sound strategies to assess pupils' understanding. They often begin the lesson with a review of previous learning to check what pupils know. They observe pupils carefully in lessons to check their progress. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory. The school expects pupils to read at home each night, and most do, though parents vary considerably in their support. Across the school, there is a regular pattern of more formal homework and it is helpful that pupils have a few days to complete it. The work pupils complete at home makes a valuable contribution to their learning at school. Parents express a wide range of views on homework, with some arguing there is too much and others that there is too little. Most, however, agree that the amount of homework is about right.

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

32. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which is well planned and organised. At the last inspection, the amount of time allocated to each subject was inappropriate and there were serious weaknesses in the guidance provided for teachers to plan pupils' work. As a result, the curriculum lacked breadth and balance, which inhibited pupils' achievements. Since then, the school has made good progress in improving the balance and quality of the curriculum. The school day has been restructured to create lessons that make the very best use of the time available. Setting arrangements for pupils in Years 5 and 6 enable teachers to plan a curriculum in literacy and numeracy that best meets pupils' needs. Another effective strategy is using a block of time each term to teach a subject, as with design and technology in Key Stage 1, so that learning is consolidated rather than fragmented. Procedures for planning the curriculum are also much more consistent across the school, and teachers

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have satisfactory guidance for each subject. As a result, pupils' achievements are now at least satisfactory in all but one subject, where it is the quality of teaching not the quality of the curriculum that is the weakness.

33. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is planned around the recommended areas of learning and provides a good range and quality of experiences. The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 meets all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Provision for religious education is good, supported by a developing scheme of work, and is taught in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. There are, however, weaker aspects within some subjects. In English, the development of pupils' writing skills, both the content and the handwriting, has weaknesses, which are evident in the quality of pupils' work. In mathematics, number work receives a high priority, but other elements of the curriculum, such as using and applying skills to solve problems and seek patterns, do not have sufficient emphasis. In art, there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas in a range of media. In all subjects, however, the new staff team is rapidly improving the quality of the curriculum.

34. Strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are particularly good in the Foundation Stage because there is a judicious blend of lively, whole-class sessions and activities that develop these skills whilst children are working independently. Throughout the rest of the school, the National Literacy Strategy is well established and the teaching of basic literacy skills is satisfactory overall and good in many lessons. In Key Stage 2, literacy skills are not used and developed sufficiently as part of work in other subjects, such as geography and history. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy effectively. Whilst pupils' numeracy skills are used and developed through work in some other subjects, such as science, planned links with numeracy are unsatisfactory.

35. The school makes good provision for the intellectual and emotional development of pupils with special educational needs. They are fully included in the

life of the school and have equal access to the curriculum. As well as their usual lessons, many of these pupils benefit considerably from individual or small group sessions to strengthen particular skills. This includes initiatives such as additional literacy support and 'booster' classes. An inclusive range of activities during break times, for example indoor cricket, mean that a number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are fully occupied alongside other pupils. Pupils with a statement of special educational need receive good provision, including a designated support assistant.

36. The school also makes good provision for pupils learning English as an additional language. They have full access to the curriculum and are an integral part of all aspects of school life. Appropriate additional support helps them to improve their English skills. Dual language books, both fiction and non-fiction, are available to the pupils and support the learning of reading skills. Aspects of the pupils' cultural heritage are utilised in order to enrich learning of all pupils. For example, the steel band makes a good contribution to the celebration and awareness of the wealth and diversity of cultural traditions within the school.

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37. The curriculum is enhanced by a number of educational visits. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils visited Hampton Court as part of their history work about the Tudors, and pupils in Key Stage 2 have visited a number of places of worship in their religious education. The school offers the opportunity for a residential visit for the oldest pupils, to study aspects of science and geography and to enhance their social development. There are some regular visitors to school, such as members of a local church who take assemblies, and occasional visitors such as musical and theatre groups. All these events play a valuable role in enriching the pupils' education.

38. A number of the parents who returned the questionnaire and those who attended the pre-inspection meeting felt that the provision of extra-curricular activities was weak. The school provides a range of activities, including choir, steel band, recorders, a number of sporting clubs, and a newspaper group. Overall, these provide satisfactory opportunities for the older pupils to take part in activities outside lessons, and the inspection team does not agree that the school's provision is weak.

39. The school provides satisfactory opportunities to promote pupils' personal and social development. The routines established in the nursery, and many of the activities, help children to grow in confidence and independence. In other classes, there are times when pupils gather in a circle to discuss personal and social issues, and these give pupils opportunities to express their thoughts and opinions. The recently established school council provides an opportunity for pupils to represent and respect the views of others about life in the school community. Some of the oldest pupils act as prefects. They say that they enjoy the role, and those observed during the inspection carried out their tasks responsibly. The school has a well-established programme of sex education for the oldest pupils. Drugs education is taught with the help of a local, specialist group, though this has only happened recently. The school is aiming for a Healthy Schools' award, which is involving the

pupils in learning about a wide variety of health-related matters. Whilst there are a number of good features to the school's current provision, these have yet to be drawn together in a planned programme of personal, social and health education.

40. The school makes satisfactory provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, with strengths in moral and social development. The provision for pupils' spiritual development has improved since the last inspection when it was a significant weakness. Acts of collective worship now meet statutory requirements. They follow a planned programme, including a weekly assembly led by representatives from local churches, and all include a period for reflection. The school's steel band made a lively contribution to two assemblies during the inspection week but music was not widely used in others. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in religious education lessons but less effectively in other subjects. However, a science experiment on the eating preferences of snails provoked wonder and curiosity in one class.

41. The very good role models provided by staff, together with the school's positive ethos in which all pupils are valued, support good moral and social development. Pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They work and play well together and those of all ethnic backgrounds are well integrated.

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42. Pupils co-operate well in mixed ability pairs and groups. For example, the school's steel band played very well together, without a conductor, taking turns in the different parts. The recently established school council was consulted during the review of the school's aims and objectives. Where the school gives pupils responsibilities, they take them on well. The range of responsibilities offered, however, is quite narrow.

43. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils study music from other cultures, using appropriate instruments. The choir, recorder group and steel band enrich cultural experiences for a significant minority of pupils. They learn about many religions and visit local places of worship. They also study artefacts from different periods in history and visit the local museum. Community languages are used in some displays. The school recognises, however, that the cultural richness of the local community is not yet tapped sufficiently to enhance pupils' learning. For example, there have been very few visits by pupils to places of worship in the locality, or visitors to school from cultural groups.

44. The school promotes equality of opportunity through the provision it makes for boys and girls, for pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and for pupils with special educational needs. It has looked carefully at the results achieved by pupils in national tests, identified discrepancies between various groups, and is taking action. For example, the school is currently part of a national initiative to raise attainment in boys who are of African-Caribbean heritage. Higher-attaining pupils, however, are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons and the work they are given can be too easy. The school has good relationships with partner institutions

and particularly with the secondary school to which most of the pupils transfer. A secondary teacher visits to work with Year 6 pupils, which gives them a helpful, known face during their first weeks at a new school. There are good links with the local initial teacher training institution, and two of the current staff taught in the school as students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. The headteacher and staff know their pupils well and relationships throughout the school are very good. As a result, pupils said they felt secure at school and were confident to approach staff with problems. Parents feel that the school encourages positive values including tolerance, respect and care. The school recognises, however, that the absence of a coherent personal, health and social education curriculum is unsatisfactory. Staff record any incident or issue of concern about a pupil on tracking sheets. However, there are at present no whole-school procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development.

46. The school's behaviour policy is effective in promoting good standards of behaviour. Pupils understand, and have confidence in, the system of rewards and sanctions. Staff use these procedures consistently and effectively, praising and rewarding good behaviour and using the 'consequences' sheet regularly to remind pupils of the consequences of their actions. Persistent misbehaviour is recorded on tracking sheets and a hierarchy of sanctions follows. Midday supervisors are currently undergoing training to improve their use of the behaviour policy. Although some classes have rules, there are no clearly stated whole-school rules, with the result that the standards of conduct expected are implicit rather than explicit.

47. Child protection provision is satisfactory. The headteacher has attended recent child protection training, which has been shared with staff. Staff know what to do where they have concerns, though there is no child protection policy. The school provides a safe and secure working environment for pupils and staff, but the condition of some lavatories is unsatisfactory. The headteacher and governor with health and safety responsibilities have begun regular risk assessments. Training in first aid is planned for all staff. Parents are notified of any bumps to the head or injury that their child sustains at school.

48. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Attendance has improved significantly in the past year as a result of regular reminders to parents and pupils of the importance of good attendance. Pupils causing concern are followed up at weekly meetings with the education welfare officer. The award of the weekly class attendance certificate is eagerly awaited and stimulates pupils to attend regularly.

49. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Class teachers and special needs' assistants understand pupils' individual needs and

circumstances well and provide sensitive support. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are also supported well.

50. Procedures for tracking and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress have improved recently and are now good. Computer generated records are kept for each year group, detailing results of the various standardised tests in use through the school. These records are being used to analyse the progress of different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, those with English as an additional language or with special educational needs, and those born in the summer. These year group profiles are used to highlight pupils with special educational needs as well as those who are more able, in order to plan work and support at appropriate levels. As yet, these measures are not fully effective. The results are also used to predict likely performance in the national tests. Analysis of test results has highlighted specific areas for development. For example, the spelling skills of Year 2 pupils were identified as a weakness and appropriate strategies introduced to improve them, with success.

51. Pupils' special needs are quickly identified early in the Foundation Stage and, if a pupil joins the school later, the special needs co-ordinator checks records for signs that extra support may be needed. Progress is monitored systematically, targets are set, and reviews are carried out regularly. Individual education plans are well prepared, containing short-term, achievable goals. Once a pupil is placed on the register of special needs, termly assessment and review ensures that needs continue to be met. In a number of cases, good progress has meant that a pupil has been removed from the special needs' register or has been reviewed as requiring less support. The documentation for pupils with special needs is of good quality and is understandable to all those involved in the process.

52. Assessment of pupils' achievements in the core subjects of English and mathematics is mostly good, though there are no formalised systems for assessing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Samples of pupils' work in both subjects are matched to national standards twice a year and kept in each pupil's portfolio. There is inconsistency in the use of individual targets. Assessment of attainment and progress in science is weak, and in other subjects there are few assessments made or records kept, which is unsatisfactory. At present, there is no whole-school approach to assessing and recording in these subjects.

53. Some staff regularly evaluate lessons on the reverse of their planning and this helps them to match future work to pupils' needs. In some lessons seen during the inspection, plans were revised in the light of on-going assessments made during the lesson.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has a good partnership with parents, which helps to support pupils' learning. Only a small number of parents attended the parents' meeting or returned the questionnaire, but those who did expressed a high degree of satisfaction with

the school. These positive views were supported by discussions with other parents during the inspection.

55. Parents feel that their children make good progress and are happy at school. They feel well informed about their children's progress and events. They believe the new headteacher has made a real difference and find him, and other staff, approachable and ready to listen. They value the informal contacts they have with staff. Some parents feel that there are not enough extra-curricular activities. The school offers a suitable range of activities, including choir, recorders, steel band, football and short cricket. However, the majority of these are only available to older pupils.

56. The school provides clear, good quality information for parents. Reports are good, with clear, evaluative comments about what pupils know and can do, and targets for development in the core subjects. However, reports for reception pupils are based on national curriculum subjects rather than the early learning goals, which is unsatisfactory. Helpful termly curriculum information is provided for each class so that parents know what topics are to be covered and can support their children's learning. Termly parents' meetings include discussion about pupils' targets. The prospectus and governors' annual report for parents are both clear and informative and in 2000, the latter document was translated into Urdu and Bengali. The school recognises that more documents need to be translated, and greater use made of interpreters, so that it can communicate more effectively with parents for whom English is an additional language.

57. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed about their children's progress through regular informal contacts with the special needs co-ordinator, as well as periodic reviews. Individual education plans include practical ways for parents to support their children at home. The school has a satisfactory partnership with the parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are consulted and informed appropriately, with bi-lingual staff supporting this process. Their involvement is encouraged and welcomed.

58. The school encourages parents to support their children's learning at home, for example through the use of home/school reading records. Some parents do so effectively, but many are not supportive enough. A small number of parents help in school and others work in school. The headteacher and his deputy have worked hard to build up personal contacts with parents and they now enjoy their confidence and support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher, senior management team and governing body are providing strong, effective leadership, and this places the school in a good position to raise standards. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection

when there were serious weaknesses in the leadership of the school. The headteacher knows what he wants to achieve and, with the enthusiastic support of the staff, has focused everyone on raising pupils' attainment and ensuring the involvement of all members of the school community. He has been successful in developing a strong team ethos, involving all the staff in school improvement. As a result, the school has been successful in improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection, and is beginning to raise standards of pupils' performance in national assessments at the end of both key stages. This has been achieved within a short period of time. The school faces a considerable challenge because many pupils start with low levels of attainment, and have continuing special needs.

60. The headteacher is a purposeful and effective leader. In partnership with the deputy headteacher, who is involved in all aspects of management, he has established an effective structure for the management of the school. The senior management team meets frequently and forms the basis for discussion and decision making, ensuring that the work of the school is monitored and evaluated systematically. This has enabled the staff to begin the process of identifying and tackling weaknesses, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Subject co-ordinators, many of whom are very new to their roles, are beginning to establish priorities for improvement in their subject areas, but these are not yet focused enough in order to raise standards. The headteacher also shows a strong commitment to creating and maintaining a caring ethos in the school, and helping pupils to establish and maintain good relationships.

61. The school's commitment to and capacity for further improvement are good. Systems are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and the standard of pupils' work. An agreed format identifies what went well in each lesson, what improvements can be made and what future targets are needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Some subject co-ordinators have had good opportunities to observe lessons, and provide teachers with feedback on their teaching. As yet, evaluation of the school's performance is not specific enough to identify exactly what needs to be done to raise standards. A particular priority has been the professional development of teachers. Many are recently appointed, and the school has good procedures in place for the induction of new staff. These are well supported by performance management and appraisal where teachers are set clear targets closely linked to improving pupils' performance.

62. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and has improved since the last inspection. Then, not all pupils received the support they needed, and progress in some lessons was unsatisfactory. Now, provision is organised effectively. The deputy headteacher has instigated a number of effective systems to help teachers track these pupils' progress and plan work that meets their needs. Pupils' needs are identified quickly. Plans outlining the best ways to support their learning have very clear targets, and this ensures sound progress is made in most lessons and good progress in many.

63. The governing body provides good support for the school and has guided it through a very difficult period of change. Governors monitor aspects of school management such as the curriculum, finance and personnel matters, through an established pattern of committees. They visit the school regularly and have developed a good working partnership with the headteacher and staff. Although very supportive, and eager to help the school improve further, many governors do not yet have a clear enough view of its strengths and weaknesses. Following a whole-school conference at the beginning of the academic year, however, the governing body is beginning to become more directly involved in determining priorities for development through helping to formulate the school improvement plan. As a consequence, governors are beginning to fulfil their role as critical friends to the school more effectively.

64. The school improvement plan is effective and has been formulated through consultation with governors and all staff. The three-year plan builds upon the issues raised during the last inspection and contains well-identified action points. Priorities are clear and focused on developing the curriculum, raising attainment, pupil welfare and staff professional development. However, the plan gives too little detail about how these priorities are to be achieved, and does not identify success criteria to measure whether targets have been reached. Nevertheless, school improvement is reviewed regularly, and the means by which priorities are to be achieved are discussed with governors and staff.

65. The headteacher and governing body have established clear educational priorities and these are well supported through sound financial planning. The school's financial management systems are flexible enough to ensure that funds are available when unforeseen needs arise, such as additional support for a particular pupil or class. This also applies to extra funding, such as when the local education authority provided additional money for non-contact time and the school carried out a rigorous monitoring programme. Appropriate attention is given to implementing national initiatives such as Year 6 'booster' groups and additional literacy support. Overall, ICT facilities are used effectively to support school management and administration.

66. The school has a committed and hard-working teaching staff whose experience and expertise is well matched to the demands of the curriculum. Many of the staff have joined the school fairly recently, but they are already an enthusiastic team with a common purpose. They are well complemented by a good team of support staff, who are valued members of the school community.

67. The school has adequate accommodation for the needs of the curriculum, and the buildings are maintained and cleaned to a good standard. Some external areas are in a poor decorative state owing to the high maintenance costs of this listed Victorian building. Many classrooms are spacious, with adjacent areas being used well for group work and other activities. The playground is small but provides an appropriate outdoor environment for pupils. The school makes best use of this space by staggering playtimes and providing large outdoor play apparatus. There is no grassed area for games, which restricts physical education. Children in the reception class do not have a dedicated outdoor learning area. This means that

there is limited provision for outdoor play and access to large apparatus throughout the day. As a consequence, opportunities for children to explore the physical and

imaginative possibilities offered by large and small outdoor equipment are unsatisfactory. The range and quality of learning resources are generally satisfactory, with good resources for ICT and music. However, there are too few books, particularly in classrooms, and games equipment for physical education is poor.

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

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. During the last two years, the school has made good progress in improving many of the serious weaknesses that had been identified in its work. It now provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils, but their attainment in English, mathematics and science is still not high enough. The school has already grasped the challenge of raising pupils' levels of attainment. Within this context, and to continue the improvements already achieved, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- ◆ Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics, science by improving provision in the following aspects of the school's work:
(*paragraphs 2-5, 8-10, 81-87, 88-97, 98-103*)
- ◆ Raise the standard of teaching in the lessons where there are weaknesses, by:
 - having high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and ensuring that the tasks set are appropriately challenging, particularly for higher attainers;
 - injecting more pace in teaching, and encouraging pupils to make the best use of time;
 - strengthening teachers' knowledge and skills in the subjects where they are least confident;
 - enabling all teachers to observe and learn from existing good practice.(*paragraphs 6, 20, 25, 27-30, 86, 95-96, 102*)
- ◆ Strengthen aspects of the curriculum by:
 - improving pupils' skills in writing, including opportunities to write in subjects other than English, particularly in Key Stage 2;
 - improving the standard of pupils' handwriting;
 - increasing the emphasis on pupils using and applying their skills in mathematics.

(paragraphs 8, 33, 85, 97)

- ◆ Extend the good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics to all subjects and the Foundation Stage, so that when work is planned it is appropriately challenging.

(paragraphs 52-53, 103, 112, 138)

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- ◆ Enable governors to focus more actively on the issues surrounding raising pupils' attainment, by:
 - providing them with information about standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and learning, and helping them to interpret it;
 - involving them more fully in the process of formulating the school improvement plan;
 - increasing the contact that governors have with teaching and learning in lessons.

(paragraph 63)

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

- ◆ Improve the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work. *(86, 96, 102)*
- ◆ Raise achievement in physical education. *(130-133)*
- ◆ Raise the profile of reading by improving the quality of books in classrooms and around the school. *(84)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	14	41	38	5	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)	22	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		57

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	51

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	87

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16
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Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	11.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	4	10
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	13	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (70)	54 (70)	79 (78)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	11	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	16	20	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (70)	83 (67)	63 (63)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	20	13	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	7	11
	Girls	8	5	8
	Total	19	12	19

Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (48)	36 (45)	58 (31)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	13	14
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	17	20	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (45)	61 (66)	67 (34)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	11
Black – African heritage	10
Black – other	13
Indian	4
Pakistani	60
Bangladeshi	7
Chinese	0
White	67
Any other minority ethnic group	25

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	487,304.00
Total expenditure	481,847.00

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	174

Expenditure per pupil	2,152.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,084.00
Balance carried forward to next year	20,541.00

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Number of pupils per FTE adult	11
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

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Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	85	13	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	76	22	0	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	43	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	61	30	4	4	0
The teaching is good.	71	20	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	41	2	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	17	0	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	27	2	2	0

The school works closely with parents.	64	29	4	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	80	20	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	26	4	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	27	13	7	22

Only 10 parents attended the meeting but they were very positive about most aspects of the school's work. They felt that the school had improved since the appointment of a new headteacher. They mentioned a number of strong features of the school's work, such as the good attitudes and values it promotes, and the way in which staff are very approachable if parents have concerns or want to know more about how their child is progressing. These parents felt well informed about and appropriately involved in the work of the school. Nearly all the parents at the meeting were pleased with the progress their children are making. A few parents felt that there should be more extra-curricular activities, particularly for the younger children.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

70. The nursery is organised in two part-time sessions, with a maximum of twenty-six children attending each session, usually for three terms. The oldest children move into the reception class in the term after their fifth birthday. Children whose birthdays fall between April and August move straight into Year 1 in September, having had no previous experience of the reception class or full-time schooling. Inevitably, this system disadvantages the 'summer-born' children, and this year well over half the nursery children fit into this category. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment overall is well below average in all areas, particularly in language and literacy skills. Currently, over half of both the morning and afternoon children are learning English as an additional language (EAL). At the time of the inspection, there were seventeen children of reception age in a class with Year 1 children.

71. The induction arrangements for children entering the nursery are satisfactory. They visit for one session and there is an informative leaflet for parents. Before children enter the reception class, they visit for a morning and a different afternoon, and experience a lunchtime, which is very appropriate. Parents are informed each half term of the main topics their children will study. In the reception class, both this and the annual report for parents are set out under National Curriculum subject headings, which is not appropriate. The Foundation Stage is not described separately in the school prospectus and the school does not have a policy, which would give an overview of the practice in the nursery and reception class.

72. The quality of teaching in both the nursery and reception classes is good overall, and was good or very good in eight of the 11 lessons seen. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants provide good support for individual and groups of children. A wide range of activities is well planned to interest the children and ensure they are all purposefully involved. As a result of this good teaching, the children make good progress and the great majority are likely to attain the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. However, only about half attain those for mathematical development and less than half in communication, language and literacy, reflecting the low attainment on entry and the high proportion of children with EAL.

73. The nursery accommodation is well used and, in spite of being rather cramped, provides many opportunities for the children to engage in a wide range of activities. There is a small, secure outdoor area for the nursery, but none for reception children. Both classes are adequately resourced, though some items are worn and require replacement. The broad curriculum is well planned to cover the six areas of learning. The systems for assessing and recording children's progress differ in the two settings, but neither provides sufficient evidence to show progress through the stepping stone levels to the early learning goals in each area of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

74. Children's achievements are good in this area, from a low starting point in many cases. In the nursery, children understand the routines and settle happily on arrival to well-prepared activities. Many sustain concentration well. Most are confident and, while many are quite

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solitary in their play, a number communicate with each other, for example in the role-play area or when sharing equipment outdoors. The provision of the 'apple tree', showing who has been kind and helpful during the week, reinforces the expected behaviour and attitudes. In the reception class, the children are enthusiastic learners and work together well in many paired activities. For example, in a very good lesson, pairs of children discussed their ideas about giving things other than presents, and began to understand that they could bring pleasure by giving such things as a smile, a cuddle and a listening ear. In both classes, children select activities confidently and often persevere with these. Relationships are good between the children themselves and with staff.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Although a few children in the nursery show well-developed language skills and a wide vocabulary, many are at the early stages of language development, and some of those learning English as an additional language know few words. Staff plan carefully for these children and effectively include them in all activities. Constant talk with the children encourages their response, and many activities are designed to develop vocabulary. For example, children describe a sprouting potato with such words as 'hairy' and 'spiky', and they are taught the names of the parts of a bicycle. The children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories well read. In a very good session, the children listened with full attention as the book 'Jump in!' was

read to them and they joined in with the rhyming words. Their attention was further held by the provision of model animals, which the children identified as they were mentioned in the story. The most able children are copying the teacher's writing, and approximately half of them can write their name.

76. In the reception class, the children remember a number of well-loved stories and many are able to describe characters or recognise them from others' descriptions. A number are still insecure with initial sounds of words. In a very good lesson, more able children enjoyed playing a game where they posted words through the correct initial sound letterbox, showing good understanding. Less able children enjoy looking at pictures in books, while a few more able read simple texts well. Few are writing using conventional letters, though some are developing this in conjunction with their invented script.

Mathematical development

77. Many opportunities are taken to encourage counting, for example checking the number of children present or counting down from ten to zero for all to gather on the carpet. In the nursery, the more able children count to twenty or beyond and recognise the number before or after another number, as well as odd and even numbers. Younger, less able children count reliably to five, though they recite numbers higher than this. Many know the names of simple flat shapes and are beginning to recognise how to group different three-dimensional shapes according to their properties. More able reception children understand one more or one less and most make simple repeating patterns. More able children know the names of three-dimensional shapes and all are encouraged to recognise shapes in the environment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. Children make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. They gain an understanding of time passing as they sequence the events in a story,

or pictures from babyhood through to old age. They develop a sense of 'then and now' as they compare schools long ago with the present. Nursery children observe their local environment and paint what they see when they study Oxford Road. Reception children also looked at Oxford Road and compared it with George Street, noting similarities and differences. Nursery children have grown cress and beans and discussed why those without light, water or warmth did not grow successfully. Reception children describe materials, such as hard wood and shiny metal, and compare the feel of different fabrics. The children build a number of objects, such as vehicles from small construction bricks in the nursery, having made a design first. Reception children designed and constructed their ideal playground, having discussed the features they would wish to see. In both classes, the children use the computer confidently to create and print patterns and to reinforce basic skills.

Physical development

79. The children make good progress in this area. In the nursery, children use a range of small equipment, such as scissors, glue spreaders, crayons, paint brushes and the computer mouse, confidently and successfully, showing good development of fine co-ordination skills. They show awareness of space as they use wheeled vehicles outside. Their large muscle development is supported as they climb and balance on the adventure playground equipment, and they have good control as they use small balls and beanbags. Reception children roll a ball from one to the other accurately and begin to evaluate others' performance. They are all aware of what happens to their bodies when they are active.

Creative development

80. A range of activities enables the nursery children to make good progress in this area. For example, they print with different objects, including the wheels of toy vehicles, and make pasta collages and wax crayon rubbings. Observation and subsequent painting of objects such as vegetables and kiwi fruit show some good attention to detail. The more able children paint recognisable pictures of a bicycle. The children use their imagination in the role play area and in making models using construction equipment. Reception children use a variety of media for their artwork, such as charcoal and watercolours. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy frequent opportunities to sing, and they know the words and actions of many songs. In a good lesson, reception children repeated rhythm patterns successfully, showing very good concentration as they were challenged with more difficult patterns. They are beginning to understand long and short notes.

ENGLISH

81. Results of the year 2000 national assessments for seven year olds, in both reading and writing, were very low compared with the national average and compared with results achieved by school in similar social circumstances. These results were lower than those for the previous year. No pupils achieved the higher Level 3. The admission arrangements have a negative impact on Key Stage 1 results because the younger children having no full-time schooling until Year 1, and half of the pupils in last year's Year 2 were summer born. National test results in English for eleven year olds were well below the national average and below those for similar schools. Nevertheless, the results show an improvement over the past two years and were just above the school's agreed target.

82. Many pupils enter the school with significant weaknesses in language skills. Just over half of the current Year 2 and Year 6 are learning English as an additional language, with many still at an early stage. The overall attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 shows improvement since last year, but is still well below national expectations. Attainment is lowered because over a third of these pupils moved straight into Year 1, thus missing time in the reception class. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is similar to last year. Bearing in mind the low level of language skills with which many pupils start school, their achievements are sound overall, and

those with English as an additional language and special educational needs make good progress, with targeted, specialist support.

83. Most pupils listen attentively in lessons, though a few find this difficult. A few pupils are confident, articulate speakers, but many have a limited vocabulary and lack the skills to express their ideas fluently. Standards are well below national expectations. Teachers emphasise the acquisition of new vocabulary, often by displaying key words in classrooms. For example, words for different materials being studied in science are displayed in the infant classrooms. Many opportunities are provided for paired and group work in order to develop pupils' language skills. For example, Year 3 pupils discussed designs for their pneumatic toys in design and technology, and Year 4 pupils worked in groups to create sound patterns in music. Class discussions, with good opportunities for pupil participation, are a feature of good literacy lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils discussed characters in well-known stories, and Year 6 pupils discussed features of Anne Fine's novels.

84. Pupils enjoy reading, though the quantity and quality of fiction in both the junior library and classrooms are insufficient to stimulate the pupils and ensure they have access to a wide range of styles. More able pupils in Year 2 read fluently, with expression, and remember details of stories read previously. Less able pupils read hesitantly, with little expression and have a limited range of previous reading to discuss. By Year 6, the more able are reading challenging books with good expression and comprehension. They discuss a range of favourite authors, justifying preferences well. However, there are few pupils reading at the higher levels and overall standards are well below average through the school. Years 3 and 4 visit the library weekly for a lesson in library skills, but do not use the library very much on other occasions. Parents and carers are encouraged to read with their children at home, and the support of those who do has a positive impact on standards. Pupils use their developing reading skills to find information from a variety of sources.

85. The pupils undertake a good range of writing throughout the school, and opportunities for extended writing are given. The range includes stories, instructions, poems and descriptions in Year 2, as well as arguments, playscripts and newspaper reports in Year 6. As at the previous inspection, pupils often do not take sufficient care with the presentation of their work and few are regularly using a neat, joined style. The limited vocabulary of many pupils affects their style of writing, which often lacks imaginative language. A recent focus on spelling, particularly with the younger pupils, has been successful, with improved test results. Year 4 pupils have successfully written and illustrated stories and presented them as books, with 'blurbs' on the back covers, for others to read. Year 6 pupils' biographies of a friend are of a good standard. They have presented them in chapters, having researched the facts in detail

with their friend. Opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English are better in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. For example, Year 2 pupils have written about Florence Nightingale in history and Jonah's journey in religious education. Younger pupils have written a letter to the council detailing their

concerns about the traffic and lack of safety on Oxford Road. At times, the work in other subjects in Key Stage 2 is dominated by worksheets, which limits the opportunities for pupils to develop independent writing skills. The use of individual targets to improve pupils' writing is inconsistent at present.

86. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory with many good features in Key Stage 2. Teaching was always at least satisfactory, and good or better in six out of the eight lessons seen. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Some of the features of the good and very good teaching observed included clearly identified objectives shared with the pupils, detailed planning showing appropriate activities for the class and ability groups, and a good pace to the lesson. In a very good lesson with the younger Year 1 pupils, high quality questioning, a lively, enthusiastic approach and full involvement of all pupils helped them make very good learning gains. Activities were well matched to the pupils' abilities, as was also the case in a good Year 2 lesson about nonsense poems. Good questioning is a strong feature of the effective teaching. For example, infant pupils were asked questions about the text 'Keeping Healthy' and the teacher modelled writing very well. This is not always the case, and some teachers' handwriting does not set a good example for the pupils. Very good teaching was seen for a group of less able Year 5 and 6 pupils. The text and tasks interested them and they achieved success through well-planned, small steps. Weaknesses in a few lessons were that the plenary did not provide sufficient opportunities to reinforce pupils' learning, or the activities were not at an appropriate level, sometimes lacking challenge for the more able pupils. The quality of marking varies, with the best making reference to the purpose of the piece of work and giving points for improvement.

87. The literacy strategy is established successfully throughout the school. The pupils' attainment and progress in reading and writing are assessed and recorded well. However, there is little assessment of speaking and listening skills. Teachers and classroom assistants have all received training in aspects of the subject and liaison with a 'beacon' school is proving very helpful. There is appropriate support provided for various groups of pupils, such as Additional Literacy Support for some Year 3 pupils, specialist support for pupils learning English as an additional language, and for those of Black Caribbean heritage. The management of the subject is good, with regular observations of teaching and learning undertaken in order to raise standards.

MATHEMATICS

88. Results of the year 2000 national assessments for seven year olds were well below average. A significant proportion of pupils begin school with weak knowledge and understanding in mathematics, however, often exacerbated by poor language skills, so pupils' achievements during Key Stage 1 are satisfactory. Teachers build pupils' understanding and skills carefully, and much reinforcement is needed to ensure that pupils make steady progress. Results have improved significantly since the last inspection when only about a half of the pupils reached the expected Level 2. Now, about 80 per cent of pupils reach this level, but very few gain the higher Level 3, so the school's overall performance is depressed.

89. Results of the 2000 assessments for eleven year olds were in the lowest five per cent, both compared with all schools and compared with those in similar social circumstances. Early indications of results for 2001, based on teachers' assessments and inspection evidence, show that they are likely to be well below the national average, but that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 will increase by about 50 per cent. Very few pupils are likely to reach the higher Level 5. These results represent a marginal improvement since the last inspection, but the school recognises that they are still not high enough. At the last inspection, pupils were judged to make unsatisfactory progress during Key Stage 2, owing to weaknesses in curriculum planning and teaching. Their achievements across the key stage are now satisfactory overall.

90. Inspection evidence shows current attainment at the end of each key stage to be well below national expectations. In most year groups, about 40 per cent of the pupils are attaining at a level below that expected for their ages and, of these, a significant proportion are attaining well below. Some are learning English as an additional language. Work for these pupils is generally well matched to their needs, they receive good support from adults, and this enables them to make good progress in many lessons. In most classes, there is a small group of high attainers, but their needs are not catered for as effectively. Tasks are often too easy, or posed in a way that does not allow these higher attainers to explore mathematics and extend their skills.

91. In Year 2, a small group of higher attainers work confidently with numbers to 1000 and appreciate the significance of the place value of digits. For example, they know that 309 is composed of 3 hundreds and 9 units, and they can add on in tens by changing the appropriate digit. In a lesson observed, however, these pupils were asked to add nine or eleven to two-digit numbers, when they were capable of applying the same skill to much larger numbers. Average attainers are confident working with numbers to 100, counting in 2s, 5s and 10s, and performing a range of simple calculations. Lower attainers count and perform simple calculations to 20, but still have difficulty doing so reliably. Beyond 20, these pupils have difficulty with sequencing and recognising numbers. Many of the lower-attaining pupils write some of their figures in reverse. In general, pupils' mental recall of number facts to 10 is weak.

92. In Year 6, a small group of higher-attaining pupils show confident skills in a range of calculation, such as work with fractions and decimals, and multiplication by two-digit numbers. They have a good knowledge of shapes, including the properties of quadrilaterals, and can calculate perimeter and area. They have sound mental skills, rapidly recalling two numbers that total 100 and knowing multiplication facts. Average attainers also have sound skills in calculating, though their grasp of the place value of digits is less secure, and their mental recall is not so quick or reliable. For example, most find multiplying a two-digit number by 20 quite challenging. Past work on number, shape and measures is at a level slightly below that expected for their ages. As in Year 2, a significant proportion of the pupils are working at a level below or well below that expected for their ages. They are still consolidating skills

such as rounding numbers to the nearest 1000, multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100, and working with simple fractions.

93. Higher attainers have sound numeracy skills but, overall, pupils' skills are well below average. In Key Stage 1, pupils are given sound opportunities to use and develop these skills

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in other subjects and in daily class routines. Counting and ordering, number rhymes and songs, and discussions about shape and position, are well integrated in to lessons. However, in Key Stage 2, too few opportunities are planned to use and develop pupils' numeracy skills in other subjects.

94. Pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language generally make good progress in lessons and are well supported in their learning. In Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2, teachers form groups within their classes so that tasks can be matched to pupils' special needs, and an adult usually works with these pupils and provides skilled support. In Key Stage 2, setting arrangements for the older children enable teachers to match work more closely to the special needs of pupils. The work given to pupils and the teaching methods used in the set for the lower attainers are very effective and result in confident learners who are making good progress.

95. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with a number of good features. It was at least satisfactory in all but one of the lessons seen, and good, occasionally very good, in five out of the nine lessons observed. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are planned thoroughly, using the pattern outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy. Learning objectives are very clear, and shared with pupils so that they know exactly what they are going to do. Mental starter sessions usually move at a good pace, with questions that have been prepared carefully to challenge all the pupils. As a result, pupils generally enjoy these sessions and most are keen to offer answers. For example, a Year 4 lesson began with rounding numbers to the nearest hundred, and it was the rapid pace of the teacher's questions that demanded the pupils' attention and encouraged them to contribute. In a few lessons, however, the pace of the mental session was too slow, or it lasted too long, so pupils' attention waned.

96. Individual and group activities are generally well organised. Where teaching was good or better, the pace and challenge seen in the whole-class session was continued through the group activities. Where teaching had weaknesses, the teacher did not ensure that pupils sustained their concentration, so they completed too little work. The difficulty of tasks is generally well matched to pupils' needs, which enables them to make steady progress. In some lessons, however, activities lack challenge and do not help pupils to take the next step in their learning. All teachers have good relationships with their classes, which support good management of behaviour, and ensure that pupils focus on their work. In one class, however, there is a high proportion of pupils with challenging behaviour and the teacher has to work very hard to ensure all pupils can make progress. Teachers are generally competent in their knowledge of the subject. Some have considerable

expertise, shown in their astute questioning of pupils and the imaginative methods they use. For example, in a lesson for Year 1 and Year 2, a well-chosen game consolidated the idea of the difference between two numbers. A few teachers lack sufficient knowledge to set work that allows pupils to explore and investigate so that they are appropriately challenged. The quality of the marking of pupils' work varies considerably across the school.

97. The curriculum is generally well planned, broad and balanced, which is a marked improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' work, however, shows too little emphasis on using and applying skills in investigations and problem solving. Equally, there is little

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indication that information technology is used to support work in mathematics. National initiatives such as 'booster' groups and 'Springboard 5' are used well to raise attainment for groups of pupils. Assessment procedures are good, and have improved rapidly since the last inspection. Individual teachers note pupils' attainment in lessons so that they can match future work to their needs and, at a whole-school level, pupils' attainment and progress is monitored carefully so that weaknesses in the subject can be identified and tackled. Organisation of the subject across the school is good, and much improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator now plays a central role in supporting planning and leading improvements. A good start has been made in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and this is to be extended so that the co-ordinator gains a full overview of standards across the school. There are clear plans for further improvement, and a shared commitment amongst all the staff to raise standards further.

SCIENCE

98. The year 2000 end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments showed pupils' attainment to be well below the national average. However, there has been a steady improvement in these assessments during the last three years. Results of the year 2000 national assessments for 11 year olds were in the lowest five per cent compared with schools nationally, but showed a marked improvement on previous results, from a very low starting point.

99. A significant minority of pupils start Key Stage 1 with below average knowledge and understanding of the world and many have weak skills in language and literacy. Taking this into account, pupils' achievements during Key Stage 1 are satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, benefiting from work that is well matched to their abilities and effective adult support. Progress in the lessons observed was always satisfactory, with best progress being made when pupils were engaged in investigative and experimental learning. In these lessons they were excited and stimulated, contributing willingly and listening to both teachers and each other during discussions. For example, Year 1 pupils used prepared labels to identify different materials found in the classroom. Afterwards, they were able to describe to the teacher the properties of each material using words such as hard, shiny and transparent.

100. By Year 2, pupils have a growing understanding of the different properties of materials, confidently using appropriate words to sort and classify objects. They can further classify materials into natural and man-made and use a simple table to record their results. Higher-attaining pupils can identify those materials that have been adapted or changed by a physical process, for example clay into bricks and wood into paper and card. These pupils can also describe what is required in planning an investigation and how to set up a fair test. An increased emphasis upon physical science means that pupils have a better understanding of processes such as electricity and forces. This has been a weakness in the past. Now, however, Year 2 pupils can make a simple circuit and describe how an axle can help move a heavy load across the floor. Pupils understand that a force can change the shape of an object by bending it, or twisting it, or breaking it. In all classes, a good emphasis on the investigative aspect of science helps pupils to observe and describe their work, record their findings and make simple deductions.

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101. In Key Stage 2, most pupils give satisfactory explanations for different processes and phenomena, and they carry out investigations. For example, Year 4 pupils can devise an experiment to find out what food snails prefer. They can explain to the teacher that the investigation must be fair and that they must collect evidence from observations in order to come to an accurate conclusion. Many pupils are able to predict the outcome of the investigation, using their knowledge of animals and their habitats to inform this prediction. Through investigation using light sources, mirrors and a kaleidoscope, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils understand that light travels in a straight line and is reflected from surfaces such as mirrors and polished metals. They can record their observations accurately and, for a particular outcome, provide the correct explanation, using scientific language. Although some of the lower-attaining pupils, most with special educational needs, have weak recording skills and sometimes struggle to explain their ideas orally, they are enthusiastic and willing learners. Test results do not reflect their knowledge, skills and understanding. Most pupils' achievements are sound during the key stage, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

102. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall, with some good features. In the eight lessons observed, teaching was excellent in one, good in another and satisfactory in six. Teachers' planning is detailed and identifies precise learning objectives, which are made clear to pupils at the start of the lesson and discussed at the end to identify whether or not they have been achieved. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject, which enables them to explain concepts clearly and question pupils carefully, probing their knowledge and understanding. For example, in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 investigating light and reflection, the teacher skilfully questioned a group of lower-attaining pupils about their investigation, helping them to use what they had learned about mirrors, to begin the process of understanding how a periscope might work. Both pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language benefit from very effective additional adult support. In some lessons, however, higher attainers are not always challenged sufficiently because expectations of what they

can achieve are too low. On the whole, teachers manage pupils well. This keeps them on task, and enables them to gain as much as they can from the activities. Resources are always well prepared and well used, and classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Marking of pupils' work is variable in quality, with some teachers making valuable comments that help pupils' scientific development, and some simply acknowledging that work has been completed. Some use is made of ICT for finding out information, but there was little evidence of it being used for recording results or measuring such things as temperature.

103. There is a good scheme of work based on national guidance, and adapted on a two-year cycle to fit the organisational needs of the school. The scheme supports teachers' planning and has enabled the school to ensure that all elements of the science curriculum are in place. Assessment of pupils' attainment is developing alongside the scheme, but information is not yet being used to help teachers plan work at an appropriate level, particularly for the middle to higher attainers. A recently appointed co-ordinator gives support to colleagues and is beginning to monitor the quality, range and attainment of work completed by pupils. There has, however, been little monitoring of the quality of teaching in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and form plans to raise standards further. Nonetheless, there is clear plan of action

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to address this weakness. Effective organisation, clear action planning and improving standards of attainment mean that co-ordination of the subject across the school is good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is well placed to raise standards further.

ART and DESIGN

104. Standards of attainment at the end of each key stage are below those expected for pupils' ages, as noted at the last inspection. However, considering the low level of skills with which many pupils start school, they make satisfactory progress, though in a rather narrow range of experiences. Only one art lesson was observed, so judgements are largely based on an examination of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and staff.

105. Pupils' past work shows a predominance of drawing and painting, occasional collage, but very little work in three dimensions, fabric or printing. The restricted range of work was judged to be a weakness at the last inspection. Nonetheless, pupils experience a variety of techniques, learn skills, and focus on different aspects of art, such as colour or texture. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have followed the theme of portraits. They considered portraits painted by a variety of famous artists and learnt colour-mixing skills to achieve the right tones for skin and hair. Self-portraits painted by Year 2 pupils show good brushwork and use of colour, and their cubist portraits in the style of Picasso are striking. This work was extended into collage faces using a variety of fabrics, wool and found materials. In Key Stage 2, artwork is integrated effectively with other subjects, but this can lead to a lack of development of art skills. For example, work in Year 3 drawing on influences from ancient Egyptian art, such as the death mask of Tutankhamun, does not enable pupils to develop and extend

their own ideas. Years 5 and 6 spent a good deal of time designing and making clay seals similar to those used by the Indus valley civilisation and, whilst they developed a number of skills, they had little opportunity to be creative or to explore a wide range of materials and techniques. Much more impressive are their tapestry panels depicting scenes of Victorian Reading. Pupils were inspired by the Bayeux Tapestry and, using old photographs of Reading, depicted scenes on hessian squares, using a wide variety of fabrics. As at the last inspection, the oldest pupils have insufficient knowledge of the work of famous artists.

106. Sound teaching is evident in planning and the pupils' finished work, but it is clear that there is a lack of confidence in teaching a wider range of techniques or giving pupils more freedom to express their ideas. In the one lesson seen, new skills were taught methodically, and the teacher offered considerable support as pupils designed and made headbands linked to their history topic. A choice of media was provided, though most pupils chose a wax resist technique for their patterns. Discussion with the oldest pupils revealed that they enjoy their art lessons. The best displays of pupils' artwork are attractive, but others do not do justice to the quality of the work.

107. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work to plan the curriculum, which has improved the quality of some projects. The range of work seen, however, is narrow and ideas are not developed in a variety of media or in a way that provides enough opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate. As at the last inspection, the use of

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sketchbooks is unsatisfactory because they are used in a rather limited way for drawing, rather than being a vehicle for pupils to develop a variety of ideas in a range of media. The work of artists and craftspeople, particularly those representing a range of cultures, is still not used enough to inspire the pupils' work. Organisation of the subject across the school has improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is new to the role, but has already identified staff training as a main priority. As yet, there is little monitoring of standards.

DESIGN and TECHNOLOGY

108. As at the last inspection, standards of attainment are close to, but not quite reaching, those expected for pupils' ages. Given the low level of skills with which many pupils start school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, planning of the curriculum has improved and now provides good support for teachers. Projects in a good range of materials are undertaken, usually one each term, which develop pupils' skills steadily.

109. In Years 1 and 2, pupils have been making 'equipment' for a perfect playground. They looked at and evaluated a range of ideas, such as swings and slides. Their design drawings of the piece of equipment they chose to make are good, showing a labelled illustration with notes about the materials to be used and the joins that would be needed. They used a range of materials to make the structures, developing specific skills such as the cutting and joining. The final

products are recognisable from pupils' designs. Year 2 pupils have also made hand puppets, experiencing the different challenges of working in fabric. The stitching and finish on many of these puppets is of good quality. The pupils' evaluations of the finished products show the ways in which they would improve their designing and making in future.

110. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have made photo' frames. They evaluated a range of frames, taking them to pieces to examine the materials used and the construction, such as the hinge mechanisms. The pupils made trial frames to check the structure for stability. The finished products reflect a good variety of original ideas, a range of materials used and imaginative ways of making the frames attractive. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have designed and made slippers. They took to pieces a variety of types of slipper to examine the materials used and the ways in which they were made. They learnt how to make a 'pattern' and then made prototypes from paper and thin cloth. Designs for the final product needed to be adapted based on earlier lessons learnt, and show that the pupils are aware of constraints in the making process. The overall quality of pupils' designs and finished products is slightly below that expected for Year 6, but is improving with a better curriculum and teaching. Evaluation and making are strong features of pupils' work, but designing does not extend pupils' ability sufficiently to show the development of a design through a series of stages.

111. The quality of teaching was sound or better in each of the three lessons seen, and good in one. Teachers' planning makes it very clear what they want pupils to achieve, and they share these objectives. Teachers use a good range of methods, leading whole-class discussion, demonstrating skills and ensuring that pupils are involved practically in activities. They often organise learning effectively in pairs or groups, which encourages pupils to share their ideas. Where teaching was good, a lively introduction really enthused the pupils about using pneumatic power to make a minibeast with a moving part. As a result, they went on to draw imaginative designs for their proposed product.

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112. The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned using nationally recommended guidance. As yet, however, there is no whole-school system for assessing pupils' progress. Organisation of the subject across the school is sound, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic, provides helpful support for colleagues, and monitors standards though teachers' planning and evaluating finished work. A useful start has been made in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in lessons, and this is due to be extended so that the co-ordinator gains a better picture of practice across the school. An action plan sets out plans for future development clearly.

GEOGRAPHY

113. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection, but evidence from pupils' recorded work, teachers' planning and discussions indicates that pupils' achievements are satisfactory across both key stages. As at the previous inspection, pupils attain standards that are below those expected for their ages.

114. In Key Stage 1, work about the seaside enables Year 2 pupils to compare their own urban environment with contrasting coastal features. Year 1 pupils develop their knowledge of the local environment by studying the traffic implications of the main road outside the school. They contrast this with a much quieter side road, drawing maps, writing letters and discussing the reasons why one road is busier than the other. Their carefully drawn pictures and maps of 'Katie Morag's Island' show a developing knowledge and understanding of geographical features. They are able to distinguish between physical features, such as a mountain, and man-made features. All this work is well supported by books, photographs and maps, so pupils can use a range of sources to explore geographical ideas.

115. During Key Stage 2, pupils continue to study a range of places and geographical themes. They draw on different sources of evidence and use a variety of ways to find out information, such as questionnaires and surveys. Year 5 and 6 pupils have explored the environmental and economic impact of the development of a large shopping centre in Reading. An emphasis upon fieldwork within the locality enables all pupils to study the variety of ways in which land is used for houses, industry, roads, and recreation. By studying the contrasting locality of Christchurch in Dorset, pupils are able to make comparisons between the physical and human features there, and those in Reading. This topic is supported by a visit to Christchurch and good use of the Internet. In the one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils made good use of an on-line mapping facility in order to develop map skills and find out about the locality of Christchurch, prior to their visit. This has been particularly helpful in the development of geographical skills and enquiry. In comparison, work about rivers is largely a series of factual worksheets and there is too little attention to posing geographical questions about the effects rivers have on people's lives.

116. A recently introduced, comprehensive scheme of work takes good account of the requirements of the National Curriculum and effectively supports teaching across the school. There is a good range of resources that provide good support for pupils' learning. Teachers' planning is monitored by the co-ordinator but there is little opportunity to monitor teaching in the subject. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and provides satisfactory leadership.

HISTORY

117. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence from pupils' recorded work, teachers' planning and discussions indicates that pupils' achievements are satisfactory across both key stages. Standards of attainment, however, are below those expected for pupils' ages, owing to the weak literacy skills of many pupils and the significant proportion who have special needs. Achievement, however, has improved since the last inspection.

118. In Year 1 and 2, a very good topic, utilising the school and its immediate environment, introduces pupils to a wide range of ways to find out about life in the

past. They found clues by looking at door furniture, ornate Victorian drainpipes, the old bell tower and the carved sign above the boy's entrance to the school. In the classroom the teacher reinforced this experience with photographs of the clues they had seen. As a result, the pupils are developing good skills as young historians, learning how to look for evidence. In Year 2, the teacher had set up a small Victorian writing corner with old inkwells, slates and an exemplar of Victorian copperplate writing. Some of the topics in history, however, are not as exciting. Although pupils have learnt about a number of events and famous people from the past, these experiences are not so rich because the sources of evidence used are more restricted.

119. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils study historical topics in some depth. Work in Years 3 and 4 about 'Ancient Egyptians' explored many aspects of their lives, and the best of this work encouraged pupils to consider different points of view, such as personal beliefs in relation to the afterlife. Pupils used books to research information about life at that time, and made a mummy which increased their knowledge of the embalming process. Year 5 and 6 work about 'The Victorians' focused well on the considerable changes that took place in Reading, particularly in the immediate locality of the school. These pupils used historical maps to identify particular buildings and features that still exist today and those that are no longer here, such as the system of tramlines. Work is supported by visits to museums, such as the Museum of Childhood. Some of the topics are too factually based, such as a study of the ancient civilisation of the Indus Valley. However, more able pupils created a fascinating presentation on this topic using a software program. Whilst building pupils' knowledge is important, the best work clearly focuses on the use of historical evidence, placing historical events in a time sequence, and exploring how developments have had a lasting impact.

120. In the three lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory with some good features. Good knowledge of the subject, clear learning objectives and skilled questioning helped pupils to make sound progress. All teachers have appropriate expectations of what the pupils can achieve, and the pupils respond by listening carefully and offering their ideas. Teaching is most effective, and has a positive impact on pupils' progress, where tasks are presented in an interesting context and pupils are encouraged to use a variety of sources. Co-ordination of the subject across the school is improving with an appropriate scheme of work in place to support teachers' planning. The co-ordinator, however, has had little time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify strengths and weaknesses and form plans to raise standards further.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

121. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but evidence from displays of pupils' work, teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and staff indicates that achievements are satisfactory during both key stages. Most pupils are attaining

standards that are close to those expected for their ages. At the last inspection, attainment was judged to be above average at the end of both key stages.

122. Pupils' work during Key Stage 1 is supported by good access to computers and the direct teaching of ICT skills. For example, Year 1 pupils have used a simple graphics program to draw good self-portraits, linked to their work in art. These show effective use of a good range of the different palette tools available. When writing a copy of a group poem, Year 2 pupils were able to change font, size and colour, using a word processing program to complement literacy work. Both Year 1 and 2 pupils have also used ICT to generate graphs and incorporate 'clip art' images into pieces of text. On the few occasions when computers were observed being used in lessons, pupils showed that they are confident in using the mouse and keyboard. They know how to load programs from a menu, how to save work and how to print it. Early control technology, creating a series of instructions to control events, is introduced to Year 1 pupils by using a programmable toy. This is reinforced in Year 2 when pupils use a simple grid to plot onto paper their own series of commands.

123. By Year 6, pupils have developed sound skills in a range of ICT work. For example, they use the Internet confidently to research material prior to a fieldwork visit to Christchurch. Most Year 6 pupils use desktop publishing, for example to make posters for a school newspaper. Their use of word processing is sustained and varied, as seen in their questionnaires, letters and descriptive writing. Most Year 6 pupils are confident in their use of the mouse and keyboard, though a few are not yet fluent. There are also examples of high achievement, as seen when more able pupils used an interactive presentation package in order to share their work on the Indus Valley. Year 5 and 6 pupils have had experience of spreadsheets. The only aspect in which current attainment is weak is using ICT to sense physical data, but the school is updating equipment and plans to teach these skills in the near future.

124. The ICT suite of fifteen computers gives pupils good opportunities to learn skills in all aspects of the subject but, as yet, these skills are not being used and developed consistently in the classroom to support pupils' work in other subjects. Each classroom has at least one multimedia computer but, during the inspection, these were seldom in use, for example during literacy and numeracy lessons. There were too few opportunities for small groups of pupils to use ICT in a way that would have supported their other work.

125. The organisation of the subject across the school is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides effective support for colleagues in planning and teaching. There are clear plans for future development, which are a strong feature of the school improvement plan. However, evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is not yet systematic enough to enable the school to identify and tackle weaknesses. Resources for ICT are good and, if pupils are given more opportunities to use computers, the school is well placed to raise standards.

MUSIC

126. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with expectations for the pupils' ages. In the lessons seen, the pupils enjoyed the varied, practical activities. They were fully involved, concentrated well and were proud of their successes. Their attitudes were very good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy singing and the infants know many songs, which they accompany with actions. A significant proportion of Year 2 pupils understand the meaning of technical vocabulary, such as dynamics, tempo and pitch. In a very good lesson, they responded to picture cards depicting these different elements, singing or playing instruments in the required manner. Their group performances were taped and the pupils evaluated their work, discussing whether they could detect the different dynamics and tempo.

127. By Year 6, groups of pupils compose three-line rhythms, each with eight notes, using their own notation to depict loud and soft. Most, but not all, follow and perform their group score. Some useful cross-curricular links were seen. For example, the oldest pupils had designed and made a musical instrument in design and technology.

128. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen was very good in two and satisfactory in one. Very good teaching in Year 4 enabled the pupils to develop a good understanding of ostinato patterns. Very good pace, challenging tasks and very good management of activities, together with a lively, fun approach, ensured the pupils were fully involved as they successfully worked in groups to prepare a four-beat repeating pattern. In the singing assembly, the pupils were taught a new song called 'Today'. The teacher's strong singing voice and confidence enabled them to learn the song quickly and perform it sensitively. In lessons, some opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their work were missed. Similarly, only once during the week of the inspection was the opportunity taken to discuss the music being played as pupils entered the hall for assembly.

129. The older pupils benefit from some extra-curricular activities. These include the choir, which meets for two terms prior to a concert in the Hexagon, a recorder club and the steel band, of which the school is rightly very proud. A few pupils learn to play the guitar with tuition by a visiting teacher. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable co-ordinator. The music policy is in the process of being revised and a new scheme of work is in place. This is proving very helpful to the less confident teachers and ensures that pupils build their knowledge, skills and understanding step-by-step. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. There is no assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Some additional instruments have been acquired recently and provision is now good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Pupils' attainment in games, at the end of each key stage, is close to that expected for their ages. Their achievements, however, are inconsistent through the school and unsatisfactory overall, largely owing to weaknesses in the quality of teaching. Attainment is similar to that found at the last inspection.

131. In Year 2, most pupils can throw and catch a small ball, over a short distance, with reasonable accuracy. They show good co-operation working in pairs. About a quarter of the pupils are accurate all the time, and they deliberately increase the difficulty of the task by

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throwing the ball higher, lower or to one side. In Year 4, pupils show good skills in passing a baton for a relay race, gradually improving the timing of their approach run and receiving run. By Year 6, a significant minority of pupils have good skills in games, as seen during football club or when pupils shot goals in a basketball hoop. There is, however, a wide range of attainment, with a few pupils still finding it challenging to bounce, pass and catch a ball securely. Only games lessons were seen during the inspection, so it is not possible to make judgements about attainment in other aspects of physical education.

132. In the five lessons seen, the quality of teaching was good in two, sound in one, but unsatisfactory in two. Where teaching was good, lessons began with a thorough warm up, new skills were introduced systematically, and pupils were encouraged to practise and improve their performance. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher explained and demonstrated very clearly the skill of passing a baton, and then provided good opportunities for pairs of pupils to practise the skill. She coached individual pupils and then selected examples of good performance so that others could evaluate the technique. Good questioning encouraged pupils to focus on holding the baton correctly, adopting the right body position and setting off at the right time. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the lessons consisted of a series of activities, but the teacher played the role of organiser rather than coach. There was little focus on practising and improving skills, and examples of good performance were not used to encourage pupils to consider how they might improve their own skills. The good teaching moves at pace and ensures that pupils are kept active for most of the time. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, too much time was used in giving instructions, so pupils did not have enough opportunities for physical activity. Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and generally channel their enthusiasm well.

133. The school provides a varied physical education curriculum, following nationally recommended guidance. There are a number of extra-curricular sporting activities, which are well attended and much enjoyed by older pupils. There are no whole-school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The hall and hard-play areas provide barely adequate facilities for physical activity, and there is no grassed area for games. Resources are inadequate for games because there are too few balls. Organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory but improving. The new co-ordinator has made a good start in advising colleagues about planning their lessons, but she has not yet had sufficient opportunity to observe and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. There is a lack of guidance for teachers, particularly regarding the structure of a good lesson. Nonetheless, the co-ordinator has an action plan, which addresses a number of the current weaknesses.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages broadly meets the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus, and their achievements are good across the school. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be below expectations and progress was unsatisfactory. In the small number of lessons seen, the pupils' attitudes varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Generally, they were very interested, entered into discussions enthusiastically, were confident to share their ideas and beliefs, and respected each other's contributions.

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135. In addition to learning factual information about different religions, the school places an appropriate emphasis on pupils having opportunities to reflect and develop positive attitudes towards others, which enhances their spiritual and moral development. For example, infant pupils discussed 'giving and receiving' and many understood how such gifts as friendship, hope, kindness and fun can bring pleasure. In a good lesson, the pupils were very motivated to write their own idea of how they could give something to another person. Thoughtful suggestions included, 'I will give my mum a big kiss because I love her' and 'I will play with someone who is alone'. While they were learning about Judaism and the Shabbat, or Sabbath, Year 3 pupils discussed their feelings about having a day of complete rest. The work sample shows how their focus on Spring last term enabled them to think about new ideas or beginnings.

136. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of religions, and talk confidently about places of worship, festivals and key beliefs associated with the six major religions. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions other than Christianity was unsatisfactory. Valuable opportunities through the school to visit a Christian church, a Jewish synagogue, a Buddhist temple and an Islamic mosque all help the pupils to develop first-hand knowledge of different religious practices.

137. Of the four lessons seen, the quality of teaching was very good in two, good in one and satisfactory in one. Year 5 and 6 pupils learnt about ceremonies associated with birth in Islam. They understood how the head of the family whispers the call to prayer, or Adhan, in the newborn baby's ear. Very good teaching enabled the pupils to share ideas about ceremonies, differentiating them from celebrations. Pupils of differing religions told others about specific birth ceremonies in their faith, such as the Hindu naming ceremony, and Muslim pupils added detail to the information about the 'Whispering Adhan' ceremony. Pupils' past work shows frequent study of each religion, with a different focus, though there is less recorded work in Year 5 and 6. Pupils report that much of their work is through discussion.

138. A recently introduced, detailed scheme of work is proving very helpful for the less confident teachers and in ensuring coverage of the Agreed Syllabus. As at the time of the last inspection, there is no agreed format to assess pupils' attainment and progress. Recently acquired resources include posters, books and artefacts

related to each of the main religions, and these are already in use through the school. The subject has a new co-ordinator who is enthusiastic and is leading the development of the subject successfully.