

# INSPECTION REPORT

**ST CATHERINE'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Swindon

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 126432

Headteacher: Mrs B Martin

Reporting inspector: Mr J G Quinn  
15676

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 218154

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Davenwood Stratton St Margaret Swindon Wilts
Postcode:	SN2 7LL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs G O'Driscoll
Date of previous inspection:	8/11/1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15676	J G Quinn	Registered inspector	English Art and design Physical education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19322	J Bedawi	Lay inspector		How well does the school cares for its pupils? How well does the school works in partnership with parents?
13307	R I Hancock	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology History Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
21056	A J Harries	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music Foundation stage	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school situated to the north-east of Swindon. There are 185 boys and girls on the school roll who come from a mixture of privately owned and rented local authority housing in the immediate and wider area. The majority of pupils are Roman Catholic. The school is currently under-subscribed admitting fewer pupils to reception last year than was planned for. There are very few pupils from families of ethnic minorities and only one who speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is 22 per cent, which is similar to the national average. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average at 6.9 per cent.

Most children experience pre-school education at playgroups prior to entry to the school's reception class at the beginning of the school year in which their fifth birthday occurs. Attainment on entry varies considerably but is broadly similar to that normally found.

The school has experienced considerable difficulties with recruitment and teacher absence. It currently has a full complement of permanent teachers for the first time since March 2000.

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

This is an improving school, which achieves satisfactory standards for its pupils through purposeful leadership combined with sound teaching, the commitment of staff and governors and support of parents. It provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher, strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, provides very positive leadership.
- The school communicates very well with parents and pupils and solicits their views on aspects of the school's work.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and most give of their best in lessons.
- Pupils relate very well to one another and to the adults with whom they work.
- The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good.
- The school provides well for pupils' moral and social education.
- The attention paid to ensuring pupils' well-being is a strong feature of the school's work.
- There is a positive ethos and a strong commitment to succeed shared by staff and governors.

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

- The quality of teaching in a significant minority of lessons.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school and music at Key Stage 2.
- The length of the taught week at Key Stage 2 is shorter than the recommended minimum and available teaching time is not always used to best effect.
- The high level of frequent and irregular absence by a small minority of staff has a detrimental effect on the education of some pupils and on important areas of the school's work.
- The roles of curriculum co-ordinators are insufficiently developed.
- The use of assessment to plan the curriculum and to enable teachers to present pupils with work matched to their abilities in all subjects.

- The use of performance data and new technology to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils.
- The school's provision for cultural and multicultural education.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1999 when it was judged to have major shortcomings mainly to the way in which the school was led and managed, the organisation of the curriculum, provision for pupils under five, assessment of pupils' performance and progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. Since then it has made sound progress in these important areas and as a result no longer has serious weaknesses. The current headteacher was appointed in May 2000. She provides strong leadership, which is the most significant contributory factor to improvement in other areas. Science and ICT now enjoy greater status within the school's curriculum. Although more attention is paid to investigative work in science resulting in higher standards, standards in ICT have not improved. There have been significant improvements to provision for children under five. Greater attention has been paid to curriculum planning throughout the school and as a result pupils now acquire skills progressively in all subjects. Governors are more involved in the work of the school than they were. Although expectations of co-ordinators are clearly defined in job descriptions, the roles of co-ordinators are underdeveloped. The school has started to make use of assessment information to plan work, but it is at an early stage and so progress in this area has been limited.

By virtue of its strong leadership and the commitment of staff and governors, the school is well placed to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	C	D	E
Mathematics	A	D	C	D
Science	B	C	D	E

**Key**

Very high                    A\*

well above average        A

above average              B

average                        C

below average                D

well below average        E

Overall standards have improved over time at a rate similar to that found nationally. However, between 1998 and 2000 results declined to average in mathematics and below average in English and science where too few pupils attained the higher Level 5. Pupils performed less well than pupils in similar schools in mathematics and well below average in English and science. Results for 2001 indicate a clear improvement in all three subjects when compared to provisional national figures. Throughout much of 2000 pupils in Year 6 were not taught by their regular teacher and this had a bearing on test results.

Targets for pupils' attainment in 2001 were met in English but in mathematics they were set too high and consequently results fell short by ten per cent.





At Key Stage 1 results fell markedly in 2000 to below average in reading, well below average in mathematics and very low - within the lowest five per cent of all schools - in writing. In science, teachers assessed pupils as performing below average. The school attributes these results largely to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the group taking the tests, combined with the disruption caused by teacher absence and the employment of several temporary teachers. Results for 2001 show a considerable improvement in all subjects.

Inspection evidence shows standards to be above average in English at Key Stage 2 and average at Key Stage 1. In mathematics and science, standards are average at both key stages, but in ICT they are below average throughout the school. In all other subjects standards are similar to that found in most schools at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 except for music which is below average and the dance and gymnastic elements of physical education which are above average at Key Stage 2. There were too few lessons seen and too little available evidence for a judgement to be made on standards in geography, and art at both key stages and music at Key Stage 1.

Children in reception make sound progress in all aspects of their work and most are on course to achieve the nationally prescribed Early Learning Goals for pupils of their age, by the time they start in Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development standards are likely to be above average.

Pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support and as a result most make sound progress towards objectives set for them in their individual work programmes.

Through their positive responses to the mainly sound teaching they receive, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.

**PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes. They enjoy coming to school and most concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well in classrooms and around the school generally. They are courteous and helpful.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils co-operate well with one another in lessons. Most take responsibility readily and relationships between pupils and with adults are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory, but there is a high proportion of absence due to family holidays. Several pupils regularly arrive at school late each morning.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching overall is satisfactory but with a considerable range between very good and unsatisfactory for Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) and Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2). English is taught well at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Mathematics teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In reception, teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good.

Overall teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they are able to achieve in their work. Consequently the majority of pupils respond positively, apply themselves well in lessons and make sound progress in their learning.

All staff are conscientious and committed to providing pupils with a good education. Where teaching is most successful relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well through positive strategies of encouragement, praise and occasional censure. They use a range of teaching strategies, which meet the needs of all pupils effectively and secure a good pace to learning. Homework is used productively to extend pupils' learning, mainly in aspects of English and mathematics. Where teaching is less successful there are weaknesses in dealing with pupils' behaviour and the time available in lessons is not used efficiently. A few teachers lack confidence in teaching music and ICT. Teachers at Key Stages 1 and 2 do not regularly indicate in their planning how they evaluate previous learning or how they will check pupils' understanding in lessons.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school's curriculum includes all the required subjects, but a minority are taught for insufficient time at Key Stage 2 due to the fact that the length of the school week is less than that found in the majority of schools. This is an impediment to the school's intention to raise standards. Time available is not always put to best use.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Targets in their specialised work programmes are appropriate, teachers plan accordingly and make effective use of hardworking support staff to provide pupils with the help and guidance they need.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Moral and social development are strong features of the school's work but cultural development is unsatisfactory. There are too few planned opportunities for pupils to understand aspects of their own and other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a caring and supportive ethos. The attention paid to pupils' well being is a strong feature of the school's provision. The use that the school makes of information gathered about how well pupils are performing, in order to plan the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

The school works well with parents. Parents have very positive views of the school and welcome the improvements made by the current headteacher.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very positive direction to the school's work. She has worked industriously since her appointment in May 2000 to overcome a legacy of unsatisfactory leadership, to good effect. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher but the role of other key staff is underdeveloped.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. Many are new to the school since the last inspection. They have a satisfactory view of what the school needs to do to improve further and some visit the school regularly to become better informed about teaching and learning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher checks the quality of teaching throughout the school regularly and provides helpful guidance to staff on what works well and what aspects of their teaching they need to develop. Together with the deputy headteacher she evaluates pupils' performance in national tests but this is currently at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of human, material and financial resources, to support priorities identified for further improvement. It works hard to ensure that pupils receive best value in their education.

The uncertainty presented by the prolonged and erratic absences of a small minority of teachers is having a disruptive effect on the education of particular pupils and a detrimental effect on staff morale.

The school's accommodation is good and enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. There are colourful displays of pupils' work around the school which encourage pupils to do their best and provides a an environment conducive to learning.

There are insufficient resources for ICT, art, geography, history and music.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy coming to school.</li> <li>• Their children make good progress.</li> <li>• The behaviour of pupils is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The school is approachable and receptive to suggestions and complaints.</li> <li>• The school expects their children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school helps pupils to become</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework.</li> <li>• The information which they receive about how their children are progressing.</li> <li>• The way the school works with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities which the school provides.</li> </ul>

mature.	
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Inspection findings support the positive views of parents with the exception of teaching, which is satisfactory rather than good. Findings do not endorse all areas which parents wish to see improved. Homework is appropriate for the ages of the pupils and supports pupils' learning well. Opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress are more frequent than in many schools. The way in which the school works with parents is good. There is currently a limited range of extra-curricular activities, which the school plans to add to in the near future.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards in National Curriculum tests for the year 2000 fell significantly at Key Stage 1 and to a lesser extent at Key Stage 2. Throughout the year leading up to the tests the education of the two classes – Year 2 and Year 6, was disrupted, as both were taught for prolonged periods by temporary staff who were not familiar with the pupils. In addition, the Year 2 class included approximately a third of its pupils with special educational needs, which had an impact on test results.
2. At Key Stage 1 results were below average in reading, very low in writing and well below in mathematics in 2000. In all three subjects very few pupils attained the higher Levels 2a and 3 in national tests. Teacher assessments in science were also well below average with pupils' abilities in experimental and investigative work being very low. Results in 2001 were better and compared favourably with provisional national figures for the same year. Those for reading and writing were well above the national average and reflected standards in 1998 and 1999. Those for mathematics were not as good and were broadly in line with all schools.
3. At Key Stage 2, National Curriculum results have improved overall in line with the national trend over the past four years. However, results for 2000 were below average in English and science but similar to those in the majority of schools in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was below that found in most schools in English and science but broadly similar in mathematics. In comparison with schools having similar characteristics they were well below in English and science and below in mathematics. Compared to provisional national results for 2001, the school's results show an improvement to above average in English and well above in science, where the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was similar to all schools. In mathematics, results were in line with all schools. Although there was very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls in 2000, girls outperformed boys in the 2001 tests.
4. In 2001 statutory targets for Key Stage 2 pupils in literacy were appropriately challenging and were met, but the school fell short of its numeracy target by approximately ten per cent. The school has identified the need to improve standards in writing and has introduced strategies such as personal target setting for pupils, which are beginning to take effect. Further monitoring of numeracy lessons is planned in order to improve pupils' performance in mathematics.
5. Inspection evidence shows that children in reception build successfully on their broadly average standards when they enter the school. Consequently, they are on target to achieve above average standards in personal, social and emotional development. Standards are in line with expectations in all other areas of their learning by the time they enter Year 1 and as a result they are well prepared to begin the National Curriculum.
6. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory support in basic skills individually and in small groups. This enables them to access other areas of the curriculum more confidently and to be included in class activities at an appropriate

level. These pupils make sound progress towards targets identified in their individual work programmes.

7. Inspection findings show that in English pupils achieve average standards at age seven and above average at age 11. In mathematics and science, standards are average throughout. There was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made on geography and art throughout the school and music at Key Stage 1. In ICT, standards do not meet expectations at either key stage but pupils attain better than those in the majority of schools in the dance and gymnastic elements of the physical education curriculum at Key Stage 2. In all other subjects standards are broadly similar to those found nationally.
8. Standards in speaking and listening are average throughout the school. Children in reception develop conversational language effectively in their imaginative play. Most pupils throughout the school listen attentively to teachers and to one another in lessons. They enjoy stories when they are read expressively. Pupils discuss their work sensibly when given the chance to do so and contribute well in circle time where they discuss matters of concern. However, much that is done is incidental and there are too few planned opportunities for discussion as was the position at the time of the last inspection.
9. Standards in reading are average at seven and above average at 11. Pupils at both key stages read confidently and build successfully upon the interest in books and simple word and phrase recognition that are established in reception. As pupils progress through Key Stage 1 they make sound progress in acquiring word and sentence recognition and have a good understanding of letter sounds which enables them to work out the pronunciation of unfamiliar words. By the end of the key stage many read fluently and at an appropriate level. They use a variety of strategies to establish the meaning of unusual words and phrases. By the age of 11 pupils have built on previous skills well. They read a variety of texts, discuss authors and favourite books and can use reference books effectively to find information.
10. Standards in writing are average at age seven and above average at 11. In reception, children make sound progress in early writing skills. They copy letters to write about events and put simple printed sentences in order. The quality of written work is better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1 because opportunities offered are more stimulating and encourage pupils to explore the use of language for effect. Although pupils at Key Stage 1 master the technical aspects of writing, such as handwriting, simple grammar and spelling at an appropriate level, the range of opportunities for them to use these skills are limited and comprise mainly of recounting recent events at home and at school. At Key Stage 2 pupils are given a variety of opportunities to write for a range of purposes thereby building on the skills that have been introduced in reception and at Key Stage 1. They write imaginatively, choosing words and expressions carefully to bring colour to their writing. By the end of the key stage pupils have made good progress. They write with a clear sense of audience, a good understanding of grammatical form, punctuation and spelling and are beginning to organise their work into paragraphs. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills to support work in other subjects such as, science, design and technology, history and religious education.
11. Children are introduced to mathematics soon after entering reception. They make sound progress in working with numbers. Children enjoy taking part in number songs and rhymes. Some can count objects up to ten and several to 15. They

measure the length of items using cubes and some add together accurately, single digit figures found on a dice. Pupils build on skills they have learnt satisfactorily as they pass through Key Stage 1. They learn to measure accurately in metres and centimetres but their ability to estimate is underdeveloped, as is their capacity to use their skills in different settings. Pupils continue to make sound progress at Key Stage 2. Some make good progress as a result of good teaching where tasks are well-matched to pupils' abilities. The skills of mental computation are developed well throughout Years 3 and 4 and by the age of 11, pupils calculate by doubling and halving decimals. They work out the percentage of a price, read five and six digit figures accurately and use long multiplication and division in their calculations. Although the use that pupils make of their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum is limited, several use computers well to create bar graphs and pie charts. In other areas of mathematics, pupils measure angles accurately using a protractor and work on rotating the position of geometric shapes.

12. In science, pupils build on their skills successfully throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and make satisfactory progress. Investigative and experimental science, which were reported to be weak at the time of last inspection, are now well integrated into the curriculum and this contributes positively to pupils' progress in the subject. For example, Year 2 pupils experiment to find the different types and sources of sound. Also pupils in Year 6 devised a controlled test to discover which materials were the best insulators. They could predict which would be most suitable and were able to record findings using their own methods.
13. Standards in physical education are above average in dance and gymnastics at Key Stage 2 largely due to the challenging and stimulating teaching pupils receive in these lessons combined with the very good attitudes of the pupils to their learning. In the most effective lessons pupils respond very well to the tasks that are set. They work very productively individually and within groups to develop sophisticated sequences, incorporating well co-ordinated movements of high quality.
14. Information and communication technology is below expectations because pupils have insufficient time or opportunity to develop and refine their skills on computers. In response to the criticism in the last report the profile of the subject has been raised and it now enjoys a discrete place on weekly timetables of each class. This is a positive development, as has been the purchase of new computers. Until recently computers were old and unreliable and this was a major impediment to pupils' progress. However, there are still too few computers and insufficient planned time for pupils to practise the skills that have been introduced in lessons. Although pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are able to produce instructions for preparing breakfast, for example, they are not sufficiently confident to amend their work or to share ideas in different forms. Pupils' keyboard skills are underdeveloped across the school and for many the entering of information is a laborious process. Towards the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils still lack confidence in cutting, amending and adapting their work and lack appropriate skills in many areas due to the fact that the subject has been neglected until the appointment of the current headteacher.
15. Standards in music are below average at Key Stage 2 because there are too few resources and several staff lack the confidence and subject knowledge to develop pupils' musical abilities. Consequently the progress that pupils make in their learning is unsatisfactory. Younger pupils improvise melodic and rhythmic pieces but find difficulty matching what they play to what they hear. Later in the key stage, pupils



sing traditional songs but are not able to improve their diction, phrasing or musical expression. They appraise pieces of music but not always for their musical content.

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

16. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils have good attitudes to learning. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school. Most pupils are willing to learn, engage themselves keenly on tasks, sustain their interest well, and remain attentive during classes and assemblies. Pupils work effectively, both on their own, as in independent literacy tasks, and in paired and group activities such as when constructing in design and technology and in physical education. They share their ideas, listen to what others have to say, and their contributions to discussions are thoughtful. All groups of pupils, whatever their gender, ethnic background or attainment level are fully included in lessons and in the life of the school. Pupils' positive attitudes enhance their learning well.
17. Inspection evidence supports the view of parents that behaviour is good, as it was at the time of the previous inspection. With the exception of a small number of younger pupils, the atmosphere in lessons is calm, orderly and purposeful. In and about the school, pupils are friendly and caring and lunch is a well-mannered and pleasant time. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and look after their school, for example, by placing their 'snack' packets in the bins provided at playtime. Behaviour in assemblies is particularly good and this adds to the reverence of the occasions. There are no signs of abuse, harassment or aggression and pupils play happily together on the playground. There were no exclusions in the last school year and this is a significant improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection.
18. Pupils' personal development is good. They willingly accept responsibility; for example, in the form of the Year 6 supervisory roles as monitors. Older pupils support the younger children, particularly when they first start school. However, they do not often organise and plan their own work and this was also reported in the last inspection. Some pupils act on their own initiative, for example, a Year 6 pupil brought a video about a summer school she had attended to 'circle time', but overall, pupils show limited initiative. Pupils take obvious satisfaction when their individual or collective efforts and achievements are recognised by incentives such as certificates, stickers or marbles in the jar.
19. Pupils relate very well to each other and to adults and this, as at the time of the last inspection, is a strength of the school. They collaborate effectively when required; for example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, some pupils folded shapes in pairs, finding more and more lines of symmetry in turn. Pupils respect the differences between them and the few pupils from ethnic minority families enjoy friendships and feel part of the same school family. All pupils are able to work in an atmosphere completely free from oppressive behaviour of any kind.
20. Attendance is satisfactory. However, parents take a large number of holidays during term time. This is preventing the school from improving its attendance further. There is also occasional absence for unnecessary reasons. Several pupils regularly arrive late, missing important parts of lessons. Registers are marked promptly.

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

21. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection and pupils make sound progress in their learning as a result. In approximately 90 per cent of lessons, teaching was satisfactory or better and of this 15 per cent was very good. Whereas the proportion of very good teaching is more than it was previously, there is also more unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is currently similar to Key Stage 2 with approximately the same proportions of very good and unsatisfactory practice. As when the school was last inspected, variations are most noticeable between classes rather than across subjects.
22. Teaching in the reception class was consistently satisfactory and occasionally good. This is an improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection when there was some unsatisfactory teaching. Staff plan and prepare the classroom well to provide stimulating and challenging activities which engage the interest of children and promote sound learning.
23. The teaching of literacy is good throughout the school. Numeracy is well taught at Key Stage 2 and at Key Stage 1 teaching is satisfactory. Most teachers have a clear understanding of the national strategies for these areas and prepare lessons accordingly.
24. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. They plan strategies to ensure that boys are more motivated in their learning following the poorer performance of boys at Key Stage 2 in the most recent national tests. In classes where a particular gender group is in a significant majority - as in Years 2 and 4 - teachers are sufficiently vigilant to ensure that those pupils in the minority take a full and active part in lessons.
25. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants in small groups working outside the classrooms. However, teachers do not always take sufficient interest in the work of these pupils during lesson time, which gives a negative message to pupils about the importance of what they are doing. Teaching assistants are conscientious and committed. Several are well established in the school and know the pupils and their families well.
26. Most teachers have changed since the school was last inspected. Some are very recently appointed, or are new to the age groups they teach. A small minority of these teachers have yet to come to terms with their classes and consequently they are unsure of what they might reasonably expect of pupils' behaviour and standards of work.
27. A common feature of the most successful lessons is the high expectations that teachers have of pupils' understanding and standards of pupils' behaviour and co-operation. This is clearly reflected in the manner in which teachers speak to pupils in lessons, the guidance that they provide and in the terminology they use to explain particular points. Pupils respond well to these expectations, they are inclined to give of their best and the quality of their learning is productive as a result. This was noticeable in science lessons in Year 3 and 4, for example, on the parts of a flower and the role of seeds in the life of a plant. The teachers used correct nomenclature such as 'stamen' and 'carpal' and scientific vocabulary such as 'dispersal' and 'germinate' where appropriate, confident that pupils would understand the terms. From pupils' responses it was clear that they had done so. In physical education lessons in Years 4 and 6, the expectations of pupils' behaviour were high.

Consequently pupils co-operated sensibly in small groups to create sequences of inter-related movements of high quality. Teachers moved between the groups, suggesting and guiding pupils to improve further the quality of what they were doing. Pupils thought creatively about their responses and as a result made significant progress in their learning.

28. The positive way in which teachers manage the behaviour of pupils is apparent in almost all lessons but weaker behaviour management is also a feature of unsatisfactory teaching in a small minority. Where it is particularly successful teachers secure good behaviour with minimum effort. They employ an appropriate balance of praise, encouragement and occasional censure. Pupils understand what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and respond accordingly. Consequently teachers are able to concentrate fully on the content of that which they are teaching rather than maintaining discipline, and the quality of pupils' learning benefits significantly as a result. In a very small number of lessons where teachers adopt a more negative approach based on inappropriate expectations, pupils do not give of their best, are not praised sufficiently and progress is limited.
29. Overall teachers use a range of teaching strategies well to engage the interest of pupils and to ensure that learning is most productive. In reception, for example, the teacher organised an extensive range of activities effectively to develop children's physical development in the outdoor play area. Pupils responded enthusiastically to the 'paint the patio' activity and worked independently, concentrating well. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to contribute as a class and to work in small groups and individually as appropriate. Some are imaginative in employing methods to enliven teaching and capture the interest of pupils from the outset. In a literacy lesson in Year 2, for example, the temporary teacher engaged the attention of pupils well by introducing a fluffy toy dog as the focus for sequencing instructions on how to care for a pet. Similarly in Year 4, the teacher, challenged pupils to try to beat the three adults in the classroom in a quiz related to double consonants and vowels at the beginning of a literacy lesson. Pupils rose well to the task and responded enthusiastically to the class teacher's gentle chiding. Many were keen to take a turn, confident in the fact that their efforts were valued. This set a very good tone for the remainder of the lesson and ensured very good progress for pupils.
30. The quality of teachers' explanations in many lessons is clear and questioning is sufficiently incisive to ensure that pupils build on their understanding sequentially. These were features of several literacy lessons throughout the school and were particularly effective where teachers engaged pupils fully. For example, in a Year 3 poetry lesson the teacher's careful phrasing of questions related to verbs and adjectives developed pupils' understanding well and encouraged them to think more imaginatively when they subsequently wrote their own poems. Similarly in a very good numeracy lesson on problem solving in Year 6 the class teacher led pupils very skilfully through increasingly difficult questions which developed their understanding well. Where teachers' explanations are insufficiently clear, pupils do not understand what is expected of them and so do not make sufficient gains in understanding.
31. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory in the majority of lessons. Where it is particularly good teachers draw on their own particular interest and expertise well to present lessons confidently to pupils. For example, in a very productive art lesson in Year 1, the teacher encouraged pupils to look closely at self portraits of famous artists prior to beginning colour-mixing, to paint their own portraits, the outline of

which they produced in chalk. Pupils were fully engaged and interested and offered observations such as *'it looks like shadows'* in connection with a portrait by Francis Bacon. Where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, as in music in Year 5 and ICT in Year 6, teachers do not have sufficient understanding to present work confidently to pupils and need prompt sheets in order to take the lesson forward.

32. Although teachers' planning is generally satisfactory, too few include assessment opportunities in their planning of individual lessons, to check whether learning objectives have been met and to plan subsequent work matched to the different abilities of pupils. On the otherhand, the setting of personal targets for pupils in literacy is an effective strategy, which not only encourages pupils to try harder but also gives them a better understanding of their learning. The most successful planning indicates work well matched to the different abilities of pupils as in most literacy and numeracy lessons. Where planning is unsatisfactory work does not match the needs of the pupils; lesson objectives lack clarity, pupils are unsure about what they have to do, the pace is slow and as a result pupils do not make the progress that they should.
33. Good use is made of teaching time, support staff and resources in reception. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 support staff and resources are used satisfactorily but lessons do not always begin punctually and important teaching time is wasted. Also in some physical education lessons, pupils sit for too long awaiting their turn on large apparatus; time is again not used to best effect and pupils do not make sufficient progress. Occasionally in ICT lessons there is too little time available for all pupils to be fully involved in demonstrations, they lose interest and do not make the gains in their learning that they should.

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

34. The provision of the curriculum has significantly improved since the appointment of the new headteacher and good progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses identified in the last inspection.
35. Similar improvements have also been made in planning an appropriate curriculum for pupils under five and consequently this area is no longer an area of serious concern. The curriculum for children in reception is clearly based on the nationally recommended areas of learning. Staff plan activities that will lead children towards achieving the Early Learning Goals and in so doing, prepare them for the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1.
36. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 includes all relevant subjects of the National Curriculum. However, the length of the taught week at Key Stage 2 falls short of that in most other primary schools across the country. Provision in science has significantly improved since the last inspection and new resources have been purchased to support pupils' learning in ICT. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. A large proportion of time has been allocated appropriately to the teaching of literacy and numeracy to help raise standards but insufficient time is allocated to develop pupils' skills in ICT, where standards are below those expected nationally. The timetable is not always planned effectively and time is not used efficiently in a few lessons, which last too long. As a consequence many pupils find difficulty maintaining their concentration, which slows the pace of their learning.

37. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and the school works hard to ensure that all pupils are included fully in the school's curriculum. Individual work programmes for pupils with special educational needs contain clear targets for improvement which are used satisfactorily by teaching and support staff to provide pupils with the particular help they need.
38. Curricular planning has improved since the last inspection and the school has adopted national guidance and strategies for all subjects to help pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a logical sequence. However, many of these schemes are at too early a stage of development to have a significant impact on raising standards and work is not always matched to the abilities of pupils.
39. Appropriate provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school takes good care of its pupils, including those with special educational needs, where they are encouraged to work well together in class and play amicably in the playground. Although there are no policies for sex education and drug misuse, these areas are taught appropriately as part of the science programme, with the help of outside visitors such as the school nurse. The introduction of *Circle Time* within the curriculum provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to discuss social and moral areas of concern. The school curriculum is enriched by a few visits to places of interest related to topics studied such as to Sevington near Chippenham where pupils experienced a Victorian school day. However, the provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory. The headteacher has identified this as an area to develop to support certain areas of the curriculum.

*Links with the community and partner institutions:*

40. The school has satisfactory links with the community and the parish it serves. There are close ties with the church. The parish priest is a member of the governing body and provides ongoing personal and spiritual support for the school. Catholic parents are encouraged to take their children to First Communion classes in the church hall. The pupils make Christmas cards for elderly members of the community.
41. There are many playgroups within the wide area served by the school. It is logistically very difficult to develop links with them all. One playgroup does visits in the term before children start in reception. There are satisfactory links with the main receiving secondary school and other secondary schools, for example, sixth form pupils enjoy work experience at St Catherine's. The headteacher is particularly keen to re-establish links with teacher training institutions in order to involve the school in teacher training.
42. Year 6 pupils now have an annual residential visit to the Isle of Wight and the cycling proficiency and *Junior Citizen* schemes continue to guide pupils in personal safety and in their responsibility to the community.
43. There is a link through the auspices of a Catholic charity with a village in India. The school community regularly arranges fundraising such as '*Bad Hair Days*' to contribute towards building and equipping a health clinic for the village and to buying a buffalo which will provide milk for villagers and help with ploughing. This allows pupils a brief glimpse of third world life. The headteacher intends to use this Indian link for future work in geography. Although football and netball teams are involved in the local leagues, pupils do not benefit from visits or visitors to broaden

their cultural and multicultural experiences sufficiently. The school is aware that these aspects are underrepresented.

*Provision for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects:*

44. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. This was the case at the time of the last inspection. The school operates as a caring community with a Christian ethos and aims to provide experiences that encourage pupils to act responsibly and to value each other's contributions.
45. Spiritual development is satisfactorily promoted through the school's strong Christian ethos, which is evident in its morning assemblies and in its connections with the local church. Assemblies pose thought-provoking questions, for example on the theme of *'faith'*. They are held in a calm, quiet atmosphere, surrounded by displays on Biblical themes. Occasionally, too little time is allowed for pupils to reflect on the assembly theme in relation to their own experiences. Special bookmarks celebrate the birth of a baby brother or sister, which helps pupils to think about their place in the world. In lesson times most teachers respect the value and dignity of each child in the way they value and answer their questions.
46. The school's ethos and expectations contribute well to the development of pupils' strong moral values. This has improved since the last inspection. Values such as honesty and fairness are clearly reflected in *Circle Time* and in teachers' everyday dealings with pupils. Any type of good deed or work effort is rewarded with an entry in the 'gold book' and these examples of upholding the school's moral code are shared with all pupils on a weekly basis. Staff ensure that, whenever pupils are reprimanded, they understand why. Pupils' sense of right and wrong is further developed through planned opportunities for discussing ethical matters such as returning found property to its rightful owner. The pupils themselves feel that these opportunities are helping them to become better people.
47. Provision for social development has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The school constantly encourages pupils to have due regard for each other as they work and play together. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities such as keeping areas of their classroom tidy or, for older pupils, ensuring that everyone comes in from playtime calmly. Pupils develop an understanding of living in different communities through their fundraising activity for a village in India. Social awareness is further enhanced through residential trips to the Isle of Wight, where pupils learn to share and co-operate with each other.
48. Pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. The school recognises this and plans to introduce a cultural activity day with visiting artists and poets. Key Stage 1 pupils perform a nativity play each year and Key Stage 2 pupils present summer concerts. At other times of the year there is insufficient cultural activity in the school generally and throughout the curriculum. Consequently pupils have too little understanding of their own and other cultures or of the multicultural nature of the society in which they live. Some parents express concern that musical opportunities in the school are limited. Inspection evidence supports this view.

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

49. The staff care for pupils well and seek to enhance pupils' learning within a supportive and positive environment where very good relationships prevail. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are now satisfactory, an improvement since the last inspection. However, the use of information gained to refine curriculum planning and the monitoring of pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. The monitoring of behaviour is good and procedures for preventing bullying and oppressive behaviour are very effective.
50. Insufficient attention had been given, since the previous inspection, to developing procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress until the appointment of the new headteacher last year. Since that time a new assessment co-ordinator has been appointed and the school has identified that the assessment policy needs to be rewritten to clearly identify issues to be addressed. New procedures have successfully been introduced for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics, which have recently been extended to include science. These are carefully linked to National Curriculum levels where targets have been set for groups of pupils and for individuals in English. The school has started to analyse and make good use of previous test information to modify teaching in English by identifying the need to raise writing standards throughout the school. However, the school has not effectively identified how best to use the national tests of seven and 11 or the optional tests information to target individual pupils' learning in many curriculum areas. The co-ordinator knows that insufficient attention is given to monitoring and moderating assessment in most subjects and intends to introduce new assessment procedures later this year. Assessment is currently underused as a tool for planning pupils' work. It is therefore difficult to identify what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects. This can lead to inappropriate tasks set for individuals and consequently have a negative impact on their learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and targets to help pupils improve are rarely identified.
51. The monitoring of attendance is satisfactory. Registers are marked promptly and properly. The concern raised in the last report about recording authorised and unauthorised absence remains, but is not the school's fault because registers have no space to distinguish between the two. The main factor impeding improvement in attendance is the high number of holidays taken in term time. The school uses holiday permission forms, but many parents choose to ignore this system and either give very short notice or only inform the school on return. The headteacher is only allowed to grant term time holidays in 'exceptional circumstances'. A considerable number of parents keep their children off school for unnecessary reasons, for example, parents feeling unwell, or visiting relatives. The school is also concerned about punctuality. A small number, particularly older pupils, are regularly late, with others being late occasionally. This means that vital parts of literacy and numeracy lessons are missed. The school maintains a late book, but needs to ensure that it is kept up to date. Too many parents are not recognising the importance of sustained attendance and punctuality on pupils' progress, nor are they supporting the school in its efforts to improve attendance.
52. The school monitors pupils' behaviour well and the attention paid to the prevention of bullying or other thoughtless behaviour is very good. The majority of staff have a relaxed yet firm manner with the pupils ensuring that they remember to behave well at all times and treat others with respect. The behaviour policy offers good guidance and pupils are aware of the school rules. The school is supportive of

pupils who find difficulty managing their behaviour and involves parents where appropriate. Targets for behaviour and academic performance are discussed as part of the weekly *circle time* sessions. The vast majority of pupils respond very well to these effective strategies. For the few who do not, the school works effectively with specialist assistance from the local authority to provide behaviour plans, the effect of which are closely monitored. The school is very clear that any bullying, racism or anti-social behaviour is not tolerated. There is no racist incident book because there have been no incidents and the headteacher believes that racism would be uncharacteristic of the school's pupils. Pupils, including the very small number from ethnic minorities, relate well together. Their views support this, as reflected in a pupil questionnaire where a pupil commented '*We will play with everyone because colour doesn't matter*'.

53. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Staff use their generally very good relationships with pupils to provide good guidance that raises pupils' self-esteem and demonstrates how to relate to and respect others. The personal, social and health education policy is in draft form and has not been shared with staff. *Circle time* discussions not only build pupils' confidence by enabling them to discuss matters that concern them, but also provides important opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. Year 6 pupils enjoy this and feel that they are becoming more mature as a result. The newly introduced residential visit promotes Year 6 pupils' social development very well. Parents are particularly pleased with this improvement. A significant strength is the use of pupil questionnaires so that the school can understand and take account of pupils' views, taking action quickly to respond to any clear concerns. Pupils of all ages comment very positively on their school and most areas of school life; they are happy and feel that staff are approachable.
54. Arrangements for child protection are good. There is a trained designated person who offers good quality guidance to staff. The school does not have its own policy but follows local authority guidelines. Any sensitive records are kept separately. The school is able to seek informal advice from outside agencies if it is needed.
55. The management of health and safety is satisfactory. However, not all records of safety equipment and procedures are completed, as required by the school policy. The headteacher was informed of a few health and safety issues noted during inspection.

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

56. The school enjoys a positive relationship with its parents, who have very good views of the school. They are particularly happy about the impact that the headteacher has had since her arrival just over a year ago. They feel that many areas of school life have improved.
57. The school welcomes parents warmly and there is an '*open door*' policy. A small number of parents help in class but many more are involved in the school association. They are currently raising funds to improve the school library. Events such as the recent visit to '*Cadbury World*' and discos are enabling the school to move more quickly towards its target of establishing a permanent library.
58. The quality of information offered to parents is good. Communication with parents is a very significant strength and has improved since the last inspection. There are regular newsletters about school life and parish events. Parents receive good



information about the work their children do and about their personal and academic targets. There are regular parents' evenings and staff can be contacted informally at other times, such as the end of the day. Pupils' reports are satisfactory. Most reports contain targets for literacy and for numeracy; there are particularly clear targets for children in the foundation years. In other years there is some variability in quality; some are relevant and specific, others too general, for instance, '*continue to be motivated in lessons*'. The summaries of pupils' personal development on reports are detailed and reflect that teachers know their pupils well.

59. The school gives parental opinion and the process of communication and consultation a high priority. The school surveyed the opinions of parents by sending out a questionnaire. This met with a particularly good response from parents. Most expressed very positive views about recent improvements, including standards, communication, quality of respect shown to pupils and the happiness of their children. Comments like '*the headteacher has rallied the school*' are common. Where there are concerns, for example, about physical education resources or the impact of teachers' absence on pupils' learning, action has already been taken or is being carefully considered. The quality of communication generated by the questionnaire and the school's response to issues raised has been very productive in establishing a closer partnership between home and school.
60. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning is satisfactory. Parents are invited to curriculum meetings and parents of pupils with special educational needs are now involved in their reviews. A homework policy has been introduced mainly focusing on literacy and numeracy and pupils take reading books home. Junior pupils often write reviews of the books they have read in their reading diaries. However, the lack of access to computers in school, together with the currently inconvenient position of the library, hinders pupils' skills and opportunities for research and independent learning. This is particularly crucial for the oldest pupils preparing for secondary school.

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

61. The school is well led and managed, which is an improvement on the position at the time of the last inspection when management was reported to be unsatisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher, appointed since the last inspection, is very good and is a major contributory factor to improvement in other areas. With the strong support of the deputy headteacher, governors and staff she has worked energetically to redress the problems identified in the previous report. Consequently, sufficient progress has been made on all the issues raised, for the school no longer to have areas of serious weakness.
62. The headteacher provides positive educational direction. She has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows what the school must do to improve further. She has consulted parents and pupils through questionnaires to gain their perceptions of how well the school meets their needs; improvements to homework and extra-curricular clubs suggest that the school is responsive to suggestions. Shortly after her appointment the headteacher communicated to every family her vision for the future of the school in a document - '*The Future of St Catherine's*' - which she presented at a meeting of parents and governors in July 2000. This was translated into a mission statement and aims for the school to which all subscribe and which are clearly reflected in the school's work.

63. The headteacher works closely with the deputy headteacher who plays a significant part in the leadership of the school, but the roles of other key staff are underdeveloped. Due to absence through illness the co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 and reception has not been able to play a sufficiently strong part in the school's development. There are co-ordinators for all subjects and other important aspects of the school's work. Although many are new to the school or to their roles most are keen to take on additional responsibilities and some have a clear view of how they wish to develop their subjects. They have sufficiently detailed job descriptions which outline what they are expected to do and they are building up diaries with useful information regarding resources and in-service training. However, their role in monitoring standards is limited and they have no time available to check how well their subjects are taught, in order that they might direct their support to where it is most needed. The school has already started to develop the subject responsibilities of co-ordinators.
64. The headteacher fulfils the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator as an interim measure until someone more suitable can be found. Given the many demands upon her time and the extent of her other duties, she performs the role satisfactorily.
65. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well, which is an improvement on the position at the last inspection. Many governors are new since the school was last inspected and most have a particular expertise or area of interest upon which the governing body can draw. As a body, they have been made more aware of their responsibilities with the help of the local authority. Consequently they have been instrumental in deciding priorities for the school development plan in conjunction with the headteacher and are more proactive in setting the general direction for the school than they were. Several governors visit the school regularly during the school day to see lessons in action and keep a record of their observations. Most statutory responsibilities are met apart from certain information in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, which is missing. The prospectus lacks the following:
- rates of pupil absence;
  - the place of religious education within the basic curriculum;
  - a summary of the charging policy for school activities;
  - special arrangements for pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need.

The governors' annual report to parents for 2000 omits the following statutory information:

- information about the next election of parent governor;
  - rates of pupils' authorised and unauthorised absence;
  - arrangements for admission and facilities for pupils with disabilities.
66. The way in which the school evaluates how well it is doing is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together on evaluating pupils' performance in national tests and on monitoring and supporting teaching. Their analysis of test results has revealed the need to improve pupils' writing and mathematics. The school has worked hard at this and there is evidence that strategies such as personal target setting in writing are beginning to have a positive effect. The school has also raised the motivation of boys as an issue, reflected in lower performance than girls in the most recent national tests. They have attempted to remedy this through inclusive strategies such as purchasing books with specific appeal that will help boys to become more positive about reading. Analysis is at an

early stage of implementation, however, and the school does not make full use of the range of national data and new technology available, to compare the attainment of particular groups of pupils as they progress through the school.

67. The headteacher monitors teaching regularly and provides staff with feedback on what works well and how they can improve their lessons. This has been largely effective. Where there are still shortcomings, the school has identified these and a system of support has been introduced with a view to remedying weaknesses.
68. The school makes satisfactory use of its resources including its finances. Grants allocated for particular purposes have been used appropriately such as that for special educational needs and for improving the effectiveness of the school. The plan for school improvement contains a number of suitable targets but not all costed closely enough against success criteria, to enable governors to measure the effectiveness of major spending decisions. For example, there has been considerable investment in computers but there is no indication of how the school is monitoring the impact of this on pupils' standards in ICT.
69. Although the latest auditors' report is very recent and has only just been received in school, many of the recommendations are already being implemented.
70. The extent to which the school seeks to provide best value is satisfactory. The governors and headteacher are not complacent. They challenge themselves to improve the school's provision by consulting parents and pupils and, where appropriate, acting upon the responses. They are beginning to compare the standards pupils achieve with all schools nationally and with similar schools in order to improve pupils' performance in national tests. In purchasing major items for the school such as computers and improvements to the premises, they explore different sources to get best value.
71. Taking into consideration the pupils' attainment when they begin in reception, the predominantly sound quality of education they receive and the standards they attain when they leave at age 11, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

*Staffing:*

72. Most of the teaching staff, including the headteacher have been appointed since the previous inspection. Together they are beginning to make a positive impact on raising standards throughout the school. The school experiences considerable difficulty in recruiting staff but currently has sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The uncertainty presented by the irregular and prolonged absence of a minority of staff disrupts the education of particular pupils and this has a negative effect on their progress and on staff morale. The school has identified priorities for future training such as in ICT to improve teachers' subject knowledge and confidence. Most teachers have at least one additional responsibility over and above their classroom duties. The professional development of staff is linked appropriately to the school improvement plan and personal needs. Since the last inspection new procedures have been introduced to monitor the performance of teaching staff, as in all schools nationally, but there is no induction policy to help new staff become acquainted with procedures and routines. The majority of education support staff have received training and work in effective partnership with teachers. They are well deployed, highly valued and make a positive impact to raising standards particularly in literacy

and numeracy for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. The administrative officer is efficient and the unobtrusive way in which she carries out her responsibilities supports the school's main functions of teaching and learning well.

*Accommodation:*

73. The school's accommodation is good overall, which enables the curriculum to be taught effectively. Classrooms are spacious and airy with good class displays of pupils' work and very effective murals on internal and external walls. Pupils particularly like the staircase murals of characters from *Harry Potter* stories and *Roald Dahl* books. There is now a separate Foundation Stage play area with further plans for development; this is an improvement since the last inspection. The temporary library area in the hall is due to be expanded and permanently re-housed. There is no wheelchair access to the top floor. Outside areas are large with good hard surface and grassed areas, including a field. The separate pond area is to be renovated soon. The planting of trees and shrubs is developing into a good environmental 'wild' area on two sides of the school field. The school is kept very clean and tidy by a caretaker and a team of cleaners.

*Resources:*

74. As at the time of the last inspection, there are inadequacies in some of the school's resources, which impede pupils' learning in these subjects. Although there has been considerable recent expenditure on computers, there are still too few modern machines and insufficient software. Expendable art materials are limited and the school has few examples of famous artworks, which significantly restricts pupils' cultural development. Resources for history and geography are also inadequate. There are too few musical instruments and these are difficult to access, particularly for the upstairs classrooms.
75. The library is better stocked than when previously inspected and together with books in classrooms and corridors, there are now enough books for the number of pupils on roll. However, access to the library is restricted when the hall is in use. Science and design and technology resources have also been brought up to a satisfactory level. Resources for physical education and equipment for the children in the Foundation Stage have improved considerably and are now good.

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

76. The governors, headteacher and staff should address the following:
- Raise standards in ICT, throughout the school and music at Key Stage 2 by improving resources, raising staff confidence and ensuring that sufficient time is devoted to the teaching of ICT skills in connection with other subjects. (see paragraphs 14, 15, 31, 74, 75, 132-136, 137-140)
  - Improve the quality of teaching where it is unsatisfactory. (see paragraphs 21, 28, 30-33)
  - Work closely with the local authority to minimise the detrimental effects to pupils' education of prolonged staff absence. (see paragraph 72)

- Review the length of the taught week at Key Stage 2 in the light of the recommended minimum and improve the organisation of weekly timetables to ensure that the best use is made of teaching time available. *(see paragraph 36)*
- Build on the positive steps taken so far to develop further:
  - a) the role of curriculum co-ordinators in order that they play a full part in the management and leadership of their subjects. *(see paragraphs 63)*
  - b) the use of assessment to plan the curriculum and to enable staff to provide tasks which are more closely matched to pupils' needs in all subjects. *(see paragraph 50)*
  - c) the use of national data and new technology available, to track the performance of particular groups of pupils as they pass through the school. *(see paragraph 66)*
- Raise pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness across the curriculum. *(see paragraph 48)*

**In addition, the governing body should consider the following less important issues for inclusion in the action plan.**

- Improve resources for art, geography and history. *(see paragraphs 74 and 75)*
- Ensure that all statutory information is provided in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents and the school prospectus. *(see paragraph 65)*
- Build on current arrangements to extend the range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils. *(see paragraph 39)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	14	20	5	0	0
Percentage	0	15	30	44	10	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents approximately two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	185
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13
Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	9	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	7	14
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (97)	50 (97)	82 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	12
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (97)	82 (97)	71 (97)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	13	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	11	12	12
	Total	24	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (79)	78 (68)	81 (79)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	14
	Girls	13	13	12
	Total	27	28	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (76)	88 (68)	81 (79)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	179
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.1
Average class size	27.1

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	84

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	390,752
Total expenditure	406,086
Expenditure per pupil	2,121
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,521

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	185
Number of questionnaires returned	63

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	27	6	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	37	54	3	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	2	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	67	11	3	8
The teaching is good.	27	63	2	2	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	19	44	24	5	8
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	41	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	52	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	24	49	19	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	41	43	6	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	54	2	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	32	40	13	8

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

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

77. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies considerably but is about average overall. Most children attend a playgroup before they start school. They begin school at the beginning of the school year in which they become five, although the youngest ones attend part time for the first term.
78. All children follow a broad and balanced curriculum based on the Early Learning Goals related to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical and creative development. Most children are on course to achieve above-average standards in their personal, social and emotional development and the expected standards in all of the areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. This is an improvement since the last inspection when children were judged to be below the expected standard in their knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
79. There has been considerable improvement in the organisation of the curriculum since the last inspection. Reception staff now plan activities that steer children towards the national Early Learning Goals and as a result, children make better progress in much of their learning. Recently introduced systems for assessing each child's progress through the reception year are beginning to help staff plan activities that are increasingly challenging.
80. Good home school links have been established and parents are consulted about how they can support their children's learning. Children take home books every day and this is contributing significantly to their progress in reading.

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

81. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and this is due to the importance reception staff place on learning to work and play together happily. Children behave well and cooperate with one another in a variety of activities such as role play, taking turns in games and sharing resources. They serve and eat their morning snack in a calm and orderly way and this makes a strong contribution to the development of their relationships with the other children and with adults. Children recognise daily routines and show their developing independence when entering the room in the morning, putting their book bags in the boxes provided and finding their name label to put on the board as a record of attendance. They take responsibility well, washing hands and dressing themselves at break times and for physical education. Children work well independently, for example where they manipulate jigsaw puzzles, and co-operate with others as when using building bricks or the computer.
82. Teaching and provision for personal and social development are good. Members of staff are very patient and set a good example to the children, showing a great deal of care and concern for them. They use praise and encouragement to good effect.

## Communication, language and literacy

83. Children make sound progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. Most children listen attentively as a class group; for example, to a television programme or a story. Some converse with each other meaningfully; for example, one child at the water tray asked another *“Shall we put this wheel on the top?”* Another replied *“No, Spider Man might knock it down.”* Most children are confident when answering questions in class or giving examples of things that begin with a particular letter. Children listen to instructions well, and carry them out as asked.
84. Children make satisfactory progress in the early stages of reading. They enjoy using books and know that the printed words have meaning. Several read texts that are familiar to them, making good use of the pictures as prompts. A few can already sound out the letters of words phonetically. Not many children yet understand that some books are useful for finding out information.
85. Children make sound progress with early writing skills. They trace and copy letters to write about events and put printed sentences in order; for example, of nursery rhymes. Nearly all of them recognise their written name but only a minority of them write their names correctly. Through practical activities such as drawing in the air, plasticine modelling and finger painting, pupils effectively practise correct letter formation.
86. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory. Teachers promote talk and question children effectively when they are part of the whole class. However, there is insufficient teacher intervention with small groups and individual children to draw ideas from them and extend their vocabulary. Teachers offer the children a range of interesting opportunities to practise their reading and writing, although opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage pupils working with pattern-making apparatus or paints to include letters or numbers in their creations.

## Mathematical development

87. Progress in mathematical development is satisfactory. Children count objects up to ten and a few count up to 15. They enjoy practising counting with hand clapping. Children learn to add together single-digit numbers that they throw on a dice and most write numbers with reasonable accuracy. They measure the length of items using cubes and identify *‘heavier’* and *‘lighter’* objects. They pour and measure out water into various containers. Many children recognise squares and pick out the squares from a selection of shapes. A few higher attaining children can explain that a square has four sides and a triangle has three.
88. The teaching of mathematical development is satisfactory. Staff provide a wide range of practical mathematical tasks, including computer programs, and successfully encourage all pupils to participate in them. Activities are well-planned, although there are too few opportunities for children who are already fairly numerate to extend their understanding still further.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. Children make sound progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They sort pictures of objects such as candles and light bulbs into ‘past’ and ‘present’ categories. They learn about our seasons and put them in

order. Children become familiar, through play, with different environments such as 'underwater' or farmland. They can name parts of the human body and begin to understand how their senses enable them to interpret the world. They know how people, such as firemen and nurses, help us and meet some of these people. Children make good quality 'faces' using paper plates, wool, tissue paper and pipe cleaners and finish their models effectively with paint. They control computer screen items, such as Teddy's clothes, with the *mouse* and 'drag' these into position.

90. The teaching of this area of learning has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Staff provide many interesting opportunities for learning, including practical investigations. Activities are now more suitable for children of this age than at the time of the last inspection. A police visit complete with patrol car promotes good understanding of adults' roles in life. Colourful displays of children's work and science topics provide a stimulating learning environment.

### **Physical development**

91. Sound progress is made in physical development. Children manipulate brushes, crayons and scissors with increasing dexterity and skill. The recently developed outdoor area offers good opportunities for climbing, sliding and riding large wheeled toys. Children enjoy these very much and most are aware of space available and that occupied by others. They build walls with large blocks and shovel, spoon and mould wet sand. In the hall, children move in different ways: as jellybeans, bouncing beans or on tiptoe. They crouch down or stretch their bodies as long as they can.
92. Teaching is satisfactory and staff manage and control the children well. However, overall, there is too little adult intervention to extend children's imaginations, promote dialogue and suggest additional challenges. The new facilities and apparatus attract positive attitudes and enthusiastic involvement from the children.

### **Creative development**

93. Children make satisfactory progress in their creative development. They paint pictures of animals such as hedgehogs with their fingers and create people, houses, shapes and patterns with brushes. Children stick coloured tissue paper shapes to make their own faces. They trace printed pictures and colour them in. Children listen to and sing along to nursery rhymes and songs.
94. Teaching is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Staff now plan many productive opportunities for pupils to develop their creative abilities, although relatively few musical activities were seen during the inspection. Children enjoy their creative experiences and respond with evident pleasure.

### **ENGLISH**

95. Standards in English are average at age seven and above average at 11. This marks an improvement on test results for 2000 and reflects the better results in 2001 tests. Overall there has been steady improvement in line with all schools nationally over the past five years, except in 1999-2000 where pupils were not taught by their regular teachers for prolonged periods and standards declined

noticeably as a result. Statutory targets for pupils in Year 6 in the last school year were realistic and were met. Although the 2001 tests show that girls perform better than boys in English, there was no such difference evident in the work of pupils currently in Year 6.

96. At the time of the last inspection standards were reported as above average at the end of both key stages. Inspection evidence indicates a similar picture at Key Stage 2 but standards are lower at Key Stage 1 because pupils do not practise the skills they have acquired widely enough in different forms of writing. Since the last inspection most of the teaching staff have changed and a new headteacher has been appointed. Pupils currently build on skills successfully, making sound progress throughout Key Stage 1 and generally good progress at Key Stage 2.
97. Teachers plan effectively to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive work that is planned to suit their needs. These pupils make sound progress as a result of the satisfactory and sometimes good teaching they receive in small groups from support staff.
98. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory at both key stages. The majority of pupils are attentive and answer appropriately when questioned in lessons. For example in a good literacy lesson in Year 1 the class teacher read the story *'Dogger'* expressively which encouraged the majority of pupils to listen closely and to respond with comments from their own experience. Similarly, in very good art lesson in Year 1 where the teacher's good subject knowledge contributed to skilful questioning, pupils commented on pictures with astute observations for their age about the pictures they were considering. In Year 2 pupils develop their skills further in literacy lessons and in story time where they responded in unison to the *'THUD! THUD! THUD!'* of an approaching monster.
99. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 they develop greater confidence in speaking for different purposes, and by the age of 11 most describe events and convey ideas clearly. Planned opportunities for pupils to discuss together in groups was a criticism at the time of the last inspection. The school has taken steps to address this for example, through the introduction of sessions such as *Circle Time* where pupils have the chance to discuss matters of social or moral concern. Where pupils work on practical activities as in science and physical education they discuss their work in small groups. Also in literacy, pupils are given the opportunity to speak to the class when they read out phrases they have written, for example in Year 3 where they write shape poems and *'rap'* verse in Year 5 in connection with work on root words. Pupils in Year 4 share their ideas with 'thinking partners' when considering verbs and adjectives to be used in a poem. However, the range of opportunities offered for pupils to discuss and debate is rather narrow and often occurs incidentally. consequently progress is sporadic.
100. Standards of reading are average at seven and above average at 11. Pupils read with a satisfactory understanding of text in books from two reading schemes at Key Stage 1. In Year 1 higher attaining pupils express opinions about the stories they read. They are confident, read accurately and correct any words that they misread with little prompting. Pupils of average and below average ability recognise many familiar words and have a satisfactory understanding of letter sounds, which enables them to work out unfamiliar words confidently. In Year 2, pupils read and enjoy a variety of texts and can talk about other books they have enjoyed. Higher

attaining pupils refer to favourite authors. Below average and average ability pupils are beginning to use a range of strategies to work out unfamiliar words.

101. Pupils build on their reading skills well throughout Key Stage 2 and extend their abilities more widely to include books other than those in the school's reading schemes. In Year 3 they are beginning to use strategies more confidently for establishing the meaning of text and higher attaining pupils can talk about the main points in a story. Throughout Years 3 and 4 many pupils have a well-established understanding of alphabetical order. They use this to good effect in literacy sessions with dictionaries and thesauri to find synonyms and expressive adjectives and verbs to support poetry writing. At Year 5, pupils have increased their confidence and competence significantly and pupils of all abilities are able to express preferences for authors and characters. By the time they reach Year 6 most pupils read fluently at a good level and some expressively. They have mastered earlier skills well. Average and above average pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction. They use tables of contents and indexes competently and can skim text to find specific information.
102. The quality of writing is average at seven and above average at 11. Pupils at Key Stage 1 practise simple punctuation, elementary grammar and handwriting in the form of exercises. However, although they achieve satisfactory standards and show that they can use what they have learnt, the range of opportunities for them to apply their skills widely are too limited and consists mainly of recounting events that have happened at home or at school. This limits the attainment of pupils. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use full stops and capital letters, spell simple and some more complex words correctly and write in a well-formed hand.
103. At Key Stage 2 the range of written work broadens noticeably in Years 3 and 4 to include narrative writing such as stories of lost kites, a school bully, well-structured book reviews, letters to monsters, poems and newspaper articles based on '*The Three Little Pigs*'. Pupils build on the skills they have learnt at Key Stage 1 well and develop an increasing sense of audience. Standards in Year 5 are not as high as in other classes. Although pupils write interesting '*rap*' poems in connection with work on root words and write good quality newspaper accounts of the Spanish Armada invading England, recent writing in exercise books shows too little variety and insufficient care given to the presentation of work. By the age of 11 pupils' writing is lively and thoughtful. They understand how an author creates a particular atmosphere and how adjectives and punctuation are used for effect. Handwriting of middle and higher attaining pupils is well formed and fluent. Punctuation is used correctly and pupils are beginning to organise their work into paragraphs.
104. Pupils respond well to the good and occasionally very good teaching they receive. In one lesson in four teaching was very good which is an improvement since the last inspection. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
105. Teachers use an effective range of teaching strategies. A feature of the best lessons was the imaginative ways in which teachers sought to grip the attention of pupils at the outset. For example, pupils responded enthusiastically and with evident delight to the class teacher's opening strategy in a Year 2 literacy lesson. She used a fluffy toy dog to introduce a theme on '*care for pets*.' This teaching aid appeared sufficiently realistic to elicit many spontaneous comments from pupils such as '*Is it stuffed?*' This was an effective stimulus, which gave impetus to the lesson, prompted pupils to suggest and develop their ideas clearly and helped to ensure

that learning was productive. Similarly in Year 4, pupils responded with equal enthusiasm to the class teacher's gently chiding challenge to beat the adults in the classroom in a spelling competition. Where teachers read out extracts from books expressively as in Year 6 and Year 2 pupils listened very attentively and embarked on ensuing work purposefully.

106. Teachers have good understanding of the subject and incorporate well opportunities for writing into other curriculum areas such as science, history and design and technology. Teachers draw on their subject knowledge to explain lessons clearly. They question pupils incisively to challenge their thinking and to take learning forward. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson where the class teacher skilfully developed pupils' understanding of verbs and adjectives in connection with a lesson on poetry writing. Pupils listened very attentively and their careful thinking gave rise to such colourful phrases as '*the slippery snake moved slowly through the swamp*'.
107. Where teachers respond perceptively and positively to pupils' work in exercise books pupils evidently enjoy the sense of dialogue that is established. They learn to value their work and to try even harder as a result. Where it is less successful in a small minority of classes, teachers do not challenge pupils to improve. Pupils value their efforts too little as a result. The use of specific literacy targets in books and on older pupils' desks is particularly helpful. They give a clear sense of purpose to pupils and provide pupils with a better understanding of their own learning.
108. Teaching and support staff work well together and make good use of the resources available to them to match teaching to the needs of individuals and groups. A small number of lessons are too long however, consequently pupils lose interest and the pace of learning slows.
109. The co-ordinator is currently absent through illness and the headteacher is fulfilling the role satisfactorily as an interim measure. The school library has been relocated in a corner of the school hall following criticisms in the last inspection report. Although it has more books than it did, its position is still unsatisfactory. There are plans to re-site it more centrally.

## **MATHEMATICS**

110. Inspection evidence shows that pupils attain average standards both at age seven and 11. Standards at Key Stage 1 have declined since the last inspection when they were above average. Standards at Key Stage 2 have improved from the below-average standards at the time of the last inspection. The 2001 national test results paint a similar picture of average standards at both key stages. There is no significant difference between the attainment levels of boys and girls.
111. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. The younger pupils sequence small numbers and solve simple addition and subtraction problems. They learn that addition can be done with the numbers in any order. Pupils measure in non-standard units such as dominoes or hand-spans although not all of them are successful at this. Many name two and three-dimensional shapes such as a triangle or pyramid. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have extended their understanding of number to include mental two-digit subtraction and the halving and quartering of numbers and shapes. Some higher attaining pupils read three-digit numbers correctly. Pupils identify shapes such as quadrilaterals, pentagons and hexagons

and draw lines of reflective symmetry on shapes and pictures. However, their mathematical vocabulary is limited; for example, few pupils can subtract when the question is phrased using the term 'less than'. Although pupils measure accurately in metres and centimetres, their ability to estimate lengths is weak. There is little evidence of pupils using their mathematical skills in different settings. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress towards the individual targets set for them.

112. Most pupils make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2 and some make good progress. This is largely achieved through teachers providing tasks and activities that are fairly well-matched to the abilities of the pupils. In Years 3 and 4, pupils build progressively on their mental mathematics skills: they 'round' numbers to the nearest ten and can multiply numbers by two, three, four, five and ten. They undertake some investigations, but have insufficient experiences of solving problems. Older pupils develop their mental skills to include working with decimals and percentages and, by the age of 11, most calculate ten per cent of a price, double a small one-place decimal and read five and six-digit numbers. During the main part of the numeracy lesson, pupils use long-multiplication and division in their calculations and solve simple algebraic problems. They create bar graphs and pie charts to represent statistical data and many use a computer for this purpose. Pupils measure angles to the nearest five degrees, some to the nearest degree. Most pupils use positive number co-ordinates to plot points on graphs and some plot co-ordinates in four quadrants. They translate and rotate the positions of geometrical shapes. There is little evidence that pupils use their mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. A small number of Year 6 pupils of slightly below average attainment benefit from close support in a small group. In this situation, their teacher quickly identifies their errors and difficulties and is able to boost their progress.
113. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall with some unsatisfactory teaching. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are good and pupils respond positively to this. The quality of teaching across the school is similar to that reported in the last inspection. Lessons are well planned using the numeracy framework and this generally enables pupils to build on existing skills effectively. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with pupils at the start. This gains pupils' attention and interest and contributes to better learning. Most respond well and settle to work with a greater sense of purpose. Teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy and all lessons begin with mental mathematics practice. In a few lessons however, the pace of questioning is too slow, allowing time for only one activity. Key Stage 2 teachers manage and organise their pupils well. In one particularly successful lesson, the teacher skilfully led a higher attaining group of pupils through progressively harder percentage calculations. Pupils responded well to the challenge and thought hard about their answers. At Key Stage 1, some teachers are less successful at this and do not always focus their teaching effectively on one group of pupils at a time. Consequently some pupils do not concentrate as well as they might and do not make the progress that might be expected. Teachers use support staff effectively, often to help lower-attaining pupils to meet their lesson objective. Key Stage 2 teachers make good use of resources such as calculators and clock faces, but at Key Stage 1 learning is not always supported with the most suitable apparatus. Insufficient use is made of computers to aid mathematical understanding at both key stages. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and most pupils respond with enthusiasm to the tasks that are set for them.



114. Assessment procedures for mathematics are satisfactory. Good use is made of standardised tests, on entry to the school and in Year 4, to set realistic attainment targets for pupils. Teachers are currently developing systems for analysing assessment data to provide more detailed information on which areas of mathematics need a greater teaching focus. The co-ordinator provides strong support for colleagues and has clear plans for the development of the subject. She carefully monitors teachers' planning but does not yet have an accurate picture of the teaching quality throughout the school. Mathematical resources are satisfactory, although there is insufficient computer software. Not all teachers are aware of the full potential of the pre-installed programs on the school's computers.
115. Since the last inspection, careful monitoring, effective organisation of pupils and informed target setting have improved the school's provision for mathematics at Key Stage 2. Better group teaching and use of resources are now needed to bring about further improvement at Key Stage 1.

## **SCIENCE**

116. In the 2000 national tests for pupils aged 11 the standards were below the national average and well below average when compared with similar schools. Standards were reported to be average at the time of the last inspection. However, inspection findings indicate that standards have risen during the last year due to more discrete teaching of the subject supported by a good scheme of work. This is endorsed by the significant improvement in the 2001 national tests. Experimental and investigative science is now an integral part of the curriculum and this has had a positive impact on standards. The 2000 teacher assessments for pupils aged seven indicate that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels was below average. Standards declined since the last inspection due to the long-term absence of staff and the difficulty the school has recruiting new teachers. However, the inspection findings indicate that standards are now rising.
117. Inspection findings are that at ages seven and 11 pupils attain average standards. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by teachers. They are fully included in lessons and make satisfactory progress in their learning.
118. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know the names of the parts of a plant and what it needs to germinate and grow. They grow their own seeds and record findings in a simple way. Pupils know that humans and animals need food and water to stay alive and that exercise and eating the right type of foods help humans keep healthy. They explore and recognise the differences and similarities of materials by their feel and appearance. Pupils learn and understand that there are many kinds of sound and during inspection experimented with numerous musical instruments to discover plucking, banging, shaking and scraping makes sound. Pupils capable of higher attainment can predict the type of sound that will be made.
119. At Key Stage 2 pupils extend their knowledge of plants by growing beans and learning how green plants feed and grow. They draw and label the main parts of a flower head and more able pupils explain the function of each part. Pupils understand that materials can be classified into gases, liquids and solids and know that temperature affects the change from one state to another. By age 11 pupils are able to plan, predict and carry out their experiments. For example, pupils

devised a fair test to predict which materials were the best insulators and recorded their findings appropriately.

120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, which is similar to the position when the school was last inspected. Teaching seen varied from very good to unsatisfactory. Learning is most effective in lessons where planning is clear, tasks are purposeful for all abilities and the pace of lessons is brisk. Where this is linked to confident class management and good subject knowledge, learning is at its best. Successful teaching is also characterised by good relationships with pupils who are encouraged to evaluate and share their findings. Several teachers have high expectations of pupils and know their subject well. This was evident in Years 3 and 4 for example, where teachers use correct scientific vocabulary such as the parts of a plant and terms such as 'dispersal' and 'germinate' in connection with plant growth. Pupils respond well to this. They show interest and apply themselves well to their work. Where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, teachers lack confidence, expectations are too low, pupils are insufficiently challenged, time is not used effectively, the pace of lessons is too slow and teachers do not check how well pupils are progressing.
121. The co-ordinator has received good support from a local authority science advisor to raise the profile of science and help teachers plan work that builds continuously and progressively on pupils' learning. Useful assessment procedures have been established in the last year but these are insufficiently developed to enable teachers to plan future work suited to the needs of different abilities. Currently it is difficult to identify what pupils know, understand and can do in science. Teachers lack this important information when planning work. This occasionally leads to inappropriately challenging tasks for individual pupils that demand too little intellectual effort. The co-ordinator's role is underdeveloped as there is no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning throughout the school. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and targets to help pupils improve are rarely identified. Consequently in some classes pupils do not know how well they have done or what they need to do to improve further. There are some useful links with literacy and mathematics but insufficient use is made of the potential of information technology to support pupils' learning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

122. There was too little evidence to make a firm judgement on standards and teaching in art and design at either Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. Too few lessons were observed and at this stage in a new school year, there was insufficient retained evidence to give a clear view on standards.
123. Of the two lessons observed a particular strength was the very good subject knowledge of the co-ordinator, which contributed significantly to the quality of pupils' learning. Through her confident and well informed approach she introduced pupils in her Year 1 class to colour-mixing to achieve a particular effect. She also encouraged them to observe self-portraits of famous artists very closely before embarking on their own, using mirrors to assist them.
124. Although she is new to the role, the co-ordinator is keen to see art and design develop and has a clear view of the direction that she wishes the subject to take. There are too few resources to enable the subject to be taught effectively, or

examples of famous works of art to stimulate pupils and to encourage their cultural and multicultural understanding.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

125. Pupils at ages seven and 11 attain the standards expected in design and technology. Standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.
126. Pupils make satisfactory progress through both key stages. By the age of seven, they join materials such as card and drinking straws using '*blu-tack*' and sticky tape. Pupils make axles and wheels and explore different ways of allowing the wheels to turn freely. Some pupils discuss other ways of fixing such as nails and screws, describing the kind of situations where this would be appropriate. Key Stage 2 pupils extend their skills to include cutting out components, gluing and stitching. Year 4 pupils make money containers which close in various ways, such as with 'poppers', 'Velcro' or buttons. They communicate their design ideas with accurate labelled drawings accompanied by lists of the materials they will need. Year 5 pupils design and make puppets and models of fairground rides. These show careful attention to the quality of finish and to how model parts will move. By the age of 11, pupils generate design ideas for models of Greek temples by researching information on their original structure. Their designs include step by step stages of construction but not always the ways in which materials will be joined or strengthened.
127. The quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and make effective use of the national scheme of work. They successfully engage pupils in motivating activities and provide plenty of practical challenges. As a result, pupils show interest in their work and apply themselves well intellectually and creatively. Teachers give clear explanations and are quick to notice and correct any misunderstandings. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson, the teacher realised that some pupils had not grasped the difference between a moving and a rigid axle and so drew the class together to explain this. Pupils listen carefully to instructions, sustain their concentration on tasks and behave well. These features of their learning impact positively on the progress they make.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

128. Standards of attainment in history are similar to those found nationally and have been maintained since the last inspection. No judgement can be made on standards achieved in geography due to the lack of available evidence. As the result of timetabling arrangements it was only possible to see a few lessons at Key Stage 2 but no lessons at Key Stage 1. Additional information was gained from other sources including policy documents, discussions with staff and examination of past and present work in exercise books and displayed around the school.
129. Key Stage 1 pupils develop an awareness between the ways of life now and in the past by comparing Victorian and modern toys. In geography, they learn about '*Barnaby Bear on holiday*' and look at features found at the seaside. Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of daily life and customs of various periods in the past is extended by studies such as ancient Greeks, Romans, Tudors and Victorians.

Through extended writing on such topics as the Spanish Armada and finding information about Greek gods and Queen Elizabeth I pupils make good use of their literacy skills. In geography, younger junior pupils make their own simple map with keys to show their route to school. They use evidence about human features to build up a map of local streets. Older pupils learn about different environments including the Isle of Wight and make a study of the stages in the development of rivers.

130. From the few lessons seen, teaching is satisfactory which is similar to that found at the last inspection. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, manage their pupils well and use appropriate strategies to capture pupils' imagination. Consequently pupils have positive attitudes towards geography and history lessons, where they show a lively interest in finding out about the past and comparing different environments. On the other hand, when lessons are not well matched to pupils' abilities they lose interest, become disengaged and do not make sufficient progress. Schemes of work have been revised since the last inspection to help teachers plan their work more effectively. However, planning is insufficiently informed by the assessment of pupils' attainment where there is no record of what pupils know, understand and can do. This has an adverse effect on their progress. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent and targets to help pupils improve are rarely identified. There are too few resources and artefacts to provide greater breadth and challenge in the work. There are limited opportunities for outside visits or inviting visitors to give pupils first hand experiences to reinforce their learning. This limits their opportunities to learn of the richness of their own culture both in the past and present. Pupils appreciate opportunities for role play and local visits such as that to Sevington to experience a Victorian day, which also successfully promotes their social development.
131. The lack of suitable resources including quality reference books and artefacts has a negative impact on pupils' attitudes to learning. Currently the new co-ordinator for both subjects has no opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school and so the part that she plays in developing the subjects is limited. The library is not used effectively and insufficient use is made of the potential of ICT to support pupils' learning in geography and history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

132. Standards of attainment in ICT are below nationally expected levels at the ages of seven and 11. They have not improved since the last inspection. Apart from direct teaching in lessons, evidence of standards of achievement and provision for the subject was gained from scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and inspection of teachers' planning. Standards are currently below expectations because resources are unsatisfactory, pupils' experiences are too narrow and they are given insufficient time to develop skills. During the inspection there were limited examples of pupils' word-processing skills displayed, which indicate that insufficient opportunities are given to pupils to use computers to develop cross curricular links in most subjects. Attainment is also below average in the aspects of monitoring and controlling devices, due to the lack of appropriate resources until very recently.
133. Pupils are introduced to computers at an early age where they learn to use the keyboard and mouse for simple games such as dressing the teddy. They use simple tools in a painting package to make their own patterns. By the end of Key

Stage 1 many pupils have developed their word-processing skills to produce instructions for breakfast. However, most pupils demonstrate limited knowledge and confidence when using the computer, and keyboard skills are underdeveloped. For some pupils entering information is a slow and laborious process. Pupils are unable to demonstrate more advanced word-processing skills and editing techniques. Key Stage 2 pupils learn to combine graphics and text. Many can highlight text using the mouse and know how to remove words using the delete key. Pupils have limited experiences of drafting and editing their own work and altering the size of a page. Many pupils use a paint program to complete their own version of Matisse's snail where there are good cross-curricular links with art and mathematics. Older pupils begin to use spreadsheets to calculate the cost of their residential trip. Only a minority are confident to cut and paste to adapt their findings as a result of their recent experience using computers at Swindon Town Football Club. New skills have been introduced since the purchase of 12 new computers last year including finding and using e-mail. Many older pupils are able to receive e-mail, respond to the message and send a reply. However, older pupils lack confidence and appropriate skills in many areas of ICT because the subject has been neglected until the appointment of the new headteacher.

134. The quality of teaching observed during inspection was satisfactory with occasionally good lessons. However, there is too little detail in teachers' planning on what skills and knowledge will be taught. Effective teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, well-planned activities and challenging tasks, where pupils make good progress in their learning. In general, teachers lack confidence in teaching ICT and the school has identified the urgent need for further training to raise teachers' confidence and subject knowledge. Many teachers lack the skills to provide pupils with suitably challenging activities and in many lessons tasks are too prescriptive. This results in learning progressing at too slow a pace. Where lessons are poorly organised, pupils lose interest and concentration, for example during a whole class demonstration by the class teacher, when they could not see the one screen available and had no opportunity to have 'hands on' experiences using computers.
135. Until the recent purchase of new computers many of the old machines were unreliable and this has severely restricted pupils' learning. Although the school has begun to timetable lessons for all classes, insufficient time has been allocated to the discrete teaching of information technology and limited opportunities are provided to allow pupils to develop their skills.
136. The new co-ordinator is very committed and has worked hard to improve the provision of information technology throughout the school. She has identified the need to evaluate and review the policy and scheme of work to help teachers plan more effectively and begin to use assessment to track pupils' progress. Currently she has no opportunity to monitor teaching and support colleagues in the classroom. She plans to purchase more resources to support pupils' learning and intends to establish more effective links using ICT in most areas of the curriculum and to promote independent research.

## **MUSIC**

137. Insufficient evidence was seen to judge the standards, progress or teaching of music at Key Stage 1. At the age of 11, pupils' attainment is below the expected standard. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection.
138. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 2. Year 4 pupils develop their understanding of how sounds can be combined and used expressively. They improvise melodic and rhythmic phrases to fit the structure of recorded pieces of music, although they do not consider variations of volume, or match what they play with what they hear. Later in the key stage, pupils sing traditional songs, but do not attempt to improve their diction, phrasing or musical expression. They appraise some pieces of music, but not always in relation to their musical qualities. Pupils perform in concerts each year but, overall, older pupils have limited opportunities to sing, perform or express their musical ideas.
139. On the evidence of the few lessons seen and discussions with pupils, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory and not as good as when the school was previously inspected. Some teachers lack expertise in this subject. Others feel constrained by the recently purchased music scheme, and so do not incorporate their own musical skills and interests into their teaching.
140. The school has too few resources for music when bearing in mind that it is impractical to move large instruments up and down the stairs on a regular basis. Storage arrangements make access to instruments difficult. The school is aware that this subject currently lacks effective leadership and monitoring. Specialist tuition is offered in the guitar and the recorder for which a charge is made. There are currently no extra-curricular activities in music.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

141. Although not all aspects of physical education were observed during the inspection, from the lessons seen, standards in dance were average at Key Stage 1 and above average in dance and gymnastics at Key Stage 2. This marks an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be average.
142. At Key Stage 1, pupils respond enthusiastically in dance as they turn and spin making 'wiggly pathways' around the hall. Where the teacher engages pupils effectively at the beginning of lessons, pupils increase the speed of their movements as they warm up, pretending that they are accelerating cars under the direction of the class teacher. Pupils show increasing control in their movements. They are aware that vigorous exercise produces certain effects on their bodies and know that it makes them out of breath and that their hearts beat faster.
143. Standards are better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory but is good overall. Pupils are keen to do well in lessons, as the result of good teaching, and this contributes effectively to the quality of their learning. Where it is most successful, as in a dance lesson in Year 4 and in gymnastics in Year 6, teachers engage pupils' minds as well as their bodies by presenting challenging activities. This encourages pupils to think carefully about their movements as they work in groups and demands of them considerable mental, creative and physical effort. For example, in the dance lesson pupils warmed up using strong and light movements in response to a tambourine. Thereafter they worked very effectively together in groups, to produce a sequence based on a clockwork mechanism with different parts synchronised, demonstrating movements of high quality. Similarly in gymnastics in Year 6 pupils were active from the outset. The teacher introduced a purposeful pace to the lesson from the beginning. Her expectations of pupils were high and pupils responded well to her firm, but fair approach. Consequently the quality of learning was good, with pupils building on skills systematically as they worked on the theme of 'overcoming barriers,' on large apparatus. Their movements became noticeably more fluent and well co-ordinated as the lesson progressed.
144. In a minority of lessons learning is unsatisfactory. Pupils are not given sufficient guidance or encouragement to improve their performance and so the development of skills is restricted. Activities are not well-managed; pupils sit for too long awaiting their turns on different items of apparatus, time is wasted therefore and pupils do not make the progress that they should. An unsatisfactory feature of some lessons at both key stages is the inappropriate use of a whistle in the school hall to secure a response from pupils.
145. Pupils in Year 4 learn to swim at a local pool for two terms in the school year. The school has responded positively to the concern of parents at the lack of extra-curricular activities and residential visits. There are now football and netball clubs and pupils take part in local competitions. Pupils in Year 6 visit a centre in the Isle of Wight for one week in the school year where they develop their ICT skills and take part in outdoor activities such as caving.
146. The deputy headteacher, in her role as physical education co-ordinator, does not monitor standards or teaching by observing lessons in order to support and improve the quality of teaching and learning.

147. With the assistance of the school association, resources have improved since the last inspection, and are now good.