

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST EDMUND'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Abingdon

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123225

Headteacher: Mr J Ryan

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 10th to 13th July 2000

Inspection number: 220338

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Radley Road Abingdon Oxfordshire OX14 3PP |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body, St Edmund's RCP School |
| Name of chair of governors: | Miss A Marsland |
| Date of previous inspection: | November 1997 |

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| Terry Elston | Registered inspector | Information technology, Physical education, Equal opportunities. | How well is the school led and managed? How high are standards? |
| Jan Leaning | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for pupils? How well does the school work in partnerships with parents? |
| Judith Howell | Team inspector | Children under five, Science, Design and technology, Geography. | How well pupils are taught? |
| Marie Gibbon | Team inspector | Special educational needs, English as an additional language, English, Art, Music. | |
| Arthur Evans | Team inspector | Mathematics, History. | How good are curricular and other opportunities? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Edmund's Roman Catholic Primary is of average size, with 229 full-time pupils from five to eleven years old, and 15 children who attend part-time in the Early years class. Nearly all of the pupils are of the Roman Catholic faith. There are 116 boys and 128 girls. The numbers have remained much the same over the past few years. The school has a wide catchment area, and 60 per cent of pupils live more than a 15 minute walk away. However, this is a favoured area in social and economic terms. A greater than average proportion of adults in the area have higher educational qualifications, and most families own their own homes. The attainment of pupils on entry is average overall compared with children nationally, but varies widely from a significant proportion of pupils with marked learning difficulties to a similar number who are above average in many areas. Over 22 per cent of full time pupils are designated as having special educational needs, which is about average, and two pupils have a statement of special educational need, which is average. Six pupils come from ethnic minority groups, and there are five who have English as an additional language; both of these figures are similar to other schools. There are ten pupils who are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, which makes the most of pupils' time here. The high expectations of the headteacher and governors are crucial in the achievement of good standards of teaching and learning. The very strong spiritual ethos gives the school a feeling of everyone working together and determined to succeed, but appreciating people's differences. There is no complacency here, and even when results are improving, the staff look for ways to do better. In view of the pupils' good progress, their high standards by the time they leave the school and the good quality of teaching and leadership, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' standards in the national assessment tests in English and mathematics are well above average.
- The headteacher leads the school very well, with good support from the governing body.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' planning is thorough, and they make lessons interesting and challenging for all pupils.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good, and helps to foster relationships of a high quality.
- Links with parents are very strong, and help to create a partnership where pupils, staff and parents work closely together.
- The school monitors pupils' development very closely. Teachers know their pupils well, and provide very good support in difficult times.

What could be improved

- The standards of reading and writing in the infants, which are too low, and are not being sufficiently raised by careful use of teachers' assessments.
- The school's development plan, which is produced by the governors, and takes too little account of the headteacher's and teachers' priorities.
- The resources in history and geography, where there is a lack of important books and equipment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good response to the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection in November 1997, and works to a well-structured Action Plan. Schemes of work are now in place, and they are of good quality. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly, and is managed well by the co-ordinator. Most of the individual targets for pupils are clear, and written well, but some still lack the sharpness necessary to guide teachers and pupils effectively. The monitoring of teaching is now good; it has improved teachers' work, and has helped to raise standards. The school's assessment procedures are generally good, but there are still some problems

in Key Stage 1, where pupils' work is assessed methodically, but not enough is done with the information gained. There are still inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking, which varies from very good to weak. The school has worked hard to improve the provision for information technology, and has invested wisely in new technology. This provision is now good, and pupils' work is above average by the time they leave. The leadership of the school has improved significantly now the headteacher and governing body have developed their monitoring roles, and the school is well placed to improve further. The school has set challenging targets for improvement in English and mathematics. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved significantly, and pupils' work in design and technology, art and history is also better than before. The provision for pupils' moral and social development has improved, and this has had a positive effect on behaviour.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 |
| English | A* | C | A | B |
| mathematics | B | B | A | B |
| science | C | A | B | C |

| Key | |
|--------------------|----|
| very high | A* |
| well above average | A |
| above average | B |
| average | C |
| below average | D |
| well below average | E |

The table shows that, by the time they leave, pupils' standards are highest in English and mathematics where they are above those attained by pupils in similar schools. In science they are above average, and similar to other schools. Standards are rising in all three subjects year by year. The school has set ambitious targets for pupils in English and mathematics, which they are well on course to achieve this year.

The findings of the inspection are that the oldest pupils attain much higher standards than those found in most other schools (well above average standards) in science and mathematics, including numeracy, and above average standards in English, including literacy. The current Year 6 is therefore performing at the same level as last year's group in mathematics, better in science, but worse in English because of the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs who have reading and writing difficulties. These standards show that pupils are achieving well, given their average attainment on entry to the school. Pupils' work is above average in information technology (which was an area of weakness at the last inspection), art, design and technology, history and physical education. In music and geography, their work is similar to that found in most schools. By Year 2, pupils' standards are below average in English, and lower than the corresponding group last year. The current Year 2 has far more pupils with special educational needs than last year's class, particularly in terms of their reading and writing, and most are achieving satisfactory standards given their weak literacy skills on entry to the school. Their work in mathematics, however, is above average, and many are quick in their calculations of numbers. Pupils' work is average in science and information technology, but their weak writing and poor presentation sometimes let them down. Pupils' work is above average in physical education, art and design and technology, and average in history, geography and music. Throughout the school, a significant number of pupils achieve well in music and benefit from music tuition in school time, and their participation in music festivals. Children under five make good progress, and, by the age of five, attain the nationally recommended objectives for very young children in all the areas of learning except in personal and social development and mathematics where they exceed them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|-------------------------|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils enjoy learning, and try hard to do well. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Most pupils behave very well in class and outside in the playground. Year 3 pupils, however, are slow to settle down to work, and chatter too much in lessons. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good relationships are a strength of the school. Pupils are mature, and enjoy taking responsibility. |
| Attendance | Good, and better than the national average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Lessons seen - 51 | Good | Good | Good |

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and promotes pupils' learning well. The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in nearly a third of lessons and good or better in three-quarters. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Parents believe that the quality of teaching is good, and the figures show a significant improvement from the previous OFSTED inspection when one fifth of lessons was unsatisfactory. The teaching in Year 6 is particularly strong, and helps pupils to make rapid progress. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of subjects, and have the skills to pass this on to the pupils. The teaching of English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, is generally good, and best in the juniors which explains the high standards by Year 6. The teaching addresses the needs of all groups of pupils well, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and higher achieving pupils. The teaching of children under five is consistently good, and prepares them well for work in the National Curriculum.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | A good, broad curriculum, which covers all the work pupils need to do. There are sufficient extracurricular activities to extend the work done in lessons. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | This is good overall. Most pupils have clear targets to aim towards, and their progress is monitored well. Not all targets, however, are precise enough to help pupils to improve. There is good support provided by classroom assistants. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. The school enlists specialist help when required, and pupils soon gain a good use and understanding of English. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. Many spiritual occasions give pupils a clear idea of the place of God in their lives. Teachers are skilled at bringing moral issues into the classroom, and pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. Very good social provision helps pupils to work and play together responsibly. Good cultural provision teaches well about how other people in the world live and worship. |

| | |
|---|---|
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school does this well, monitoring pupils' personal development through the school carefully. The headteacher and staff know pupils and their families very well, and ensure that pupils are well cared for. The assessment of pupils' progress is good overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and teachers in the juniors use this data well to raise pupils' standards. In the infants, teachers make too little use of assessment to get the best out of pupils in English and science. There are also weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' work in art, design and technology, geography, history and music. |
| How well the school works in partnership with parents | The school keeps parents well-informed about their child's progress. Relationships between the school and parents are very strong. Many parents help in school. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher is committed to raising standards, while maintaining a very strong Catholic ethos. The two key stage leaders work well with their team of teachers, and liaise closely with the headteacher. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | They do this very well, and all statutory requirements are met. Governors are energetic and knowledgeable, and support the school very well. They do not, however, take enough account of the priorities of the headteacher and staff when producing the school's development plan. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good overall. The school monitors pupils' performance carefully in the national assessment tests, and the headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators monitor teaching and the curriculum effectively. |
| The strategic use of resources | This is good. The school's money is spent wisely, and the budget monitored carefully. The strengths of individual members of staff are used well to enhance the curriculum, especially in information technology and art. |
| The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources | This is a well-qualified teaching staff, effectively supported by knowledgeable classroom assistants. The good accommodation is used well. Resources are good overall. The computer suite has made a big difference to standards in information technology, but there is a shortage of resources in history and geography. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' behaviour is good • Their children enjoy school • The teaching is good • The school helps children to become mature and responsible | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extracurricular activities • The consistency of homework |

The inspection team endorses the positive comments made by parents. The range of extracurricular activities is good overall, and supports the curriculum well. Homework is given with reasonable consistency, and builds up suitably as pupils get older.

PART B: COMMENTARY
HOW HIGH

H ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's national end of Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 show that, compared with all schools, standards were well above average in English and mathematics, and above average in science. These results are a considerable improvement compared with the previous OFSTED inspection, when standards were above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Compared with similar schools, standards in 1999 were above average in English and mathematics, and average in science.

2. The percentage of pupils attaining higher than the expected standard was well above the national average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, these figures are above average in English, and average in mathematics and science.

3. When the averages of the school's end of Key Stage 2 test results for 1999 are compared with those reached by the pupils in 1996, 1997 and 1998, they show an improving trend in standards which is broadly in line with the national trend, and static trends in mathematics and science. There is no significant difference in the standards attained by boys and girls.

4. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for 78 per cent of its pupils to reach, or exceed, the expected level in the national end of Key Stage 2 tests in English in the Year 2000, and for 81 per cent of pupils to meet or exceed this level in mathematics. These targets are lower than the standards attained by last year's pupils, but reflect the higher number of pupils with special educational needs this year. The, as yet unverified, results for this year indicate that the school has met these targets.

5. The findings of the inspection are that pupils In Year 6 attain standards well above those found in most schools in science and mathematics, including numeracy, and above average standards in all aspects of English, including literacy. The current Year 6 is therefore performing at the same level as last year's group in mathematics, better in science, but worse in English because of the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs who have reading and writing difficulties. Nevertheless, given pupils' average standards on entry to the school, these achievements show how successful the school is at teaching pupils the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and scientific enquiry.

6. In English, by the age of 11, the pupils ask good questions which build upon the contributions of others, and most speak clearly and confidently. They are interested in books, read with enjoyment, and predict what will happen next in stories. They write effectively for a wide range of purposes and readers, but standards of spelling and punctuation are relatively weak, and pupils' presentation is often slapdash. In mathematics, by the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils have very good strategies for problem solving, and have a thorough knowledge of multiplication tables up to ten. They work confidently with fractions and decimal, and have a good understanding of three-dimensional shapes. By the age of 11, in science, pupils use resources they are given for experimental work well, and are beginning to devise their own experiments. They produce good descriptions of the functions of some important human organs, classify materials accurately as solids, liquids or gases and use symbols appropriately to draw an electrical circuit.

7. By Year 6, pupils' work is above that found in most schools in information technology, art, design and technology, history and physical education. In music and geography, their work is similar to that found in most schools. Since the previous OFSTED inspection, pupils' work, by the time they leave, has improved in art, design and technology and history, but is not as good in music.

8. In information technology, the pupils have good word processing skills, and use spreadsheets confidently. In art, they show a good capability to experiment with different skills and techniques and use tools and materials effectively and safely. In design and technology, they evaluate their work well as it develops, considering the purposes for which it is intended.

When making models, they produce good step-by-step plans, and demonstrate increasing accuracy, with attention to the quality of finish and function. In geography, their work on the local environment shows a sound geographical understanding, but their map work is weak. In history, pupils have a good knowledge of the past, and write well about conditions in Victorian Britain. In music, Year 6 pupils have a sound idea of tempo and mood when appraising pieces, and a significant number sing and play instruments to a high standard. In physical education, pupils have a good level of fitness, and play games particularly well.

9. In Year 2, when the averages of the school's 1999 national assessment tests are compared with those of all schools, they show that standards were above average in reading and well above in writing and mathematics. When the average of this data is compared with similar schools, standards are average in reading, and above in writing and mathematics.

10. When the end of Key Stage 1 test results for the school in reading and mathematics are compared with the previous three years, they show a good rise in standards, at a higher rate than the national trend.

11. The findings of the inspection are that, in the current Year 2, standards are average in speaking and listening, below average in reading, and well below average in writing. They are above average in mathematics, and average in science.

12. These pupils entered school with weak literacy skills, and, whilst they have made sound progress during the key stage, many fail to achieve the national standard in reading and writing. They listen well to stories, and respond appropriately. A few pupils read accurately and with confidence, but, for many, new words are difficult to work out. Their library skills are also weak, because of the shortage of opportunities the school provides for them to search for books in a well-organised library. In writing, pupils use interesting words well, but their spelling and punctuation are well below average. Pupils fare better in mathematics, where their attainment is above average. They add and subtract quickly in their head, and tell the time accurately. They collect data well, and produce clearly labelled graphs of their results.

13. By Year 2, in science, pupils have a sound understanding of how to sort materials according to their properties and recognise and name a number of sources of light and sound. Pupils conduct simple experiments with average skill, but their written work is often poor.

14. In other subjects by Year 2, pupils' work is above the standards found in most schools in physical education, art and design and technology, and similar to that found in most schools in history, geography, information technology and music. In art, pupils paint, weave and print well to produce exciting pictures. In design and technology, their designs are imaginative, and they use tools with good, safe skills. In information technology, the pupils show average word processing skills, and use the mouse and keyboard confidently. They link their work well to mathematical activities, and create accurate graphs on the computer. In physical education, pupils have good gymnastic skills, and show interesting ideas as they produce good sequences of movements.

15. Pupils do well at this school, and make good progress. From their starting point at average national standards, they attain above average standards by the time they leave the school in nearly all subjects. The strong focus on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is successful in giving pupils confidence to read challenging material in all subjects, produce interesting poems and stories in literacy lessons and work out complex mathematical problems. In science, teachers' demanding questions encourage pupils to think scientifically, and this helps them to attack new experimental work with confidence.

16. Higher achieving pupils achieve very good standards by Year 6, particularly in English, mathematics and science. They are extended by good opportunities to deepen their knowledge, particularly as they reach Years 5 and 6. They respond well to the lessons provided for them, and learn to research their work in English and mathematics. The high proportion of pupils who attain above national standards in the national assessment tests by Year 6 shows how successful the school is in extending them. Whilst progress is steady in the infants, and good in mathematics, pupils' achievement in reading and writing is too low. Teachers make too little use

of assessments to show which pupils are struggling, and in what particular areas of their English work they are weakest. Consequently, many pupils have not mastered the basic skills of reading by Year 2, and their writing is often brief and full of errors. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is good by Year 2 because they have lots of practice in the basic skills of number, and teachers' assessment of their progress shows clearly how well they are doing.

17. Pupils with special educational needs attain appropriate standards in relation to their previous attainment. A number of pupils who receive support which is well targeted to their needs, and whose individual education plans have clear, realistic targets, make good progress. This includes those pupils on the register who receive support through the effective implementation of the Additional Literacy Support programme. Pupils who receive support from the Advisory Service for the Education of Travellers attain appropriate standards. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, and quickly gain confidence in their use and understanding of English.

18. Children under five make good progress and, by the age of five, meet the nationally recommended objectives for very young children in all the areas of learning. In their personal and social development and in mathematics, most children exceed the expected standards by the age of five. In their language and literacy, physical and creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world, the children meet the standards expected of them by five.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good. They show positive, caring behaviour, and respect each other's feelings and differences. The Catholic ethos is very strong. Pupils enjoy school; they are keen to learn and work at a good pace. They show a pride in their finished work, and are keen to show visitors their achievements. The presentation of many pupils' work is, however, untidy.

20. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. They are always positive, keen to volunteer and work well in groups. There is good teamwork and pupils help each other. In a Year 6 lesson on numeracy, pairs of pupils were working collaboratively to explore percentages and decimals, and the high quality of their work showed how much they had gained from working with each other. Pupils know the rules and the reason for them. When asked about whether rules were really needed, they replied that without rules, "...it would not be a nice place, with arguing and fighting and teachers getting cross". Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous to each other, teachers and visitors. Teachers are keen to show how interested they are in their pupils, and the pupils respond very well. Pupils play well together in the playground using the different games and equipment which are available. They appreciate their well-maintained school, which is free from litter or graffiti.

21. Overall, pupils' behaviour is good, but there are, nevertheless, some problems. In most lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, but the behaviour of some Year 3 pupils is unsatisfactory; they are noisy and unresponsive to the teacher, and this slows down lessons and restricts learning. The school has worked hard to improve standards of behaviour, and they have improved since the previous report, when behaviour was described as 'generally satisfactory but too noisy with poor behaviour in classes'. Most pupils respond well to the school's strategies to encourage good behaviour, and show great pride when they are praised, or awarded stickers given out by lunchtime supervisors. There has been one fixed period exclusion this year.

22. The personal development of pupils is very good. They are well encouraged to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world and of themselves. They are keen to take advantage of opportunities to act as monitors, take dinner registers and put away equipment. Older pupils help younger ones by reading with them and looking after them in the playground. In classes, most pupils listen carefully and wait politely for their turn to answer. They work well both in groups and independently. There is a school council with elected representatives, and pupils undertake these duties conscientiously and with pride. Pupils in Year 6 show a good sense of responsibility as they act as prefects, look after the reception area at lunchtime, answer the telephone and welcome visitors. They do this very competently. Pupils are involved in editing

and preparing the termly school newsletter, and many contribute interesting articles. Pupils are keen to raise funds to help people from all over the world. Donations include those to a local Hospice, the British Heart Foundation, The British Legion Poppy Day and victims of the recent floods in Mozambique. The pupils have initiated a petition to support peace in the world. They respect the values and beliefs of others, and recognise that there are many different kinds of faiths and cultures.

23. Relationships in the school are very good; staff know pupils and their families well. All members of the school are relaxed and at ease with each other in a very sociable atmosphere. Pupils respond well to the learning support assistants and to the lunchtime supervisors. In discussion, they are very confident and articulate. They feel that they get very good support from their teachers, and that school is a friendly place.

24. During the inspection there was no evidence of any bullying or racial incidents.

25. Children under five settle quickly into the school routines. The children are very friendly and their behaviour is very good. They have a positive approach to their learning activities, grow in confidence and quickly become independent. When working together, they co-operate well and support one another in their learning.

26. The attendance rate at the school in the year 1998/1999 was good; it was well above the national average at 94.8 per cent. Unauthorised attendance at 0.1 per cent was below the national average. Pupils arrive punctually at school and at lessons and this, together with the high levels of attendance, has a good effect on standards. There is little difference from the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. The quality of teaching is good overall, and promotes pupils' learning well. During the inspection, 51 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was very good or excellent in nearly a third of lessons and good or better in three-quarters. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Parents believe that the quality of teaching is good, and the figures show a significant improvement from the previous OFSTED inspection when one fifth of lessons were unsatisfactory, and teaching had 'unacceptable inconsistencies'.

28. The quality of teaching for children under five is good, because the staff are experienced and have a sound knowledge of how young children learn. All lessons were at least good, and half very good. The early years class has well organised routines so children quickly feel secure and happily become independent in their activities. Planning is good and is carefully matched to the recommended areas of learning for these children. The daily activities are well prepared and the good range of resources available is effectively used to stimulate interest and participation. There is a good balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities. The teacher and nursery nurse work very closely together to plan and teach the curriculum for the children and to ensure that there is a range of stimulating activities. They listen with interest to what the children have to say and, through careful questioning, develop their language skills. They are very skilled at developing warm relationships with both the children and their parents. Consequently, the children successfully develop very good attitudes to learning and, when they transfer to full-time education, they respond quickly and are eager to learn. There is good quality teaching in the more formal aspects of literacy and mathematics and sensitivity towards children's needs in other areas of learning.

29. In the infants, the quality of teaching and learning is generally good overall, with well over half the lessons at least good, and nearly one in five very good; none was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is good in mathematics and science, and satisfactory in all other subjects except information technology and history, where it was not possible to make a judgement. Teachers show a very secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and all make lessons interesting, so that pupils enjoy learning. Their direct teaching works well, and promotes pupils' learning of new skills effectively. Their management of pupils' behaviour is very good, because they have high expectations of how pupils should act, and this helps pupils get the most out of their time in school. Planning of lessons is good, and provides all pupils with an appropriate level

of challenge. The teaching of mathematics is particularly good, particularly in the basic skills of numeracy. The strengths of the teaching were exemplified in a mathematics lesson, where pupils were highly motivated by the teacher's quick fire mental mathematics session at the start. She built on their enthusiasm by requiring them to come up with different ways of solving problems, asking "...and who worked it out differently?" This made pupils search their minds for alternative strategies, and ensured that all developed a deep understanding of the subject.

30. In the juniors, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and often very good, and helps to explain why pupils do so well in the national assessment tests in Year 6. Three lessons were excellent, well over a third of lessons were at least very good and more than eight out of ten good or better. One lesson was unsatisfactory. Teaching is very good in science and information technology, good in English, mathematics and geography and satisfactory in art, music and physical education. Not enough teaching was seen in history and design and technology to make a judgement.

31. Lessons are very well planned to ensure that all pupils can learn at their own pace. The teaching in Year 6 is consistently of a high quality. A fundamental strength in the quality of teaching is the way that the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught. These lessons have a brisk pace, and have a sharp focus on specific skills that pupils learn quickly, and then apply to follow-up tasks. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher wanted pupils to be able to write a report following work done in science on the preservation of woodlands. Recognising that pupils would need good skills in using reference books, the teacher began with a dictionary game, which quickly got pupils familiar with looking for new words. Using questions skilfully to assess pupils' understanding, the teacher was able to swiftly fill gaps in their understanding, and then let them write their reports. Because of the teacher's careful preparation, pupils moved smoothly through the lesson, and were very well equipped to write reports of high quality.

32. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour well, but occasionally Year 3 pupils are rowdy, and slow to settle. This means that some lessons move slowly, and are punctuated with constant reminders for pupils not to call out, and to do their work.

33. Throughout the school, the quality of teachers' marking is variable, and whilst most is helpful to the pupil, too much is just ticks, or congratulatory comments. A few parents feel that there is either too much, or too little, homework, but the inspectors found that teachers provide appropriate levels of homework to support work done in class.

34. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. However where teaching is well focused on pupils' needs and the targets on pupils' individual education plans are clear, precise and realistic, the quality of teaching is good. In Key Stage 2, because the planning and teaching were so effective, three pupils required no further support and four required less support during the year. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when pupils were judged to make slow progress. In order to ensure that provision is consistently good, the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs has recognised, as a priority, the need for further training in the quality of pupils' individual targets. Learning support assistants and the co-ordinator for special educational needs provide good support in lessons, in small group work and work with individual pupils. This support has been particularly effective in the teaching of the Additional Literacy Support programme which includes Years 3, 4 and 5. There is good formal and informal liaison between class teachers and learning support assistants, and there is good use of monitoring notebooks, which are used effectively as regular tools of assessment. Pupils who receive support from the Advisory Service for the Education of Travellers make good progress when they are in school, because their needs are clearly identified, and the support from the visiting learning support assistant and the class teachers is well focused on their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from good specialist support from the Local Education Authority's specialist service, and profit from the good structure of the literacy hour. As a result, they make good progress in their use and understanding of English, and are able to achieve at least average standards in their work in all subjects.

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

35. The school provides a good curriculum, which is relevant to the needs of all the pupils. The previous inspection found that there was insufficient provision for information technology and for design and technology. Both these subjects are now adequately provided for. Indeed, information technology is used well to support learning right across the curriculum, for example, in history in Year 6 and in mathematics in Key Stage 1. Statutory requirements are met for all subjects. Total weekly teaching time is above the nationally recommended minimum at both key stages. The pupils are receiving a wide range of good learning opportunities, including swimming at Key Stage 2, outdoor and adventurous activities during a Year 6 residential visit and opportunities for instrumental music tuition. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily. Its implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is proving very effective and this is having a positive impact on standards in mathematics at both key stages.

36. The school has made a good response to a key issue of the previous inspection, which was to improve long term planning of the curriculum by developing schemes of work for all subjects, and by improving systems for ensuring a progressive development of skills. Clear policies and schemes of work for all subjects, some incorporating guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, are now in place, and these are proving successful in promoting at least average standards of work in all subjects. The school is about to develop a scheme of work for the dance aspect of physical education. Work in subjects such as history, geography and design and technology is done on a two-year cycle so that the pupils have the opportunity to cover the necessary programmes of study. There is still a lack of guidance, however, on ensuring the development of pupils' mapping skills in geography. The teachers plan carefully for the work which the pupils will cover each half term and each week.

37. Provision for extracurricular activities is good, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. A number of parents feel that there is an insufficient range of activities outside lessons. Whilst it is true that there are no after school clubs on offer to the pupils in Key Stage 1, younger pupils do have the opportunity to go on a good number of visits to places such as Didcot Railway Centre, Appleton Farm, Bekonscot Model Village and the Cotswold Wildlife Park. Key Stage 2 pupils participate in clubs for football, netball, cricket, country dancing and chess. About 45 pupils attend a drama club and there is a school choir, which recently performed well in front of 50,000 people at the Oxford Millennium Festival. The pupils can pay to attend woodwind and French clubs. The school often does well in sporting competitions. Footballers from Year 4 recently won a competition in front of over 5000 people at Oxford United's ground. Last year, the school won the Vale of White Horse Primary Schools Indoor five-a-side Football Tournament and the Carslaw Cup, and the year before, the school won the girls' district athletics championships. Last term, the school's hockey team reached the semi-final of a local tournament. The pupils in Key Stage 2 also have the opportunity to enhance their learning through worthwhile visits to places such as Wittenham Nature Reserve, Wytham Woods, Legoland and museums in Oxford. Year 6 pupils have the benefit of a residential visit to Kilvrough Manor in South Wales. The teachers also enrich their curriculum by making use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors, including an astronomer, the Mayor and the emergency services.

38. The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. This aspect of the curriculum is managed effectively by the religious education co-ordinator. Sex education is taught through the school's Education for Christian Love and Living Policy. Questions are answered honestly and openly as they arise, with due regard to the pupils' ages. Formal sex education is offered to Year 6 pupils in the summer term. There is no written drugs education policy in place, but, in practice, appropriate attention is paid to the dangers of drug misuse in science lessons and on other occasions as they present themselves. The necessity of maintaining a healthy diet and lifestyle is also taught as part of science.

39. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, and has greatly improved from the previous OFSTED inspection, when it was unsatisfactory, and poorly managed. There is good provision made for pupils' literacy support through the Additional Literacy Support programme, and in classes where learning support assistants work with

individual pupils or with small groups. In classes where individual education plan targets are well thought out and challenging for the pupils, provision is particularly good. They include literacy, numeracy and behavioural targets. However, in some classes, the targets are not sufficiently precise, nor well matched enough to pupils' needs, and these factors limit pupils' progress. Learning support assistants carry out activities planned by the teachers very effectively, and keep careful and appropriate records of pupils' progress. Learning support assistants and teachers and the co-ordinator for special educational needs work well together.

40. Curricular provision for children aged under five is sound. The planning for the children is appropriate and takes full account of the recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of quality. There is very good provision for personal and social development. This is a strength of the early years class which prepares children well for full-time education. More focused teaching, linked to literacy and numeracy is carefully planned for and is introduced appropriately to the children.

41. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The previous inspection found that this provision was good and was a strength of the school. This remains very much the case.

42. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. A clear mission statement emphasises the school's role in providing an education based on a Christian ethos and in providing a welcoming community. In this, the school is very successful. A sense of spirituality and prayerfulness is developed in all classrooms, in acts of collective worship and in a weekly liturgy, celebrated with the community. During a leavers' mass observed during the inspection, Year 6 pupils read out prayers which they had written themselves. In the most recent Newsdesk, these pupils had written about their hopes and wishes for the new millennium. Throughout the school, the pupils write prayers of their own and thanks to God for his care and protection. A Year 1 / 2 registration period began with the lighting of a candle, reflection on the day ahead and a morning prayer. Pupils with special educational needs have talked about emotions, such as anger and sadness. In many lessons, the teachers encourage the pupils to develop a sense of awe and wonder in learning. In an information technology lesson, for example, Year 1 / 2 pupils showed real excitement in generating images of Joseph's coat of many colours. Year 4 pupils did the same during a lesson on electrical circuits, especially when some realised that the missing ingredient was a battery! The following day, this was used in assembly as an example of learning from our mistakes.

43. Provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The previous inspection found this to be sound. The school's mission statement emphasises a whole-school approach to the promotion of positive attitudes and behaviour and parents appreciate the values and attitudes which the school seeks to develop in their children. A clear behaviour policy lists the school's rules and its policy towards bullying. Good behaviour and effort are rewarded through a system of good work certificates, house points, stickers and 'worker of the week' certificates which are celebrated during assemblies. The pupils contribute to the making of classroom rules, which are then displayed prominently. The teachers provide good role models for the pupils, and instil in them a strong sense of right and wrong. Midday supervisors award 'playground certificates' for sensible behaviour at lunchtime, and these are proving effective in creating a calm and happy atmosphere. Issues of morality, for example, child labour in Victorian times, are often discussed in lessons, and Year 4 pupils have written some effective stories with a moral theme.

44. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. The previous inspection found this to be good. Parents feel that the school is successful in helping their children to mature and become responsible. The teachers offer older pupils many opportunities to show responsibility by undertaking a variety of tasks which help the school day run more smoothly. One governor maintains that when he rings the school at lunchtime, he is unsure whether it is a teacher or an older pupil answering the telephone. Prefects, house captains and class representatives on the school council have the opportunity to take part in decision making and to develop important social skills. Older pupils show a real sense of care and responsibility towards the younger children. The pupils develop very good social skills in school productions, extracurricular activities

and in the dining hall. In geography lessons, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are encouraged to develop a responsible attitude towards issues of environmental pollution and the need for conservation of areas such as the tropical rain forests. They develop good communication skills by conducting a survey of facilities and transport in Abingdon. Each class takes part in a litter-picking rota. The pupils are encouraged to think of people less fortunate than themselves by supporting a variety of local and national charities. In many lessons, such as mathematics, science and physical education, the teachers encourage the pupils to develop good social skills by working co-operatively to tackle investigations and to become good team players.

45. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. In history lessons and through visits to museums, the pupils learn about the legacy of the Vikings, the Tudors and the Victorians and how the culture of Britain as we know it today has evolved. They learn of the changes in society since the last World War. In art, the pupils become familiar with the works of painters such as Matisse, Rousseau, Klee and Mondrian, and in music they have the opportunity to appreciate the works of composers such as Holst, Wagner, Erin Copeland and the contribution of jazz to musical culture. The school encourages a love of literature, through book weeks, a book character day and a visit by Year 6 to see 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' at the cinema. The pupils are made aware of the diversity of faiths and cultures which exist throughout the world. Reception children have benefited from the opportunity to sample Malaysian cooking and they have celebrated the Chinese New Year. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can read some 'books from around the world' and they can follow the world-wide travels of Barnaby Bear. Older pupils learn about some of the world's major religions and the culture of India. There are some books in French in the Key Stage 2 library and pupils can pay to participate in a French club. Older pupils have drawn some very effective 'faces from around the world', but, overall, there is insufficient emphasis on non-western art. There is also limited provision for the pupils to appreciate music from other cultures.

46. The school has very good links with the local community. Each week, family and friends are invited into masses and assemblies, and tea and coffee is served afterwards. They are also invited to other events, such as concerts and sports day. There is very good support from the governing body. At the Year 6 leavers' assembly, which was taken by the priest and Year 6 pupils, there were 35 parishioners and families in attendance. Student teachers, pupils on work experience and child-care students are welcomed into school. A bulletin of school events is displayed in the parish each term, and the chairman of the parents' association ensures that the local community is aware of the school's activities. A parent governor is actively involved in seeking sponsorship from business for the new play area for children aged under five.

47. The school enjoys good, effective links with other schools. Most pupils transfer to three local comprehensive secondary schools, and relationships with these are good. Teachers and pupils exchange useful visits, and there is a meeting for parents. Curricular and personal information is passed on, as well as annual reports and test results. These strong links help to prepare pupils well for transfer to their new schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?The school provides good care for its pupils. They receive good support and work in a safe, friendly environment. The school's mission statement aims to develop the full academic, social and physical potential of all pupils through love, respect and care for others. The procedures for monitoring and promoting suitable behaviour are good. A detailed and effective policy gives clear outlines of expectations which pupils understand and which are also shared with parents. Pupils who have difficulty in keeping to the rules are offered useful strategies to help them manage their behaviour. The school does not tolerate bullying, and is constantly vigilant in order to prevent any form of harassment.

49. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. The whole school ethos is well reflected in the way it ensures that pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are valued highly, and their achievements are well recognised. This is particularly true for those pupils who have statements of special educational need, and ensures that these pupils make good progress. There are good

procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs, and this represents a significant improvement from the previous OFSTED inspection, when these were poor. Pupils' needs are quickly identified when they enter the school, and appropriate arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress. There is good liaison with outside agencies, which provide support. Good records are kept of pupils' progress in relation to their targets. Although most teachers use this information to ensure that class activities are well matched to the pupils' needs, this is not consistent in all classes.

50. The school has adopted a comprehensive policy to promote health and safety, with regular risk assessment to ensure the well-being of all its pupils. The headteacher is the responsible officer. Health and safety education is good, and makes pupils aware of personal hygiene and the need to be safety conscious.

51. Procedures relating to child protection are in place and the headteacher is the responsible officer. At present, however, there is no one to deputise for him if he is not there. Random fire drills are held each half term, and equipment is regularly maintained. Electrical equipment is checked regularly, and suitable records kept. There is adequate first aid equipment. All staff have been well-trained, and any incidents are recorded appropriately and parents notified.

52. Procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are generally good. The previous inspection report was critical in this respect, and found that assessment was variable and was used insufficiently to inform planning. A key issue was to develop effective assessment and recording systems. Good progress has, therefore, been made to address these criticisms. Assessment procedures are managed effectively by the two key stage co-ordinators. A clear assessment policy, which was reviewed last year, outlines the particular focus of assessment in each year. Arrangements for end of key stage national tests meet statutory requirements. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 take optional national test papers, in order to assess progress. Reading tests and commercially produced tests are also used throughout the school to assess attainment. The teachers incorporate opportunities for assessment into their planning for each half term and for each week. There are still, however, some subjects where assessment is not fully developed, notably in art, design and technology, geography, history and music, and these shortcomings limit pupils' progress in these subjects.

53. The school has begun to make much more use of assessment data to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning than was evident in the previous OFSTED inspection. The results of national tests are carefully analysed to highlight areas of relative weakness in performance and to plan accordingly to provide additional academic support as necessary. Teachers make good use of assessment to plan subsequent work in English and science at Key Stage 2 and in mathematics in both key stages. However, assessment is not being used sufficiently to inform planning in English and science in the mixed age classes in Key Stage 1. Here, there is insufficient focus on what is expected of the pupils to achieve in terms of the higher National Curriculum levels of attainment. As a result, standards in reading and writing in particular are too low. The school has developed useful collections of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels of attainment in mathematics, English, science and information technology, in order to help the teachers in the accuracy and consistency of their assessments. In the 1999 national tests, whilst most of the assessments made by teachers were fairly accurate, there were examples, such as English at Key Stage 2 and mathematics at Key Stage 1, where there were discrepancies between what the teachers predicted pupils would attain and what they did, in fact, achieve.

54. The previous inspection found that the school had no marking policy. This has now been addressed. A clear policy emphasises positive marking and the need to make marking helpful for the pupils. Nevertheless, its implementation is variable. There are examples of very good marking. The Year 6 teacher, for example, made comments in her marking such as "What would be the benefit of educating the children?" in history, and, in mathematics, "If you don't draw the columns neatly, you cannot read the graph accurately". Too often, however, pupils' work is just ticked, or has a congratulatory comment added, even if the standard is not as high as it should be.

55. The teachers use plenary sessions well to assess what the pupils have learnt during the lessons, to clarify misunderstandings and to consolidate learning. Some teachers try to involve the pupils in self-assessment, and this is good practice. In Year 4, for example, the teacher asked the pupils if they thought their work deserved a house point, and the pupils were very responsible in making their decision.

56. Assessment and record keeping procedures in the early years class for children aged under five are good. Everyday observations of the children at work and play, within each area of learning are well established and documented. Consequently, the teacher has a clear overview of the curriculum, and can see clearly how well children are progressing. A good record of children's work is kept to show and monitor their progress.

57. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. Teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well. Each pupil has a useful 'Personal and Social Skills Sheet', on which the teachers record clearly and simply the progress being made in developing the skills of listening, co-operating, sharing, decision making and originality. Individual half-termly targets for improvement often include personal development skills. Pupils who need support for their special educational needs benefit from mostly good individual plans, with clear targets for them to achieve. Their progress is reviewed regularly, and appropriate new targets set. The school monitors different groups of pupils well. As an example, some years ago, it was clear that one year group was performing particularly poorly, and the school set in motion a valuable 'tracking' system. This involved monitoring pupils' assessment scores over four years, and providing extra support for any weaknesses found. This worked well, and the pupils improved significantly over the monitoring period. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance. Registers are accurately maintained, and parents are contacted quickly if their child is absent.

58. Since the previous report, the good degree of care for pupils remains as strong, and some areas have improved significantly. The behaviour policy is applied more consistently than it was before, and the monitoring of pupils' personal development and of those with behaviour problems has improved; it was unsatisfactory, and is now good.

59. Induction procedures for children aged under five are appropriate. Parents are invited to meet with the early years teacher, the headteacher and the school nurse where they have the opportunity to hear about the learning their child will experience and receive the school's Prospectus. There is no booklet specific to the provision for children aged under five in school or guidelines on what they can do at home to help. Twice yearly parent/teacher meetings are held. One after the first half term of starting school to share the results of the assessments of the children made on their entry to the school and one at the end of the children's time in the early years class when parents receive a written report of their child's progress. There is constant daily communication between the early years staff and parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The school works very well in partnership with parents, and has high expectations that parents will support their children's learning to ensure that they achieve high standards. Parents are very appreciative of the dedication and commitment of the staff, of the class teachers' involvement with their children and of the very good relationships within the school. They feel that staff are very approachable. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Parents are always made to feel welcome in school, and many help on a regular basis, particularly with reading, sewing and cooking. Working parties give practical help with activities such as painting and pruning trees. A very active Parents' Association raises considerable sums of money, which the school uses well, and which includes subsidies for the Year 6 residential visits.

61. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well with their child's support. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns and they are consulted in all procedures. They have indicated their appreciation of the school's support and the encouragement which the school gives them to be involved in their child's care. Parents of pupils

who receive support from the Advisory Service for the Education of Travellers have good liaison with the school and the Advisory Service.

62. The quality of information provided for parents is very good, with regular, informative newsletters and a school newspaper, which is an effective line of communication for pupils and parents. There are two parents' consultation evenings and an evening of curricular information, which was very well attended. Annual written reports are of good quality. They meet statutory requirements, but some parents would like more targets for their child to aim towards, and more information on the levels at which their children are working. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report to parents are clear and informative, but they lack required information on attendance statistics.

63. The parents' questionnaires, parents at the meeting and those who spoke to inspectors in school showed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. They were very happy and supportive of the school, and of the good progress, which their children make. A small number of parents were concerned about homework, but the inspectors found that the provision of homework supports pupils' learning satisfactorily. The parent governors play an active role on the governing body and support the school very effectively.

64. Parents act as class representatives and provide vital links between home and school. The school has an 'open door' policy which parents welcome. In addition, each Friday after school, teachers are available for informal discussion. There is a home school agreement, with clear expectations outlined and a reading record book.

65. Parents are invited to share in weekly masses, assemblies and other school events. In association with the local college of further education, the school has arranged computer lessons in school for adult beginners, leading to a qualification and certificate.

66. There is little significant difference from the previous report in the school's very good partnership with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The school benefits from good leadership. Parents speak very highly of the management of the school, and the way the headteacher has helped to create a happy and purposeful environment. The headteacher has high expectations of teachers and pupils, and these are clearly communicated. His firm, but caring, style enables him to meet the school's aims of expecting high standards of work and behaviour within a deeply spiritual ethos. That is a fundamental reason why this school is so successful.

68. The leadership has made a good response to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, and works to a well-structured action plan. Schemes of work are now in place, and they are of good quality. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved significantly, and is managed well by the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is a full time class teacher who carries out her responsibilities effectively and efficiently. The school now has good systems and procedures for managing the support given to pupils with special educational needs and for monitoring its effectiveness. The school fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. There is a designated governor for special educational needs, who has a very good involvement in the work of the school. This governor monitors all aspects of the school's provision, including the interviewing of parents and pupils.

69. The monitoring of teaching is now good, and has helped to improve teachers' work. The school's assessment procedures are generally good, but there are still some problems in Key Stage 1 where pupils' work is assessed methodically, but not enough is done with the information gained, particularly to raise standards in reading and writing. The school has worked hard to improve the provision for information technology, and this is now good.

70. The school's monitoring of the quality of teaching works well because it involves the headteacher, governors and co-ordinators working in partnership. The teaching of different subjects is monitored rigorously by co-ordinators and the headteacher for the quality of teaching

and learning, and by governors for the extent to which it meets the requirements of the subject's policy. In this way, teachers benefit from useful individual feedback, the whole staff gain an insight into the teaching of the subject through the school, and the headteacher and governors see the 'big picture'. The usefulness of this process is illustrated by the high quality of the teaching and learning, and the good structure of the curriculum.

71. The leadership of the school reacts well to any shortcomings found in pupils' work. The headteacher, co-ordinators and governors monitor samples of pupils' work to see if any subjects are weaker than others, or if any groups of pupils are struggling with the work. When, for example, a particular year group was performing poorly some years ago, the school tracked their progress carefully for four years. Extra work to improve their reading was provided, and this raised their standards significantly. A similar programme is to begin next term for the current Year 2. At Key Stage 2, the analysis of pupils' results in the annual assessment tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 revealed weaknesses in their numeracy skills. Consequently, the school provided more mental mathematics work, and pupils' scores in subsequent tests showed a good improvement.

72. The problem of boys performing worse than girls in reading was addressed by inviting soldiers and policemen into school to read with pupils, and boys showed a much greater enthusiasm for reading than before. This initiative ran alongside a 'reading challenge' for all pupils which gave rewards of small prizes for reading a quantity of books over a set period. Over 100 pupils read the maximum number of books, and their reading improved markedly as a result.

73. The 'flat' management system employed by the school, having no deputy headteacher but two key stage leaders works well. The key stage leaders co-ordinate the curricular planning effectively so that it builds on pupils' knowledge year by year, and ensures a full coverage of the National Curriculum. Subject co-ordinators provide good support to other staff, by ensuring that schemes of work are in place, and providing helpful advice on teaching and learning. The temporary situation of one teacher managing both literacy and numeracy is, however, unsatisfactory, and places too great a burden upon one member of staff.

76. The governors give very good support, and are much in evidence around the school. They analyse all policies rigorously, and use their considerable skills and enthusiasm to help improve the school's provision. Their committees work well because each has clear terms of reference, which provide detailed expectations of their roles. Governors substantially meet the statutory requirements for the teaching of the curriculum and the welfare of pupils, but there are minor omissions in the school's prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents.

77. There is a sound number of well-qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school has a good mix of new and experienced teachers. Individual teachers' expertise is used well to provide informed teaching of information technology, art and physical education to different classes. This system works well. New teachers to the school benefit from good induction procedures, which include a mentor to provide guidance and support.

78. The school has effective systems for assisting in the training of student teachers. Members of staff give advice on lesson plans, and observe students teaching. A teacher acts as a mentor, and students find this support valuable.

79. The school has good arrangements for the appraisal of teachers. Each member of staff meets with the headteacher to agree on targets for the year ahead, and discuss training needs. This system is an effective way of improving teachers' skills, and identifying any common needs of the whole staff. Last year, for example, it turned out that a number of co-ordinators felt that they needed more guidance on their role, and so, in this area of their work, all staff benefited from training.

80. There are sufficient support staff, who make a big contribution to the school's work, particularly with pupils with special educational needs. They work closely with teachers, and make a significant difference to the quality of teaching and learning. Some lessons, however, take place without this support, and this means that pupils have to wait to be helped. The school has identified the need to increase the number of support assistants.

81. The school benefits from the expertise of peripatetic music specialists. They take pupils for individual and group lessons, and have helped a significant number to attain high standards in their playing. A disadvantage of this system, however, is the withdrawal of pupils from lessons for this tuition. There is nothing in teachers' planning to enable pupils to cover the ground lost during their absence and when the pupils return to lessons they have missed important work.

82. The accommodation supports the teaching of the curriculum well. Most rooms are large and bright, and allow pupils to move around easily. There are good, specialist rooms for music and pupils with special educational needs, and an excellent information technology suite, which is having a good effect on pupils' standards. The library area for pupils in the infants, however, is badly organised, and hinders the development of their library skills.

83. The school has good resources overall to support teaching and learning, and teachers use them well. Resources are very good in information technology, and good in English, science, art and design and technology. Resources are inadequate in geography, where there are too few books, maps and photographs, and in history, where there is a shortage of books and historical materials.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

84. In order to continue to raise standards, the headteacher, governing body and staff should:

- **Raise standards in the infants, particularly in science, reading and writing, by using assessment more effectively to identify clearly how pupils are progressing and their attainment on entry to the school.** (paragraphs 16, 53, 117, 132)
- **Ensure that the school's development plan is written so that the priorities of the headteacher and staff are taken into account.** (paragraph 75) and
- **Improve the resources in history and geography.** (paragraphs 83, 148, 153)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Improve the consistency of teachers' marking, so that it is clear to pupils how they can do better. (paragraphs 33, 54, 116)

Develop assessment procedures for all subjects. (paragraphs 52, 138, 143, 148, 153, 164)

Place greater emphasis on the presentation of pupils' work. (paragraphs 19, 121, 132).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 51 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 48 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 6 | 25 | 45 | 22 | 2 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR-Y6 |
|--|---------|-------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | | 236 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 10 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR-Y6 |
|---|---------|-------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | | 51 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 8 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 21 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.1 |
| 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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1999 | 14 | 16 | 30 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 14 | 13 | 14 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| | Total | 28 | 27 | 28 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 93 (86) | 90 (91) | 93 (91) |
| | National | 82 (80) | 83 (81) | 87 (84) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| | Girls | 14 | 14 | 14 |
| | Total | 27 | 28 | 27 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (80) | 93 (88) | 90 (88) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85) | 87(86) |

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 |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 1999 | 14 | 20 | 34 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 13 | 13 | 13 |
| | Girls | 19 | 18 | 18 |
| | Total | 32 | 31 | 31 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 94 (63) | 91 (68) | 91 (83) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 9 | 13 | 13 |
| | Girls | 16 | 19 | 18 |
| | Total | 25 | 32 | 31 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 74 (76) | 94 (71) | 91 (68) |
| | National | 68 (65) | 69 (65) | 75 (72) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | 3 |
| Indian | |
| Pakistani | |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | 2 |
| White | 220 |
| 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 | 1 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 9.2 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 25.6 |
| Average class size | 30.3 |

Education support staff: YR-Y6

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 93 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|--------|
| Financial year | 1999 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 383023 |
| Total expenditure | 375186 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1611 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 26440 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 34277 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 263 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 60 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 52 | 42 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 45 | 43 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 52 | 45 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 42 | 40 | 13 | 5 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 42 | 50 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 40 | 45 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 53 | 40 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 48 | 43 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 42 | 48 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 43 | 43 | 8 | 0 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 53 | 42 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 40 | 38 | 17 | 3 | 2 |

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

86. When children aged under five enter the school, their overall attainment is average for their ages. From this starting point, the majority of children make good progress and reach the expected standards in the recommended areas of learning by the time they reach statutory school age. In mathematics and their personal and social development, most children are on course to exceed the national objectives by the age of five. In language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development, they are well on course to meet the standard expected of them by the age of five. Provision for children aged under five was not reported on by the school's previous OFSTED inspection.

87. The school admits children, part-time, to an early years class in the term after their fourth birthday. By their third term in school, they attend full-time. At the time of the inspection, there were 22 children aged under five in the Early years class, seven who were attending full-time and 15 part-time.

Personal and social development

88. Most children are likely to reach higher standards than those found in most schools by the time they are five years old. Personal and social development is strongly promoted, which has a positive impact on their learning. The well-organised procedures and caring nature of the provision allow all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. Children come into the classroom happily and respond positively to the activities. They quickly become independent, settle to tasks well and after physical education lessons dress themselves promptly without any fuss. All adults use praise and encouragement effectively. They motivate the children to learn and are good at encouraging the children to try. Consequently, the children are self-confident, mix well with other children and behave well. They join in whole-school assemblies readily, and listen carefully throughout. The provision for free play is good and enhances the children's co-operation with others. By the time the children are five, they work and play well as part of a group, settle to tasks quickly and are able to concentrate for increasing periods of time. For example, a group of children were engrossed in manipulating re-cycled materials to make models and in making decisions about how to join the materials. In group activities with an adult, they are eager to answer questions, try hard to succeed and carry out instructions carefully and conscientiously. Children are eager to explore new learning, enjoy their work and, by the age of five, have mature attitudes to learning.

89. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in this area. Opportunities are exploited to the full to promote the children's personal and social development and the children respond positively. A strength of the teaching is the development of children's personal independence. The teacher and nursery nurse develop very good relationships with the children and set very good examples of respect towards each other, the children and their parents which the children follow. Children are encouraged to be kind and helpful towards others and to consider the impact of their actions on others, both at work and at play times. A wide range of experiences is provided for them to develop an awareness of caring for others, such as inviting a mother in to bath her baby and visits by a doctor and nurse to talk about their work. The staff also make good use of special occasions, such as the children's birthdays, to allow time for them to reflect on their previous experiences.

Language and literacy

90. Children make good progress in the development of language and early literacy skills and, by the age of five, reach the levels expected for their age. They are provided with a wide range of purposeful practical activities to support the development of language and literacy. Teachers provide many opportunities for children to talk with an adult whilst they undertake their activities and actively seek to extend their vocabulary. Children understand and use a wide vocabulary, and, by the age of five, show confidence in talking. For instance, when talking about the cakes they made, they go through the ingredients and method and use vocabulary such as, 'creamy',

'squidgy' and 'hot from the oven but firm and brown' to describe the cakes before and after being cooked. They participate eagerly in discussions and learn how to listen attentively to others. Children enjoy sharing books with an adult, and listen to stories with great pleasure. They join in with the story, and recognise phrases, such as, 'could not', 'would not', 'house', 'mouse' and 'anywhere' in the book 'Green Eggs and Ham'. By the age of five, most children know that words and pictures carry meaning and some read on sight a few familiar words in simple text. They associate sounds with written letters and many of the older children are beginning to use their phonic knowledge well to write simple regular words such as ten, bun, sun and gun. Progress in writing is sound, and, by five, children are fully aware of the purpose of writing. Nearly all make good attempts to communicate meaning through simple words and phrases when writing 'letters' to their friends, for example, or 'writing' out a recipe for cakes they have made. They write their own names clearly and accurately, and label their drawings of flowering plants. Most children learn to form recognisable letters, many of which are correctly formed, by the time they are five.

91. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in language and literacy. Teachers understand the importance of language development and use a wide range of strategies to extend the children's learning. The 'writing table' is available for children to use freely, and role-play is often used to promote their writing skills. The literacy work is well structured, and the opportunity to work in small groups with the teacher is a frequent and useful part of the routine. The staff use the shared writing and reading times well to promote the children's skills. The teaching of reading is well structured, from sharing books, to the more formal introduction to reading and phonic practice. Appropriate computer programs, when the children have to identify a letter and match it to the correct object, help to reinforce the children's understanding of the initial sounds in words. The teaching of writing is made meaningful by connecting it to the planned activities, such as after cooking, or in labelling their drawings of plants.

Mathematics

92. Children make good progress in mathematics, and most are on course to higher standards than those found in most schools by the age of five. This is largely due to the high quality of the teaching and to the good opportunities provided for children to participate in a range of practical mathematical activities over a period of time. Children recognise and count numbers to 20 with good skills, and write them correctly. A few have sufficient knowledge of number operations to add three numbers when throwing dice, and are beginning to understand that the position of a digit signifies its value. When threading beads or putting pegs into a pegboard, the children are challenged to complete the task within a set time and they learn about the passage of time. They use mathematical names for 'flat' two-dimensional shapes, and show a good awareness of the properties of position and movement as they fit together plastic shapes to create pictures.

93. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in this area. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of the needs of these young children ensure that there is an appropriate variety of practical activities before working on a more formal curriculum. The work is planned well and the tasks provided for the children clearly promote their numeracy skills. Both the class teacher and nursery nurse encourage the children's mathematical development by intervening in the children's play, and asking questions such as, "Can you make a long thin shape with the dough?" or "Do the shapes fit together?" to promote discussion. The experiences provided for the children are enjoyable and meaningful, and build well from what they know, understand and are able to do.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

94. The children come to school with a varied knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They make good progress in most aspects of this area of learning, and are generally meeting the standards expected of them by the age of five. Taking the themes such as 'Transport', 'Materials', 'Growing' or 'Myself', all activities are planned to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. The children observe and care for living things, such as worms, African snails, stick insects and plants. They grow sunflowers from seed, measure their growth with reasonable accuracy and draw and label

pictures of what happens to the plants over time. They explore and work with a range of materials for weaving, making models and building. Their skills in model making are well developed.

95. They draw on their own experiences to help generate ideas, select materials for themselves and use sticky tape, glue, paper clips and tags effectively to join them together. Their models of such items as a helicopter, lighthouse and the 'boxes' based around the book of 'Ben's Box' are finished to a high standard. Through the opportunity to observe the building of a new house near to the school, the children learn that materials are chosen for specific purposes and have the practical experience of building with house bricks, by using the correct tools and materials for the job. Children learn about the past through stories of such events as the Great Fire of London, and through the tales of their parents and grandparents who are invited in to share their past memories. The staff make appropriate use of visits to places of interest, such as Didcot Railway Centre and Beconscot Model Village to provide children with a range of suitable experiences, and give them the opportunity to gain an awareness of places beyond their own locality. They enjoy using the computer and use the mouse carefully to click on items on screen to identify the shape and sound of letters they see. Children produce good descriptions of significant events in their lives, such as their birthdays, and know of certain religious practices in their own lives. They gain awareness of the cultures and beliefs of others by learning about the celebration of the Chinese New Year and the Hindu festival of Diwali.

96. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good as seen in the range of well planned experiences that are relevant to the children in the world around them.

Physical development

97. Most children are on course to meet the recommended standards with regard to their physical development by the time they are five. They use a range of tools with average skill, including scissors, glue sticks and fine paint brushes. They cut card and paper carefully when modelling, manipulate materials such as clay to make well-formed pots and use tools creatively to make patterns in the clay. There are appropriate opportunities for physical movement, both in the outside area and in the hall. They move around with reasonable agility, showing a satisfactory awareness of space and of each other. Outside, children use scooters and equipment requiring pushing and pulling with increasing control. They run, skip and jump with reasonable co-ordination and improve their performance by repeating some actions.

98. The quality of teaching and learning is good in this area. The direct teaching of physical education is effective and fully promotes, not only the children's physical development but assists in their creative development. All children are well supported by both the teacher and nursery nurse, as observed in a dance lesson, where they were fully involved in leading the children, and encouraging them to use all parts of their body.

99. The enclosed outdoor play area adjoining the classroom only has a small space for children to develop co-ordination and to increase their control by using equipment for climbing, scrambling, sliding and swinging. There is an appropriate range of wheeled vehicles, but although there is some climbing apparatus for the children, its use is restricted by the weather, as it is on a grassed area. However, the school has acquired some extra land that adjoins the Early years class, and is planning to improve the play area during the summer break of this year.

Creative development

100. Overall, the children are on course to achieve similar standards to those found in most schools by the time that they are five years old. There are good examples of children using the 'Fire Station' play area to re-enact the roles of fire officers, and in the sand when they re-create the story of the 'Little Red Hen' by filling bags with sand to represent the corn. In art and craft work, there are daily opportunities for free painting, as well as planned tasks for the development of skills. Children know the names of the colours, and use them to good effect in their paintings and patterns. They use a variety of materials well to weave, make and decorate clay pots, and have regular opportunities to cook. They enjoy making things, and select materials and use different techniques for joining the materials to produce a range of models. In music, they clap in

time to their singing and make 'body' sounds for other children to follow. In response to music in dance lessons, the children thoroughly enjoy moving as flickering flames and use 'fire sticks' with ribbons on imaginatively to swirl around their bodies and create the mood of a fire dance.

101. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good, and the activities are well organised. The classroom is attractively displayed with examples of the children's work and photographs of past experiences. The teacher plans role-play opportunities carefully, and these enable children to learn how to play out imaginary situations.

ENGLISH

102. Standards in Year 6 are above those found in most schools. The averages of the school's 1999 end of Key Stage 2 test results showed that, compared with all schools, standards were well above average in English. Compared with similar schools, standards were above average. Overall, over the past four years, standards have been well above average but with a drop in standards in 1998. There were no significant differences in the standards attained by boys and girls. The school set formal targets in English for this year of 78 per cent of pupils to achieve at least the national standard. This was a good degree of challenge, and the unverified results show that, in fact, 77 per cent of pupils attained this level. To illustrate how standards are improving, the current Year 6 had targets set for them two years ago aiming for 66 per cent of them to attain the national standard by this year.

103. The findings of this inspection are that standards in English by Year 6 are higher than those found in most schools. Initial indications are that the end of Key Stage 2 test results are in agreement with these findings. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls. This judgement represents a drop in the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standards compared with the corresponding group last year, because the current class has more pupils with special educational needs. Similar standards were found at the school's previous inspection, which indicates that good standards have been maintained.

104. By the age of eleven, pupils attain above average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils speak confidently and clearly in class and in individual and group discussion. They listen with good attention to their teachers and to each other, and share their ideas thoughtfully. In discussions in class, they listen carefully, and ask and answer questions that respond closely to what others have said. There are good opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to take part in more formal discussion. This was seen to good effect in a geography lesson where pupils considered environmental issues relating to the conservation of woodland. The higher achieving pupils used a good range of information, and showed a sufficiently deep understanding of the issues to develop their argument and present their points of view relevantly. Average and lower achieving pupils were able to present suitable ideas and points of view clearly.

105. By Year 6, standards in reading are above average. Pupils are interested in books, read with enjoyment, fluency and accuracy and evaluate the books they have read with confidence. Average and lower achieving pupils respond well to various forms of reading. Most make simple predictions, and have a satisfactory understanding of characters, ideas and events. Higher achieving pupils are able to develop their ideas well when discussing preferences of character, author and genre and can relate them to specific parts of the text. They generally read a good number of books, which provide a good level of challenge and interest. Pupils know how to make reference to subjects in the library, and many use contents pages and indexes confidently. They have good opportunities across the curriculum to consolidate and develop their research skills.

106. Standards in writing are above average by the age of 11. Most pupils write effectively for a wide range of purposes and readers, and their writing reflects a wide variety of styles and moods, for example, formal and informal letters, character studies, play scripts, poetry, biography, diaries, argument, instruction and persuasion. Pupils show confidence in using a wide range of vocabulary, and are comfortable with the technicalities of writing. The work of higher achieving pupils shows a very good ability to adapt the tone of their writing effectively in more formal contexts with a growing sense of style. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally accurate in the work of higher achievers and pupils of average ability. There is some variability in

standards of spelling and expression in the work of lower achieving pupils. Most pupils use a neat, fluent and joined style of handwriting, but the presentation of their work is often careless. Pupils' skills in planning, editing, redrafting and refining their writing to improve its quality are good. Many make good use of information and communications technology to write up and improve their work.

107. The averages of the school's 1999 end of Key Stage 1 test results show that, compared with all schools, standards were above average in reading and well above average in writing. Compared with similar schools, standards were close to average in reading, and above average in writing. Over the past few years, pupils' performance in reading and writing has been above average although there was some variability in test results for 1996 and in 1998. Taking the past four years together the performance of girls has been above average and the performance of boys has been close to average.

108. The findings of this inspection are that standards in both reading and writing in the current Year 2 are lower than those found in most schools. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls. Initial indications are that the results of the recent national tests at the end of Year 2 agree with this finding. This judgement represents a fall in the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standards when compared with the end of Year 2 test results for 1999. Variations between the end of Year 2 test results in 1999 and the inspection judgement are due to the fact that different groups of pupils are involved and the higher than average number of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs. Thirty per cent of pupils in Year 2 have been identified as having special educational needs. This represents a fall in standards when compared with the school's previous inspection when standards were found to be in line with national expectations by Year 2.

109. In Year 2, pupils attain standards in speaking and listening which are close to the level of national expectations. They listen attentively to stories, rhymes and explanations and make simple and appropriate responses in class. A few pupils extend their ideas in more detail, and speak confidently and clearly.

110. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading are below average. A few pupils read their books clearly and confidently, retell their stories and make simple predictions about what will happen next. They name their favourite authors or books and their reading diaries show an appropriate number of books and range of reading. However, overall, pupils lack sufficient skills to break new words into sounds to read with any confidence, and struggle when asked to talk about their reading. Although most pupils are aware of some of the simple differences between fiction and information books, they have a more limited understanding of how books are organised in a library, and how to use the library for simple research tasks. These limitations are largely due to the lack of appropriate organisation in the Infant library. The school is aware of this problem, and has identified its development as a priority.

111. Standards of writing at the end of Year 2 are well below average. A small number of higher achieving pupils are able to write simple sentences accurately, and there are a few indications in their poetry writing that they are beginning to use words in a more varied and interesting way. In their writing about the wind and the rain, for example, these pupils used words such as 'hammering, flooding, tumbles, splashing'. The writing of most pupils shows an average awareness of how sentences should be structured. However, a significant number of average and lower achieving pupils often spell familiar words incorrectly, and lack consistency in their use of full stops and capital letters. Pupils write for a generally satisfactory range of purposes, but few write at length. Most pupils form their letters clearly but the size and shape are not always consistent. Standards of neatness and presentation are generally weak.

112. As they enter the school at average attainment in English, the level of the pupils' achievement is good by the time they leave, and above that found in most schools in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Whilst pupils make steady progress in the infants, their learning accelerates in the juniors as the demanding lessons and teachers' careful use of assessment give them the skills to approach new work with confidence. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs achieve satisfactory standards relative to their previous

attainment, and do well when they receive well-focused support in class. High achieving pupils achieve appropriate standards by Year 6, but few produce work of a high enough quality in the infants. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from good support in lessons and by specialist teachers, and all attain at least average standards by Year 6.

113. Throughout the school, standards in literacy reflect those found in English. The development of English skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities are appropriately taken to broaden the range of pupils' writing experiences in their research in geography, biographies in history and evaluations of their work in design technology and science.

114. Overall the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are good in the juniors, and satisfactory in the infants. Although pupils generally enter the school with average standards of attainment, the school's own assessment data indicate that the current group of pupils in Year 2 entered the school with weak literacy and language skills. They make sound progress by Year 2. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in English. The previous inspection report found teaching good in the infants, and satisfactory in the juniors. There has been a significant number of staff changes since the previous inspection. One of the strengths in teaching across the school is the quality of relationships in the classroom. Teachers, learning support assistants and other helpers value and respect all pupils' contributions. In this atmosphere, pupils develop their confidence well and take part in lesson activities with interest and enthusiasm. Learning support assistants and class teachers work well together to support pupils on the register of special educational needs, and to effectively teach the additional literacy support strategy to pupils in the juniors.

115. Strengths of the teaching and learning of English across the school were well illustrated in a Year 6 literacy lesson. The lesson was planned carefully, with activities for pupils' differing levels of ability, and good guidance for the learning support assistant. Through very effective use of questions, the teacher established and developed pupils' understanding of how to use dictionaries to discover particular aspects of meaning. Pupils responded well to the good level of challenge in activities. The activity was sharply timed, encouraging good concentration and good progress, and was consolidated by a plenary session, which reinforced the main learning points of the exercise very well. This was followed by a very well organised explanation and demonstration of how to develop initial ideas, and then use them to form a full report. Pupils' interest and understanding were enhanced through well-established links with their work in geography and science. At the end of the lesson, pupils had effectively extended their vocabulary and their use of dictionaries. They had made very good progress in understanding how to plan a report, and began writing their own version. This was the result of very good direct teaching, a productive working atmosphere, good relationships and high expectations of the pupils.

116. All teaching is at least satisfactory, but, in lessons where teaching has shortcomings, the match of activities to pupils' abilities is not always effective, nor is there sufficient challenge to enable all pupils to make good progress. In addition, the use of assessment to set targets and activities which challenge all pupils is a weakness at Key Stage 1. Key Stage 2 teachers make good use of the information from the optional national tests and other standardised data. Teachers generally mark pupils work regularly, with supportive comments and recognition of pupils' achievement. In the best marking, teachers' include guidance for pupils to develop further their skills, but, too often, comments are too bland to teach pupils how to improve.

117. The curriculum in English is broad and balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The policy is reviewed and updated regularly, and contains useful guidelines for the teaching of all aspects of English. The Literacy Strategy is fully implemented throughout the school and is taught on a daily basis. The framework of the National Literacy Strategy provides the scheme of work, and ensures good progression in the teaching of skills and knowledge. Assessment procedures in English are good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, there are some good assessments of pupils' progress, but the school does too little with children's initial assessments on entry to the Early years class, or the end of Key Stage 1 test results, to find out where pupils are struggling. The co-ordinator for the subject is an enthusiastic and hard working teacher who has recently taken responsibility for literacy in addition to her responsibilities for

numeracy and as Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. This is too much to do. The allocation of responsibilities between subject co-ordinator and key stage co-ordinator is not always sufficiently clear to ensure that there is coherence within the subject across all classes in the school, and that best practice is shared. The school monitors English teaching and pupils' work well as part of its rolling programme of monitoring. The findings of the monitoring process are discussed with individual teachers and in general staff meetings.

118. The curriculum for English is enhanced by visits from writers and poets such as John Foster, from members of the police force who read with pupils, book quizzes and story writing competitions such as the contribution made by Year 2 to Roger McGough's incomplete tale. Book resources in the subject are generally good, with some good recent purchases for literacy and for Key Stage 1 readers. Although the Key Stage 2 library supports pupils' research and information retrieval skills appropriately, the Key Stage 1 library area is not sufficiently clearly organised to allow the satisfactory development of library skills. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development and a sound contribution to their spiritual and moral development.

MATHEMATICS

119. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above those found in most other schools. In the previous inspection, they were above average. Over the past three years, standards have been above the national average and have risen consistently. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national assessment tests, standards were well above the national average and above average compared with similar schools. In the most recent national assessment tests, the school's unverified results show that standards are similar, particularly at the higher National Curriculum level of attainment. The school has set challenging targets to maintain these high standards. Based on their average level of attainment on entry to the school, pupils are making very good progress to reach such high standards. High attaining pupils tackle very demanding work with confidence, and many exceed the national expectation by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are making sound progress. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, which found their progress to be unsatisfactory.

120. By the age of 11, the pupils attain well above average standards in basic numeracy skills, in mental calculations and in other aspects of mathematics. They use quick mental recall of the four operations of number to solve questions. For example, they quickly divide 54 by three, halve it and then add or subtract various numbers from their answer. Most of the pupils solve long multiplication and long division questions with ease. They have a very good understanding of the equivalence of fractions and calculate fractions and percentages of numbers quickly and accurately. They solve complex problems skilfully by identifying the necessary information and recognising which number operation to use. They make quick estimates, in order to check the reasonableness of their answers. The pupils understand the language of angles well, and calculate the perimeters and areas of regular and irregular shapes accurately. They use their good knowledge of the 24-hour clock to calculate journey times. The pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. In science, they carefully record water temperatures and the rate at which sugar dissolves, and construct accurate line graphs and pie charts to record the growth of chicks. Recently, the pupils organised the shopping for refreshments provided for parents at a presentation evening about Kilvrough Manor.

121. By the end of Year 2, standards are above those found in most schools, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. This is not as good as the results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests. The present class has more pupils on the special educational needs register, and, although almost all of them are attaining the expected National Curriculum level, few achieve the higher level. Over the past three years, standards have been broadly in line with the national average. In the 1999 national tests, standards were above average compared with similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are making satisfactory progress, which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection.

122. By the age of seven, the pupils attain above average standards in basic numeracy, in mental mathematics and in knowledge of shapes and measures. They use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 and beyond. They use their good knowledge of doubling and halving to calculate quickly the cost of shopping items. Pupils have an average understanding of the concept of decimal notation of money, and use real coins to make up different totals. They tell analogue time correctly, including half and quarter past the hour, and solve simple time problems with average skill. Higher achieving pupils do well to relate analogue to digital time. The pupils use non-standard units well to measure the length of objects in the classroom, and have a sound recognition of right angles in some of these objects. They recognise and name common two and three-dimensional shapes, and conduct good investigations of the capacity of various containers. Most construct accurate block graphs of, for example, favourite toast toppings. They use their mathematical skills effectively in other subjects, such as geography, where they construct effective block graphs of their holiday preferences.

123. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is good. There are examples of very good teaching. This is an improvement on findings of the previous inspection, which judged teaching to vary from good to unsatisfactory. The teachers plan their lessons well, according to the National Numeracy Strategy. They place a strong emphasis on mental mathematics and encourage the pupils to explain their strategies and to appreciate that there is usually more than one way of working something out. "Who did the sum differently?" asked a Year 1/2 teacher, and this helped to give the pupils a broader knowledge of number and to speed up their calculations. Similarly, the Year 4 teacher asked "What has she done that's different?" By providing real objects, such as sweets and bakery items in a Year 1/2 lesson, the teachers make mathematics real and relevant to the pupils. They ensure that the pupils use correct mathematical language and units of measurement. This led in Year 5 to good progress in learning the concept of mode, median, mean and range. Key Stage 2 teachers provide good opportunities for the pupils to carry out independent investigations and to make predictions. This worked well in Year 4 to teach pupils how to recognise patterns in number squares. In Year 6, the teacher taught the pupils clearly how to approach problem solving through a careful, step by step approach. The teachers use information technology well to enhance learning, from using data bases to construct graphs in Key Stage 1, to using spreadsheets as calculators in Key Stage 2.

124. The teachers match work well to varying needs, and monitor pupils' progress carefully. They use assessment well to plan the next steps in learning. A Year 1 / 2 teacher, for example, recognised that some pupils needed more work on money, and the Year 5 teacher saw that further work on calculator skills would be necessary. Some Year 3 pupils were assessed as being able to benefit from a session for high achieving pupils at Westminster College. The teachers use plenary sessions well to assess and reinforce learning; "...talk us through your thought processes," said the Year 6 teacher in one lesson. The good, and often very good, teaching of mathematics is having a positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to lessons in this subject. They really enjoy mental mathematics sessions, and relish having to work quickly to a time limit. However, in both key stages, too many pupils present their work untidily and carelessly, and, in this respect, the teachers are not consistently applying one of the aims of the school's marking policy.

125. A clear policy meets National Curriculum requirements and planning is soundly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching in all classes with a view to improving expertise, and the quality of teaching has improved as a result. She has led training for colleagues on the daily numeracy hour, and has produced useful guidance on how parents might help with mathematics work at home. Procedures for assessing and recording the pupils' attainment are good, and the concerns of the previous inspection in this respect have been addressed successfully. Nevertheless, the collection of pupils' work at agreed National Curriculum levels is not updated regularly at Key Stage 1, and has been extended into Key Stage 2. These factors limit its usefulness. There are adequate, easily accessible resources to support learning in mathematics. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The teachers strive to make mathematics real and fun, whilst at the same time encouraging the pupils to achieve high standards.

SCIENCE

126. In Year 6, standards are well above those found in most other schools. This represents an improvement since the school's last OFSTED inspection, when it was judged that pupils attain standards 'that are average and sometimes above average'. It also shows an improvement in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national assessment tests when, compared with all schools, standards were above average in science. Trends in performance over the last four years indicate a steady improvement in standards that is better than the national trend. The provisional results of this year's national assessment tests indicate that the school's standards have remained high, with all pupils achieving the expected Level 4 and above, and 52 per cent the higher Level 5. There has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

127. These judgements show that pupils are making very good progress through the school, based on their average attainment on entry and their high standards by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support and make good progress. High achieving pupils do well in science, and many exceed the nationally expected standard by Year 6.

128. By the age of 11, many pupils demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of how animals and plants are suited to the habitat in which they live, and, when their environment is changed, how it can affect the food relationships that exist in an ecosystem. For example, in a lesson on the theme 'What is a Woodland?', pupils in Year 6 put forward very persuasive scientific arguments for and against the building of a bypass which would destroy a very old wood. Pupils in Year 4 already recognise that feeding relationships exist between plants and animals, and identify the structure of a food chain that begins with a green plant which 'produces' food for other organisms. They use and explain the terms, 'producer', 'predator' and 'prey' with good understanding, and identify features of animals which make them suited to their habitat. In learning about life processes, they use accurate scientific names for the major organs of body systems, identify the positions of these organs in the human body and describe the main functions of the heart with good understanding.

129. Their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties are well developed. Pupils provide good descriptions of how materials can be separated by sieving and filtering, and know that some solids, such as salt, dissolve in water but sand will not. They make good predictions, and understand the need for a fair test, as when, for example, pupils carried out an investigation to find out which type of sugar would dissolve the quickest. They make a good series of observations over time, and use thermometers to make careful measurements of the temperature of a liquid as it cools. When recording the result of their investigations, they use scientific vocabulary well, using words such as 'solution', 'suspension', 'dissolve' and 'evaporate'. Pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of electricity. They draw good diagrams of a circuit using conventional symbols accurately for bulbs, wire, battery and switches. They construct a good, working circuit, which incorporates a simple switch made from paper clips which they use to turn a bulb on and off. In their study of the Earth and beyond, pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the phases of the moon, and know how day and night arise from the Earth spinning on its axis. Work on forces in Years 5 and 6 shows that pupils have gained detailed knowledge and understanding of gravitational attraction and air resistance. They identify weight as a force, and use a forcemeter with good skill to make a series of measurements of the length of a spring with different weights attached. Many pupils throughout the school use scientific vocabulary well, and present their work in a variety of suitable formats, such as, drawings, diagrams, bar charts and tabular form. In Year 6, pupils use information technology appropriately to record the growth of chicks that they rear in an incubator.

130. Standards attained by the pupils in Year 2 are generally similar to those found in other schools, and most make sound progress. This is similar to the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection and to the 1999 end of key stage assessments made by teachers. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 and above was below average. Indications are that standards in 2000 are similar. However, the evidence gained in lessons and in the scrutiny of work suggests that, whilst the pupils' oral skills in communicating their knowledge and understanding of science are average, their written work is not of the same standard.

131. By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of materials and their properties. They make sound observations of the changes that take place when materials such as bread, chocolate and butter are heated, and undertake a good investigation into what happens to ice cubes when left in different places. They know that when ice cubes melt, the water can be changed back into ice by freezing, but when bread is toasted it cannot return to its original state. Their knowledge and understanding of light, sound and forces are generally average. They recognise and draw a number of sources of light, and know that there are many kinds of sound. In their work with mini-beasts, pupils show a good recognition that different living things are found in different places, such as ponds or the garden. Their investigative skills are generally average. They respond well to suggestions of how to find things out and describe their observations clearly. Although they record some of their findings through drawings, writing and in tabular form, the output is frequently limited by their writing skills.

132. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including those for pupils with special educational needs, are good overall, and very good in the juniors. This is an improvement in the findings of the previous inspection when the quality of teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Strengths of the teaching of science and its impact on learning were very well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson, in which pupils were looking at the effect that the building of a bypass could have on the environment. The teacher made excellent use of discussion to capture and retain the pupils' interest in the lesson. Comments such as "How would you feel if you lived in a house where a bypass is planned?", and "consider the environment and the effect of taking out part of the food chain" made the pupils think, and challenged them to think about the scientific evidence before putting forward their arguments. The teacher's confident and innovative approach, brisk pace and clear explanations motivated the pupils and made learning relevant and enjoyable. The teacher's very good interaction with all groups of pupils, ensuring they all had a role in the debating process, inspired them all to put forward persuasive arguments for and against the building of the bypass. Throughout the school, strong emphasis is placed on teaching investigative skills, and pupils quickly learn to think and act as scientists. Lesson planning is very good, and the activities provided indicate that pupils' learning is in general well organised. Overall, the management of pupils is very good, and promotes a good working atmosphere. All staff show confidence when teaching science, and, at best, provide a good range of opportunities for the pupils to become actively involved in their own learning. In these lessons, the teaching style is such that pupils are encouraged to ask questions to clarify their ideas. As a result, they know the reason for learning and achieve well. At times, however, insufficient attention is paid to encouraging pupils to take a pride in the presentation of their work. The storage of the younger pupils' work in files, together with other subjects of the curriculum, does not enable teachers in the infants to determine the levels of pupils' work, or make best use of the work for assessment purposes to raise standards higher. Pupils in all lessons show positive attitudes to the subject, and, by the age of 11, apply their literacy and numeracy skills well in science.

133. The subject is very well managed by a knowledgeable and competent co-ordinator who has made a significant impact on the subject over the relatively short period of time she has spent in the school. The school makes very good use of the Local Education Authority scheme of work, and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines, to guide teachers' planning, and support the progressive development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and scientific skills. Assessment procedures overall are good, but better in the juniors where the organisation of the systems are good, and pupils' work is easier to locate. Useful assessments are administered to all pupils at the end of topics, and the co-ordinator collects samples of pupils' work to show the different levels of achievement in each year group. Learning resources are good, and the school has a wildlife pond in an enclosed area of the grounds for the pupils to use for environmental studies. The science curriculum is enriched by a good range of visitors to the school, and, recently, a number of local businesses were involved in supporting a science day organised by the co-ordinator. Visits out to such places as Whytham Woods and a museum in Oxford enhance the pupils' learning. Overall, the subject makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

ART

134. Pupils' work in art is above the level of that found in most schools at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2. This includes pupils with special educational needs. Pupils enter the school with average skills, and, therefore, achieve well in art. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous inspection report, which stated that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was in line with national expectations. At that time, the co-ordinator for the subject was new to the role, and improvement in the subject has been influenced by her vision for the subject and the quality of her support for pupils and staff. Judgements are based on the lessons seen, displays around the school, records of past work, photographs and planning for the subject and discussion with teachers and pupils.

135. In Year 6, pupils work effectively with a wide range of media and techniques, and much good work is displayed around the school. Pupils use colour, line and form well in painting, pastel and oil crayons, chalk and pencil, and create interesting and imaginative designs in their textile and printing work. They explore different techniques such as painting on silk and simple batik and show a good control of colour and form. In their studies of other artists, they reproduce techniques used by such painters as Matisse, Mondrian, Paul Klee and Henri Rousseau with good skill. They develop their observational skills well in their studies based on photographs of people from around the world, sunflowers and sea urchins. Pupils' awareness and experience are enhanced by working with artists, such as the project led by Andy Goldsworthy when pupils developed their own natural sculptures in the local environment. Artist Claire Plumb worked with a range of pupils to develop large-scale papier mache under-sea figures. Pupils at the school created, among other creatures, a huge leaping dolphin, which formed for some time, an effective entrance piece to the school.

136. By the age of seven, pupils have a good awareness of colour, shape and texture, as illustrated by their work in weaving. In their printing they use an exciting variety of objects to print interesting patterns and designs, and explore the effect of colour. They use clay to make realistic models of cats, and some pupils have a good degree of success in creating cats in different postures. They have a good understanding of the process involved in designing, as was shown when they designed 'Joseph's coat of many colours', and transferred the design to fabric. Pupils work well together to produce effective collages, which link with their work in geography on mountains and rivers. Younger pupils develop their observational skills well when they use colour palettes to create effective representations of a bowl of flowers. They learn some simple technical terms associated with the subject, and develop a good descriptive vocabulary, because they are encouraged to talk about their work, and are taught appropriate terms.

137. The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory, and is enhanced by the support and guidance of the co-ordinator who, in her non-teaching, support role, is able to work and teach in classes in both key stages. Correct techniques and care of tools and materials are specifically taught, and there is good teaching of the use of colour and composition. Teachers are interested in the subject, and work hard to develop activities and ideas, which provide variety and stimulation. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities and challenges they are offered because all pupils' work is valued and appreciated. This, together with their enthusiasm for art, means that the quality of their learning is good. In lessons, there are good opportunities for teachers and other adult helpers to talk to pupils about their work and provide guidance to help them improve. In a particularly effective lesson in Year 4, the teacher made good links with pupils' work in science, geography and literacy. Pupils used their knowledge of electricity, for example, to create a felt tip poster, taking care with the composition and effect of colour. They transferred their design for a starch relief onto fabric and painted dye on to a fabric that they had previously designed. Another group built on the 'wash' background they had painted earlier using chalks to create a foreground picture of a building. Others created a design for an Indian proverb they had previously discussed, to ensure that their design complimented the meaning of the proverb. The atmosphere in the class was of busy enthusiasm and great pleasure in their work.

138. The co-ordinator has had a significant impact on the subject, and uses her own specialist skills and enthusiasm to ensure that all pupils and teachers have positive and enriching

experiences. The scheme of work, which is in draft form, ensures that pupils receive a wide range of experiences and skills' development across all the elements of the subject. Art is monitored within the programme established across the school. The school plans to incorporate elements of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines when the scheme is reviewed in line with the National Curriculum 2000. There is no consistent format for the systematic assessment and recording of individual skills. This was also the situation in the school's previous inspection. Basic resources for art are good, and are well supplemented by the Parents' Association and by teachers themselves. There are good spaces in classrooms to enable a variety of activities to take place. The subject is enhanced by the school's participation in local area projects and by art weeks held in the school. Art makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and social development, but, although the contribution it makes to pupils' awareness of their own culture is also good, there are limited opportunities for pupils to be aware of the richness and variety of other cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

139. Although it was not possible to observe any teaching of design and technology during the inspection, a scrutiny of displays and work books and conversations with teachers and pupils indicate that, by the time they leave, pupils' work, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is of a higher standard than that found in most schools. Pupils enter the school with average skills, and, therefore, achieve well in design and technology. These judgements show a good improvement on the findings of the previous OFSTED inspection when it was judged that pupils' attainment was mainly in line with national expectations, but sometimes below average in Key Stage 1.

140. As they move through the school, pupils undertake a broad range of designing and making activities which provide the opportunity to develop a number of different skills and techniques. By Year 6, they generate a good range of their own ideas, communicate their designs well through accurate drawings that include measurements and achieve a product of high quality. They incorporate simple mechanisms in their models of bridges to produce different types of movement, identify the difficulties they encountered and suggest good ways of improving their models. A particularly impressive project by pupils in Year 6 involved their having to plan for, and provide, an evening buffet meal for their parents, following their school visit to Kilvrough. This involved the pupils in costing the meal, shopping for the ingredients and cooking scones, cheesy tit-bits, pizzas and chocolate brownies. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 design and make imaginative hats for different occasions, using a variety of finishing techniques as appropriate to the purpose of the hat. In Year 4, pupils design and make attractive belt bags and purses to certain specifications, using good skills of measuring and sewing. Pupils in Year 3 draw well on their scientific knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits when designing and making torches that include switches. They become increasingly competent in handling tools, such as a saw, a hand drill and a glue gun, and learn to assemble progressively complex structures as they get older. All products are finished to a high standard, and, by the time pupils are in Year 6, they have become proficient in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of their designs and products.

141. Pupils are introduced to the safe handling of simple tools from an early age and learn how to join materials together competently using the appropriate adhesives and fixings. By Year 2, many have good skills in designing and modelling using a variety of materials and tools. Most pupils communicate their ideas well through labelled sketches that show details of their design. They develop sound skills in marking, cutting and shaping materials and apply finishing techniques successfully to improve their finished product. These skills were particularly evident in the bags they made from different materials and in the cut-out dresses that they designed, planned and made. Their work on 'Houses for Cats' showed pupils using a wide variety of techniques for combining materials. They make good evaluations of their work, and write critically about what went well, what they found difficult, what they changed from their original design and how they could have improved their design. They design and make a healthy sandwich, drawing on their scientific knowledge and understanding, and, judging by the photographs, thoroughly enjoy eating the end product.

142. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good, and that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in this subject. The scrutiny of documentation shows that the tasks provided for pupils are purposeful and challenging. The skills of both design and making are clearly being taught well and systematically through the school. Evidence from the pupils' work shows that teachers instil the need for quality in their work, and that they encourage pupils to be creative. Teachers make effective links between various elements of design and technology, and plan assignments thoughtfully to capitalise on pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics, science and art.

143. The subject is well co-ordinated by two members of staff who are, in turn, well supported by a skilled classroom assistant. The scheme of work adopted by the school provides teachers with very clear guidelines of the skills to be taught, and projects to be covered. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when it was reported that the lack of a scheme of work meant that skills were not taught regularly and systematically throughout the school. Assessment procedures however, are still weak, and are a recognised area for development. Resources for design and technology are good, and the high standard of displays around the school effectively celebrates the pupils' skills.

GEOGRAPHY

144. Pupils' work in geography, including that by pupils who have special educational needs, is of a similar standard to that found in most other schools, and pupils are making sound progress. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection, where the pupils' attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations. Classroom observations were supplemented by an analysis of pupils' work, displays, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers.

145. By Year 6, pupils achieve average standards. Examples of this were seen through pupils' work on rivers and mountains and in their work on the features of their own locality. In studying rivers and their effect on the landscape, pupils have a sound knowledge of how rivers erode to produce particular landscape features, such as gorges, waterfalls and oxbow lakes. They write knowledgeably about how mountains are formed, and, on a map of the world, they mark the main oceans and mountains with reasonable accuracy. Most pupils have a clear understanding of how to identify physical land features by interpreting map symbols. However, their skills in advanced map work, such as measuring direction and distance, and interpreting maps at a variety of scales, are relatively weak. Through their study of India, pupils in Year 4 do well to identify similarities and differences between the main human activities in India and those in England. They have a good understanding of how conditions vary between the places studied by comparing the temperature and rainfall in Bangalore with those in London. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 carried out a good, detailed survey on the needs of Abingdon, and, through questioning people in the town, identified the changes they would like to see. Following on from this, the pupils prepared a persuasive 'publicity campaign' to raise the profile of the town, and produced a realistic 'radio advertisement' to encourage people to visit Abingdon.

146. By Year 2, pupils make informative maps of real and imaginary places, such as the Cotswold Wildlife Park and the Isle of Struay. They show an average understanding of the functions of a simple key on a map, and, through the 'Travels of Barnaby Bear', show a sound awareness of places beyond their own locality. In their study of seaside resorts, pupils in Year 2 make good comparisons between Abingdon and Brighton, and, by looking at pictures of seaside resorts in the past and the present, obtain information to compare the similarities and differences of human features. They collect information from the pupils in their class on how many people go to the seaside, town, countryside or abroad for their holidays, and use information technology effectively to present their findings as a block graph.

147. When the full range of evidence is considered, both the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are generally good, with good planning and effective teaching methods. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when teaching ranged from very good to poor. Strengths in the teaching of geography and its effect on learning were evident in a Year 5 lesson, following on from the survey carried out the previous week on the needs and proposed changes

in Abingdon. The work was well planned, prepared and managed, so that the pupils knew exactly what was expected of them. The clear instructions and explanations, high expectations and good use of time engaged the pupils and enabled them to succeed. Good discussion and questioning enabled all pupils to contribute their ideas, and increased their understanding of the potential of the town. Questions such as, 'What does Abingdon have to offer?' and 'What do we mean by down market?' not only increased their geographical knowledge, but also their literacy skills. Very good use was made of the information given to pupils by the President of the Chamber of Commerce after his visit to the school and through the latest news as reported in local newspaper. Teachers utilised pupils' interest in the visit to promote discussion and develop the pupils' awareness of the needs of their own locality. Teachers make a point of encouraging pupils to use the appropriate geographical vocabulary, and this is good, but occasionally they labour the point, and this slows down the pace of lessons.

149. It was not possible to observe any history lessons, as the current focus was on geography. From an analysis of pupils' work and from discussions with some of them, it can be judged that, in Year 6, the pupils attain standards which are higher than those found in most schools. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. In Year 2, the standard of pupils' work is similar to that found in most schools, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils' progress is sound in the infants, and good in the junior classes. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are making satisfactory progress.

150. By the age of 11, the pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of life in Victorian Britain, including the growth of cities and industry and developments in technology and transport. They know about the harsh conditions which working children faced in the factories and mines and use their literacy skills well to write letters to Lord Shaftesbury, complaining about them. The pupils have used their research skills, literacy skills and information technology skills very well to produce some excellent individual projects on a variety of history topics, including the bicycle, chocolate, health, space travel, Queen Victoria and World War One at sea. These are very well written, complete with contents and bibliographies, and well illustrated with photographs and pictures. Much of this work has been done at home. In a Year 6 information technology lesson, the pupils began to design very effective pages for the school web-site based on these projects. The pupils in Year 5 have a good knowledge of the many changes in British society which have occurred since the end of the Second World War. Like Year 6, they too have used their literacy and research skills well to produce very good home-school projects on some of these changes, including homes, fashion, technology and the Royal Family. The pupils have a sound understanding of the facts and importance of major world events of the late twentieth century, such as the Falklands War, freedom for Nelson Mandela and Hong Kong's return to China. Year 3 / 4 pupils write knowledgeably about the Viking invasions of Britain, and the importance of the longboat. They describe in words and pictures some aspects of life in Viking times that show a thorough understanding of that period of the past.

151. By the age of seven, the pupils are beginning to understand the concept of chronology and change over time, and can construct a simple time line. They have a sound knowledge of some famous personalities of the past, such as Queen Victoria and Florence Nightingale, and events such as The Great Fire of London. The pupils understand how we can find out about the past, and about changes which have taken place by looking at pictures. In work linked to geography, they work at a good standard as they compare old and recent pictures of a seaside resort.

152. The previous inspection found that teaching varied from good to unsatisfactory, but was satisfactory overall. No lessons were observed during the current inspection. Planning for history is sound, and an analysis of pupils' work indicates that the teachers maintain a good balance between giving information and allowing the pupils the chance to find things out for themselves. This generates very positive attitudes towards the subject, which are evident in the degree of care taken in the project work by pupils in Years 5 and 6, and the willingness of some pupils during the inspection to continue with linked history/ information technology work in their lunch break. The teachers make good links with other subjects apart from information technology. Year 5 pupils

used their communication skills well recently to interview a visiting grandparent. In art lessons, Year 3/4 pupils have made some very effective Viking shields and model longboats. There is evidence that the teachers enhance learning in history by organising worthwhile visits to sites in Abingdon, museums in Oxford and to Cogges Farm.

153. The previous inspection found that there was no scheme of work in history. A clear policy is now in place and a sound scheme of work incorporates guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The subject is currently managed by a teacher on a short term, temporary contract, but there has been some monitoring of teaching, with a view to improving expertise. The previous inspection found that assessment in history was weak. Although procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are broadly satisfactory, it remains the case that there is no whole school system for recording assessment information. Some teachers maintain good records of achievement in history, but this is inconsistent. Although some new 'Big Books' have been purchased for use in history in Key Stage 1, learning resources are inadequate, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. The school relies too heavily on the teachers bringing in historical artefacts from home, or on others loaned from parents. There is a wide range of history reference books in the Key Stage 2 library, but many are old and worn and unsuitable for this age range. In making the pupils aware of the legacy of the past and in providing opportunities to visit museums and other places, the subject makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

154. In Year 6, standards in information technology are above those found in most schools. This judgement is an improvement since the school's previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be below average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress, and achieve well in the subject.

155. In Year 6, pupils use information technology well to organise, reorganise and edit text to ensure that their writing is clear, well presented and free of errors. Their work on the keyboard is confident, and most feel comfortable using menu lists, and locating files they have saved previously. They re-size text, change colour, save and spell-check their work with ease, and have a good understanding of how computers are used in everyday life. Pupils in Year 6 use a screen 'turtle' well to create shapes on the computer screen, and then progress to rotating, stretching and reversing the figures. This is a good level of attainment, and fits in well with pupils' work in mathematics. They use a spreadsheet effectively to calculate the square and cube of numbers, and have a good understanding of how these operations can be used in everyday life. Pupils have good opportunities to use the Internet to conduct research, and find useful facts about their history and geography projects. They have a good knowledge of how to mix graphics into their text, and use pictures from a digital camera well to illustrate their written work. The school has only recently acquired the technology to enable pupils to control machines, but they have developed average skills using appropriate programs at a nearby technology centre.

156. Pupils make a sound start in the infants, and in Year 2, their word processing skills are average. They type in text confidently to support their literacy work by writing poems and stories, and create good, labelled graphs in work related to mathematics. They make a good, early start to their control of technology by programming a floor robot with skill to find buried treasure on a map.

157. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Key Stage 2, and on this evidence, the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teaching is significantly better than the generally satisfactory teaching found in the previous OFSTED inspection, when too few opportunities were given for pupils to use computers, and teachers' knowledge was variable. Most lessons at Key Stage 2 are taught by one of the Key Stage 2 information technology co-ordinators in the new computer suite, and this system works very well. Lessons have a clear focus on developing specific skills, and pupils are then given good opportunities to practise their new learning on a computer. The teaching is very lively, and pupils are given lots of individual attention. The teacher has good computer skills, and this means that pupils learn new work quickly. Lessons are prepared to a high standard, so that pupils' skills are built upon week by

week. The teacher's control of classes is excellent, and pupils get the most out of their time using computers. The school ensures that a good link exists between work done in the classroom and that completed in the information technology suite. This is good practice, and helps pupils see computers as valuable aids to their learning in all subjects.

158. The subject is very effectively managed by two co-ordinators and both have sufficiently well-developed skills and knowledge to train other staff in the use of computers and software. They have invited teachers to observe 'model' lessons, and this has proved a useful way of sharing their knowledge with all staff. The co-ordinators have introduced a new scheme of work successfully so that all elements of the National Curriculum are covered at an appropriate stage. The assessment procedures are good overall, and include useful collections of pupils' work matched against levels of the National Curriculum. The school has a very good number of powerful computers in the information technology suite, and at least one in each classroom. These resources have a good effect on pupils' standards, and have helped to raise standards since the previous OFSTED inspection.

MUSIC

159. Standards in music are similar to those found in most schools in Year 6 and in Year 2. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language attain standards which are appropriate to their abilities. Pupils enter the school with average skills, and, therefore, achieve well in music.

160. In the school's previous inspection, standards were above those found in most schools. In this inspection, classroom observations were supplemented observations of sessions taken by visiting music teachers, discussions with teachers and pupils and by observations of music in collective worship.

161. In Year 6, pupils respond well to changes in character and tempo when listening to music. The pupils who are members of the choir attain standards which are above average. They can use their voices very effectively to follow a melody and to respond well to variations in rhythm and mood. This was seen to good effect in a collective worship session when the choir performed pieces which they had sung successfully in the Oxford Millennium concert. One pupil's solo to an audience of 50,000 people reflects ability well above the average. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to sing in parts and to develop their skills at maintaining counter rhythms. Pupils' compositions reflect an appropriate awareness of simple rhythms, but do not often succeed in blending sounds to create a more complex texture. Pupils who receive tuition from visiting specialist teachers make good progress. They are confident in reading musical notation, and often achieve high standards.

162. There is a wide range of attainment, but, by the time they are seven, pupils play musical accompaniments with percussion instruments with average skill, and follow patterns when clapping. They use simple symbols well to record their own class compositions to accompany familiar stories, and use their voices effectively to follow a melody. However, a number of pupils, which includes some with special educational needs, need support in maintaining rhythms and in playing percussion instruments appropriately.

163. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, but, when taken by the co-ordinator or specialist teacher, the quality is good, and pupils perform well. In a good lesson with a Year 6 class, the teacher had organised very good resources and used a recording very productively to develop pupils' awareness of elements of music. Her own very good subject knowledge was used to help pupils to identify features of different fanfares, which they were able to consider using in their own compositions. By the end of the lesson, pupils were able to show they had benefited from their teacher's explanation and performed their compositions to the class. In Years 1 and 2, pupils enjoy class activities, take turns and listen carefully to their teachers. However, in some classes the limitations of the number of simple percussion and tuned instruments affects the rate of progress that pupils make. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed the opportunities to design and make their own maracas in a good link with their work in art. Older pupils show that they can collaborate and use their initiative when working in groups. They

applaud the skills of others, and recognise the efforts of those who are not so musical. Pupils in the choir willingly follow the guiding hand of the conductor and those who play in groups with visiting teachers work productively together, as was seen in the lesson for a group of pupils playing the guitar.

164. The present co-ordinator has very good specialist knowledge, which is used well to support both staff and pupils. However, she has been in post effectively for a relatively short period and her influence is only beginning to be apparent. She has a good understanding of her role, and has established useful priorities for the subject. Good use is made of her expertise to teach groups outside her own class and to model lessons for other staff. She has not yet had opportunities to monitor teaching in the subject, but music is part of the school's cycle of review. There is a sound policy for the subject, and a good commercial scheme of work. There are no formal arrangements for assessment in the subject, although these are identified in the scheme of work. This was also identified in the school's previous inspection. The co-ordinator has included this as a priority for the development of the subject. Visiting specialist teachers broaden the opportunities offered to pupils in the school to learn to play the violin, the cello and the guitar. Resources in the subject are generally satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in the range and number of percussion instruments for some classes in the infants. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

165. By Year 6, pupils' work in physical education is above the standard found in most schools, and shows an improvement on the average standards reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection. Pupils enter the school with average skills, and, therefore, achieve well in physical education.

166. By Year 6, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good skills in games. They bowl well in cricket games, hold the bat correctly and strike the ball well. Many have a good, competitive edge to their work, but are keen, at the same time, to play fairly. Their gymnastic skills are good. They move easily around the hall, and combine twists and rolls skilfully to make an interesting sequence. Pupils observe each other's work carefully, and improve their own performance as a result. Their swimming skills are also above average, and nearly all swim well. In the infants, pupils combine running, jumping and walking movements into suitable sequences with appropriate levels of co-ordination. They respond well to instructions, and are well aware of the effects of exercise on their heart and lungs.

167. The quality of teaching and the quality of learning, including for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are satisfactory overall, but range from good to unsatisfactory. Teachers start physical education lessons promptly and in a well-organised manner. Warm-up activities are appropriate, and interest the pupils who work at a good pace. The lessons are challenging, and teachers show sound knowledge of the subject in the instructions and demonstrations that they give. In one of the best lessons, for example, the teacher reminded pupils constantly how to hold the bat and stop games to demonstrate the correct grip, and how best to hit the ball straight. As a result of this informed instruction, pupils' batting improved considerably, and, by the end, all were striking the ball solidly. Where one lesson had shortcomings, pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactorily controlled. This resulted in a slow pace to the lesson as pupils were continually stopped in their work while the teacher admonished those who were misbehaving, and their learning suffered as a result.

168. The pupils show good attitudes to physical education. They behave well, form constructive relationships and work in a good atmosphere with high degrees of racial harmony. Physical education makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils as they learn to understand the benefits of teamwork. The subject is overseen capably by two co-ordinators. The school has a good scheme of work, and the curriculum includes appropriate opportunities for swimming and outdoor adventurous activities. The school has a suitably sized hall, a good hard surfaced and a large, flat playing field. Boys and girls compete in various competitive events with some success against other schools; these matches include football, netball, hockey, cross country running and cricket. A good range of extracurricular sports

sessions helps to boost standards, especially by the most able pupils.