

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **ST THOMAS MORE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Kidlington, Oxford

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123206

Headteacher: Miss M Sweeney

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker  
11897

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2000

Inspection number: 220344

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Oxford Road  
Kidlington  
Oxford

Postcode: OX5 1EA

Telephone number: 01865 373674

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Father Mervyn Tower

Date of previous inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr C Parker	Registered inspector	Information technology	How high are standards? <i>The school's results and achievements.</i>
		Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
		Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
Mr A B Anderson MBE	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</i>
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs J Edwards	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Science	
		Design and technology	
		Art	
		Special educational needs	
Mrs B Rimmer	Team inspector	English	
		History	
		Geography	
		Music	
		Under fives	

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The Registrar  
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The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas More is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school for children aged from four to eleven years. There are 180 pupils on roll. Approximately six per cent of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, but almost all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is similar to that found nationally, although currently there are no pupils with statements. The attainment of pupils when they first enter the school covers a wide range of abilities, but taken overall is broadly average.

An independent nursery is located within the school buildings but was not included in this inspection.

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

The school makes good provision for its pupils throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. They are well taught and as a result achieve well above average results in the national tests for eleven-year-olds. The school is effectively led and has a strong commitment to improvement. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The results of national tests in English and mathematics for eleven-year-olds are well above average.
- The overall standard of the pupils' work is above average.
- The teaching is good and the pupils are learning effectively.
- The pupils are generally well behaved and have positive attitudes to their work.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school well with good support from the governing body. The governors are actively steering school development and improvement.
- The school has a very strong partnership with parents and provides them with excellent information.

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

- The arrangements for the pupils under five are unsatisfactory.

*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 improved significantly since it was inspected in November 1997. The leadership now has a much more strategic view of school development and improvement. The headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators all play a full part in monitoring and evaluating key aspects of the school's performance. This has resulted in an improved curriculum where information technology plays a greater part. There have also been notable improvements in art and satisfactory improvement in design technology, although more development work is needed in this area of the curriculum. The school now has informative assessment procedures, and there have been considerable improvements in the quality of the teaching.

In bringing about the above improvements, the headteacher and governors have established systems and procedures that very effectively support and enable the continuation of this process.

## 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	B	A	A
mathematics	C	A	A	A
science	A	B	B	C

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

The standards attained by five-year-olds are broadly average, but currently these children are not achieving as well as they should be. However, in Key Stages 1 and 2 the pupils are achieving well. The results of the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds show standards in reading, writing and mathematics to be above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels is also above average.

In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds the results in English and mathematics were well above the national average and the average for similar schools. The results in science were above the national average, but were average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels is above average in English and mathematics but average in science. These results are the culmination of impressive improvements over the last three years. The school sets appropriate targets and has been successful in achieving them. Trends over time show the school to be advancing faster than the national rate of improvement.

Standards in history, geography, physical education and music are above average at the end of both key stages.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have positive attitudes to school and in many lessons display an eagerness to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most of the pupils behave well, but a small number can become unsettled. A very small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties, who are generally well managed, from time to time cause disruption to other pupils' learning.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development and relationships are very good. The older pupils are willing to take on responsibilities and work well, both independently and in collaboration with others.
Attendance	Attendance is above average although there is a significant and increasing incidence of absence due to pupils being withdrawn to take family holidays in term time.

The pupils are developing good working patterns and routines, particularly in the classes at the end of each key stage.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
43 Lessons seen overall	Unsatisfactory	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 teaching is good overall and is particularly strong at the end of both key stages. In some lessons at the end of Key Stage 1 it is excellent. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of the youngest pupils that result in them not making sufficient progress in their learning. At the time of the inspection the youngest pupils were taught by a temporary teacher. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the lessons are thoroughly planned and many tasks are challenging and interesting. The teachers mark the pupils' work thoroughly to help them to improve and encourage further learning. They utilise the assessments they make to help them to meet the needs of all of the pupils. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught and result in many pupils achieving good standards in English and mathematics.

Of the lessons seen, 95 per cent were satisfactory or better, 70 per cent were good or better and almost a quarter were very good or excellent. In 5 per cent of the lessons seen, the teaching was unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	The school has fully implemented the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies that now play a predominant part in a broad and balanced curriculum. However, the curriculum for the pupils under five is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now much improved, meets the needs of the pupils and is well managed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	The school is using all of the resources at its disposal to provide access to learning for the very small number of pupils who are at an early stage in their acquisition of English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal development. Social development is particularly strong. The pupils' spiritual and moral development is also good. Opportunities for the pupils to learn about other cultures are increasing and although satisfactory are not extensive.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	The pupils' academic performance and welfare are carefully monitored and actively supported. However, not all members of staff are fully aware of arrangements for child protection.

The parents give very good support to the work of the school. Many are actively involved in various ways such as extra curricular activities, fund raising and helping to improve the school by decorating the classrooms.

The curriculum is generally well organised although the school has not yet developed a coherent programme for the teaching of design and technology.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and has managed the school's improvement and development activities very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	The governors take their responsibilities very seriously. Through a well-developed committee structure they are steering the work of the school very effectively.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	The systems and procedures for self-evaluation are good. The subject co-ordinators and the governors' curriculum committee are working effectively to monitor development activities, although their impact on standards is not yet fully evaluated.
The strategic use of resources.	Very careful consideration is given to the allocations of finance and other resources. The governors are concerned to ensure the available funds provide the best opportunities for the pupils.

The level and quality of resources are generally good although the school has fewer computers than the national average and the resources for the pupils under the age of five are inadequate. There are sufficient teachers and they are well supported by learning support assistants. There are sufficient classrooms, but some are small for the numbers of pupils on roll.

The governors are beginning to apply the principles of best value extensively. For example, they are challenging contractors to deliver high quality goods and services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the good progress made by the pupils;</li><li>the good teaching;</li><li>the generally good behaviour;</li><li>the good provision for music and sport;</li><li>the ease with which they can approach the school.</li></ul>	

The inspectors broadly agree with the many positive comments made by parents. There were very few concerns expressed by parents and those that were referred to the poor behaviour of a very small minority of pupils. A small number of such incidents were observed by inspectors, but they were generally well managed by the teachers.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Taken overall, the school's results are above the national average and better than those of many similar schools. The pupils are achieving well as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2 because the teaching is good. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection as a result of a successful programme of school development, although within this the provision for the pupils under five has not yet been sufficiently addressed.
2. The standards attained by five-year-olds are broadly average, but currently they are not achieving as well as they should be. The absence of an appropriate curriculum with interesting, well-planned and carefully matched activities is not, at the present time, ensuring that these pupils achieve the standards that should be expected of them. This is primarily the result of a temporary teaching arrangement.
3. However, in Key Stages 1 the pupils are achieving well. The results of the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds show standards in reading, writing and mathematics to be above the national average and above average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is also above average. The results are a marked improvement on the last two years and reflect the very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 1.
4. In the 1999 national tests for eleven-year-olds, the results in English and mathematics were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The results in science were also above the national average, but were average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was above average in English and mathematics, but average in science. These results are the culmination of impressive improvements over the last three years. The school sets appropriate targets and has been successful in achieving them. Trends over time show the school to be advancing faster than the national rate of improvement. These improvements are the result of secure progress throughout Key Stage 2 where the pupils are achieving well and building effectively on their previous learning. The strong teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 capitalises on this firm base and consequently the results attained by both boys and girls are well above average.
5. Evidence from the inspection confirms that in English the majority of pupils are attaining standards that are above the national averages in speaking and listening, reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in Key Stage 2 are judged to be well above those normally found. In mathematics the position is very similar with overall standards being above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average at the end of Key Stage 2. In both English and mathematics, it is clear from their work that a significant proportion of the pupils is working well at a higher level than that expected by the end of Key Stage 2. In science, standards are above average throughout the school but not as many pupils are working at the higher level by the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils including those with special educational needs are making good progress in their learning throughout the school.
6. The quality of the pupils' work in history, geography, music and physical education is above average. By the time the pupils leave primary school, standards in design technology, information technology and art are in line with those expected. The development of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum is well established with, for example, pupils making good use of the library to search for information to support their learning in history and using their numeracy skills to record and present their findings in science. There is also greater use of information technology to support learning in other subjects.
7. The school is using all of the resources at its disposal to provide access to learning for the very small number of pupils who are at an early stage in their acquisition of English. As a result, satisfactory progress is being achieved.

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

8. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their work, and overall their behaviour is good. The pupils' personal development and the relationships within the school are very good. The vast majority of parents believe the school maintains high standards of behaviour.
9. Most of the pupils consistently demonstrate positive attitudes to their work. In many lessons, the children demonstrate an eagerness to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and are confident to offer their own ideas and suggestions. Most pupils quickly settle down diligently in class, are capable of sustained periods of concentration, and stay on task. However, a small minority of pupils, particularly in Reception and Years 1 and 4, do not listen very well and have underdeveloped social skills.
10. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is good. Most behave well and act in a mature and responsible manner. Their conduct in the classrooms and assemblies is almost invariably good and often very good. Most pupils respond well to their teachers. However, at times a small number of children with behavioural difficulties respond inappropriately, and they disrupt the learning of the rest of the class. The pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner, and their behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is very good. There was no evidence of any bullying or isolation of individual children. No exclusions from the school were necessary either in the year prior to the inspection or during the current academic year.
11. Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils of all ages are polite, and courteous. They relate well to their teachers, to other adults with whom they come into contact, and to one another. They work together well, sharing resources, taking turns and listening to each other. During whole school assemblies and acts of worship in their classrooms, the pupils show appropriate reverence for the occasion. Nearly all pupils show respect to their teachers, each other and the environment. There is no deliberate damage to resources or school property and a remarkable absence of litter around the school site.
12. The pupils' personal development is very good. They are learning a good range of social skills, which is helping them to develop into well-rounded individuals. The pupils support local and national charities and make appropriate visits into the community. They respond well when given responsibility for their own work in the classrooms. In many lessons, pupils were observed working independently and carrying out their own research. The children, particularly by the end of each key stage, are developing a very positive work ethic. In taking on formal responsibilities, the pupils respond in a mature and sensible manner. For example, Year 6 pupils willingly undertake a wide range of duties in their classroom and around the school.
13. Levels of attendance are good and above the national average. There is a low level of unauthorised absence. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and the parents are supportive in maintaining good attendance levels. However, there is an increasing incidence of authorised absence due to pupils being withdrawn to take annual family holidays during term time. The pupils come to school on time and lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly.

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

14. The teaching is good overall. It is particularly strong at the end of both key stages and in some lessons at the end of Key Stage 1 it is excellent. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of the youngest pupils that result in their not making sufficient progress. At the time of the inspection, the youngest pupils were taught by a temporary teacher. The teaching of the children under five lacks the focus and organisation needed to provide this group with activities that will develop their skills and knowledge effectively.
15. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the lessons are thoroughly planned. The teachers identify precisely what they want the pupils to learn and in many cases make it clear to them at the start of the lesson so that they know the purpose of the activities they are to undertake. In Year 6, the teacher does this very well by

writing the objectives for the lesson on the white board so they can be referred to during lessons. In the very best lessons, the teacher uses them to assess the extent of the pupils understanding at the end of the lesson. In Years 2 and 5 mathematics lessons, this information, along with the teachers' assessments of the pupils' work from marking, was used to modify plans for the next lesson. The modifications made by the teachers ensured that the new work was well matched to the needs of all of the pupils so that it built on their existing knowledge and where necessary rectified weaknesses.

16. The teachers use their good subject knowledge to set purposeful tasks that are challenging and interesting. Some of the teachers are not totally confident in their use of information technology across the curriculum, but nevertheless prepare carefully to ensure they are able to support the pupils. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught, resulting in well above average standards in English and mathematics by the time the pupils leave the school. The teachers mark the pupils' work effectively to help them to improve and to encourage learning. In some cases, they make lengthy comments to make sure the child is very clear about how well they are doing. The teachers set the pupils a good range of homework tasks that extends the work they have been doing in the classroom.
17. Of the lessons seen, 95 per cent were satisfactory or better, 70 per cent were good or better and almost a quarter were very good or excellent. In 5 per cent of the lessons seen, the teaching was unsatisfactory. This represents a significant improvement from the last inspection when almost a fifth of lessons were unsatisfactory, and only a few were either very good or excellent.
18. As a result of the improvements in the teaching, the pupils are now acquiring new knowledge and developing their skills at a good rate. They produce a good volume of work and show interest and enthusiasm for the tasks they are set. The pupils at the end of both key stages are particularly well motivated and are developing good work habits. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, most pupils are able to sustain concentration for appropriate lengths of time and are working with increasing independence.

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

19. The school provides all of its pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education. It also offers a good range other interesting and worthwhile experiences. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved significantly its provision for mathematics, information technology and art. Although there have been improvements in the provision for design and technology, the curriculum still lacks coherence. The next step is to ensure that a well-integrated programme for the provision of design and technology is put into place. ***This is an additional issue for improvement.***
20. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is firmly established. It includes appropriate opportunities to provide sex education and to raise pupils' awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs.
21. Over the past two years, the school has successfully introduced both national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers plan these lessons well and set out clearly what they expect the pupils to learn. As a result, the pupils' confidence and competence in these fundamental skills is increasing steadily throughout the school. Other subjects are enhanced by the good range of educational visits organised both locally and further afield. For example, Year 6 pupils spend time on a residential visit to Yenworthy Residential Outdoor Centre, and the choir takes part in concerts, often raising funds for charity. The teachers and parents make very good provision for extra-curricular activities and the pupils take part in a wide range of musical and sporting events.
22. The curriculum for the youngest pupils under the age of five is unsatisfactory. They are taught in a large class of Year 1 and Reception children. The teacher is supported by a part-time teacher and a learning support assistants. The teachers plan in the main for the Year 1 pupils in the class and then adapt this work to meet the perceived needs of the youngest children. This has a negative impact on the learning of these young children who are not receiving a planned programme of learning based on the areas of learning for the under fives. The school should now take steps to improve the provision for the pupils under five. ***This is an important issue for improvement.***

23. The school's arrangements for preparing pupils for the next stage of education are good. As well as the usual pattern of visits and preparatory meetings for pupils and their parents, the teachers are maintaining good links with their colleagues at the partner secondary schools by working together on a range of curriculum initiatives.
24. There has been significant improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school now identifies these pupils early in their school lives. All aspects of special needs provision are managed very efficiently by the special needs co-ordinator. She receives strong backing from the learning support assistants and other staff. As a result, the school succeeds in ensuring that all the pupils on the special needs register are fully involved in the life of the school and make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. The school is also using all the resources at its disposal to provide access to learning for the very small minority of pupils in the early stages of learning English.
25. The school makes good provision overall for the pupils' personal development. The provision for the pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. All assemblies comply with the requirements for collective worship and provide good opportunities for the pupils to reflect on their beliefs and their place in the world. The themes, prayers and songs provide a good focus for the pupils' spiritual development. Opportunities for the pupils to experience and reflect on the world around them are being built into the teachers' planning, particularly in science, music and art. For example, in a Year 2 class the pupils took great delight and became very excited when they found huge numbers of creatures under a stone while looking for plants and mini beasts in their science lesson. They are enthusiastic and very committed to making good music at every opportunity, such as whole school assemblies.
26. The provision for the pupils' moral development is good and for their social development it is very good. These important aspects are nurtured through the positive example and high expectations of the school staff. The school's aims are set out clearly within the prospectus and the home school agreement made with each family. All the adults work hard to ensure that in their work with the pupils they live up to these expectations. The pupils are frequently encouraged to consider the impact of their actions on the lives of others and to take increasing responsibility, as they grow older. The pupils co-operate well together and on many occasions throughout the year they work closely in joint projects to raise money for charities. The pupils are developing skills that enable them to work well together and, as a result, have a very strong work ethic particularly in Years 2 and 6.
27. The pupils' cultural development is planned effectively. The pupils have a secure grasp of their own Christian culture, the key festivals and other secular events. The classrooms and corridors reveal a range of interesting artwork reflecting recent study of Western European artists such as Monet, Picasso, Mondrian and Michelangelo. One class experienced dance that reflected Hindu culture and the festival of Diwali and this provided opportunity for pupils to experience a strong, spiritual element in their work in physical education. There are very good opportunities for the pupils to learn to play instruments such as violin, cello, clarinet and guitar amongst others and to perform in the school's impressive orchestra.

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

28. The school provides effective support for its pupils and strives hard to ensure their welfare. The head teacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides good leadership in this area. The teachers are approachable and supportive. The non-teaching staff is caring, dedicated and committed, and provides good support for both the teachers and the pupils. All of the staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, which they implement consistently. Appropriate provision is made for medical and first aid requirements, and the arrangements for dealing with routine matters such as minor accidents are good. Supervision at breaks by the teachers and support staff is alert and vigilant. The lunchtime oversight is undertaken by experienced and efficient supervisors and the standard of care on the playground, and in the dining hall, is good.

29. The school makes sound use of appropriate welfare agencies and support staff. The classroom assistants and parent helpers are deployed effectively and used well to help pupils and teachers. The support for pupils with special educational needs is good, which has a positive effect on their attainment and the progress they are making. Child protection procedures are in place, but there are no formal school guidelines for staff. Consequently, their awareness of this aspect, particularly by the non-teaching staff, is unsatisfactory. The school should take steps to ensure all members of staff are fully aware of child protection procedures. *This is an additional issue for improvement.*
30. There are sound procedures for health and safety. They are well known and understood by all staff, who consistently demonstrate safe working practice in lessons. All the required safety inspections and checks, including risk assessments, are regularly carried out and properly recorded. A few potential health and safety hazards were brought to the attention of the headteacher and the appropriate members of the governing body. The headteacher and governors were already aware of these and had assessed the potential risks involved.
31. The school has very good procedures for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. There is a behaviour policy, with clear rewards and sanctions, playground rules and class rules, which have been agreed with the pupils. The teachers' class control and management are consistently good throughout the school. The pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well. The teachers, parents and the majority of the pupils themselves have high expectations of good behaviour. Good attendance and punctuality are actively encouraged and absence is monitored carefully.
32. The headteacher, class teachers and the support staff know the pupils very well and have a good understanding of their individual, personal needs. The procedures for assessing the pupils' academic performance and monitoring their attainment and progress are very good. The teachers regularly mark and assess their pupils' work and use this assessment to guide their curriculum planning. They consistently monitor individual and class progress and set targets for improvement. They maintain comprehensive and detailed assessment files and individual pupil profiles. However, the assessment of the attainment and progress of the children under the age of five is unsatisfactory. The arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils with special educational needs are good. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and very effective.
33. Overall, the care and support given to the pupils has a positive effect on their attainment and progress.

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

34. Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents, who consistently expressed a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the school. There are a good number of committed parents and governors who regularly help in the classrooms and accompany the children on out of school trips. Many are also involved with the school in other ways; for example, a group of parents recently redecorated classrooms. Parental involvement in their children's work in school is very good, and there is very strong support for home reading and homework. There is a very active parent teacher association, the Friends of St. Thomas More School, who have appointed class representatives. The Friends organise events and have raised considerable funds for the school. The parents feel that the school works closely with them and the vast majority is comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems concerning their children. The headteacher and her staff are very approachable and welcome parents into the school.
35. Day to day communication between the school and home is excellent. The school sends out regular informative newsletters and there are frequent communications to parents about specific events and activities. There have been information meetings for parents, for example, on the national numeracy strategy, and these are well attended. The school publishes an informative prospectus, which is also available along with useful information on the school web site. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. The prospectus and the governors' annual report contain all

the statutory required information. At the start of each term, the class teachers send letters outlining for parents the work planned for that term. The parents are given an annual progress report and offered appropriate opportunities to attend meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The reports consistently state what the pupils can and cannot do, the progress they are making and where they are finding difficulties. An overwhelming number of parents indicated that they were kept well informed about what was taught in the school and the progress that their children were making.

36. Overall, the school's links with the parents enrich its work considerably and have a beneficial effect on the pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

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

37. The leadership and management of the school have improved considerably since the school was last inspected. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the school and has managed the school's improvement and development activities very effectively. Consequently, the quality of the teaching has been raised and the results of national tests have improved faster than the national rate. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and teachers have brought about many improvements through a well-focussed and carefully monitored school development plan. Progress on development activities is thoroughly evaluated in order to inform the next stage of improvement.
38. The governors take their responsibilities very seriously. Through a well-developed committee structure they are steering the work of the school very effectively. The governors have developed a rigorous yet sensitive approach to questioning the effectiveness of the school's work. The school mission and ethos committee ensures the school implements its aims and provides the pupils with a Christian and caring environment for learning. The curriculum committee has developed very good systems and procedures for self-evaluation. The subject co-ordinators and the governors are working effectively to monitor various improvement initiatives, but the effect of these initiatives on standards is not fully evaluated. The school should now extend these good systems to evaluate the impact of development activities on the standards the pupils achieve. *This is an additional issue for improvement.*
39. The finance and buildings committee give very careful consideration to the allocations of funds and resources. The governors are concerned to ensure that the available funds provide the best opportunities for the pupils. Following a period of financial constraint resulting from the additional costs imposed by lengthy staff absence, the governors are now able to plan more effectively in the medium term and begin to explore the possible development of an information technology suite. They are beginning to apply the principles of best value extensively. For example, they are examining the roles of the learning support staff to see where they will be most effective and also challenging service providers to deliver high quality. The governing body is now meeting its statutory responsibilities in full and is very well informed about the work of the school, its strengths and the areas where further improvements are needed. With the senior management of the school, it shares a strong commitment to on-going and further improvement.
40. The school secretary provides good day-to-day administration and her financial management allows the headteacher and teachers to focus on meeting the needs of the pupils. The teaching and support for pupils on the special needs register are now well managed and the school takes advantage of the available external agencies to provide appropriate support both for these pupils and the very small number who are in the early stages of learning to speak English.
41. The level and quality of resources are generally good although the school has fewer computers than the national average for a school of this size and the resources for the pupils under the age of five are inadequate. There are sufficient teachers and they are well supported by classroom assistants. At the time of the inspection a temporary teacher was responsible for the children under five but the school was unable to secure the services of a teacher with experience of teaching this age group. Hence, the match of the teacher's expertise to the needs of the children is, in this instance, inappropriate. The school has adequate teaching accommodation. There are sufficient classrooms, but some, particularly those for the older children, are small for the numbers of pupils on roll. The school makes best use of the available accommodation. There are no spare rooms available, for example, for withdrawal of children

with special educational needs. The library provision for Key Stage 2 is good, but the Key Stage 1 library is situated along the side of a main corridor and is unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of storage space. Access into and throughout the school for pupils with physical disabilities is poor. There is currently no special toilet provision for disabled pupils. The building is kept spotlessly clean, is well maintained and the environment enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work.

42. The school has a large hard surface playground, an adventure play area and attractive grassed areas for children to relax and play in. It does not have its own sports field, but has the use of an adjacent school's field when required. There is no separate safe and secure play area for children under five years old.

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

43. The governing body, headteacher and teachers should continue to bring about further improvements by continuing to implement the school development plan, paying particular attention to:
- (1) Improving the provision for, and the teaching of, the pupils under five. **(paragraph 22)**

The school should use the introduction of the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage from September 2000 as a central feature in addressing this issue.

In addition, consideration should be given to:

- ♦ establishing a more coherent curriculum plan for design and technology; **(paragraph 19)**
- ♦ extending the school's self evaluation strategies to focus on the impact of development activities on the standards the pupils achieve in each subject; **(paragraph 38)**
- ♦ ensuring that all staff are fully aware of child protection procedures. **(paragraph 29)**



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	19	46	25	2.5	2.5	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)		180
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		13

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		34

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	2.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	11	12	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	9	9	10
	Total	19	20	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (74)	87 (76)	91 (76)
	National	82 (79)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	8	9	10
	Total	18	19	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (73)	83 (78)	91 (73)
	National	82 (79)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	16	17	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	15	16
	Girls	14	12	14
	Total	30	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91 (78)	82 (82)	91 (82)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	16
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	27	26	29
Percentage of pupils	School	82 (74)	79 (78)	88 (75)

at NC level 4 or above	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)
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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	
Indian	3
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	143
Any other minority ethnic group	8

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.6
Average class size	30

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	51

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

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

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

#### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	318 777
Total expenditure	309 005
Expenditure per pupil	1 661
Balance brought forward from previous year	9 772
Balance carried forward to next year	9 514

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

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	180
Number of questionnaires returned	54

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	39	11	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	43	9	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	48	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	56	9	2	0
The teaching is good.	56	39	4	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	39	7	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	22	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	37	0	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	37	0	2	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	44	2	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	15	2	2

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

44. At the time of the inspection, there were five children under the age of five years in the Reception class, where they attend mornings only. There are two teachers during the morning session and the children are flexibly grouped. Those children who are under five often work with one teacher in a group of the youngest children.
45. There is no policy for the education of children under the age of five and the provision for them is unsatisfactory. The school has identified the Early Years for further development, but there is a lack of expertise in this area of the curriculum. It has already taken appropriate steps to improve provision by seeking advice from the local authority and by observing practice in another school. The introduction of a play session, called 'play fun' during one morning a week is a positive step forward. However, there is little appropriate planning and structure to this session, and the children's progress is rather haphazard. The curriculum lacks a wide enough variety of well-organised, stimulating and relevant experiences that the children can learn from and enjoy on a daily basis. There is insufficient balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities. There are weaknesses in the teaching which result in some lessons being unsatisfactory.

**Personal and social development**

46. Most children reach the desirable outcomes for learning by the time they are five. They listen attentively to adults telling stories and giving instructions, and they follow directions obediently and sensibly. A minority still prefers solitary play when given the choice and has difficulty in sharing equipment. The teaching in this aspect of the curriculum is satisfactory overall. The teachers give very clear directions so that the children know what is expected of them. During 'play fun' activities, there are good examples of a teacher making very good interventions when disputes arise, involving the children in agreeing codes of behaviour. As a result, the children gain an increasing awareness of their own feelings and those of others. One or two children are uncooperative and disruptive when activities are not sufficiently matched to their interests and abilities. The teachers deal most effectively with challenging behaviour through the good use of additional adult support. This ensures that children with special educational needs are involved as fully as possible in lessons. Most children rely on their teacher's direction and rarely make choices for themselves.

**Language and literacy**

47. The children reach the standards expected of this age group and make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Although they reach the expectations of the desirable learning outcomes in reading and writing, their experiences in these areas are inadequate and their progress is slow. The teachers provide the children with good models on which to base and develop their own speaking skills. The teaching is at its best when the children have good opportunities for speaking. In a literacy session, for example, the teacher listened very carefully to children's ideas about how they could help the little yellow chicken in the chosen text. She allowed time for children to think about their answer and find the right words, valuing their responses. The children are given opportunities to talk in pairs and share their ideas with the whole class with confidence and enthusiasm. The teachers promote books and reading suitably through the formal structure of the literacy hour, but the arrangement of the classroom does not sufficiently promote interest in and enjoyment of books and reading for the youngest children. For instance, there is no clearly defined area for reading. Nevertheless, the children are beginning to recognise initial sounds and enjoy finding the letter 'b' in selected texts. Although they do not yet recognise many words, they are able to distinguish and write their own names. They show appropriate pencil control and are beginning to copy an adult's writing in their workbooks. However, they spend too long on formal tasks, often copying sentences they are unable to read, and these activities lack real purpose and enjoyment. There are too few materials and opportunities for the children either to initiate writing in their play activities or to practise what they have learned.

### **Mathematical development**

48. In their mathematical development, the children reach the expected standards for their age. The majority is able to recognise, count and match numbers and symbols reliably up to ten. Some begin to understand the principles of addition and subtraction through number rhymes such as “Five speckled frogs”. During the play session, the children experiment with shape and pattern and can identify circles, squares and rectangles sufficiently well. They can discern and continue simple patterns. A range of different activities are provided, although these mostly lack a clear purpose and are not structured to build upon what children already know and understand. There are too few opportunities for the children to use their mathematical ideas on a regular basis to solve practical problems through the use of construction toys, sand, water and malleable materials. The teachers make too few interventions to reinforce and develop the children’s mathematical vocabulary. Taken overall, the quality of teaching in this area is unsatisfactory.

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

49. The children talk about their families, where they live and special events in their lives. They have a secure knowledge of colours and know the vocabulary for different parts of their bodies. In information technology, they use the keyboard and the mouse to operate the controls on a computer. Children are effectively introduced to the planting of seeds in a science lesson and know what is needed to make seeds grow. They gain a sense of chronology when they look at the changes that have taken place since they were babies. Recording of this is not always appropriate, however. Although the teaching is satisfactory overall, many of the worksheets are poorly matched to the age and ability of the children, leading to little progress in learning.

### **Physical development**

50. The children handle large and small construction apparatus with reasonable skill and dexterity when given the opportunity. For example, they build high towers with care and concentration and manipulate small construction equipment to produce the desired effect during their ‘play’ session. They handle scissors, glue brushes and painting equipment appropriately and with increasing control. The teaching is satisfactory and teachers effectively emphasise the safe and correct use of tools. There is no separate secure area for outdoor activity with wheeled toys, but the school has good climbing equipment that is accessible to all at playtime. Physical education sessions in the hall are well taught and children develop a good awareness of space and good control when they stop and start in response to their teacher’s commands. The teacher also introduces the skills of throwing and catching effectively. As a result, the children improve their skills during lessons, and by the time they are five they reach the appropriate standards for their age

### **Creative development**

51. Whilst the teaching, in the lesson seen, was satisfactory the children are given insufficient opportunities to explore sound, colour, shape, texture and form. Consequently some children do not achieve the expected learning outcomes for pupils of this age group. Other children concentrate well and show imagination when they make pictures from a rather poor range of materials, use construction materials and participate in role-play. Access to painting easels, sand and water, in one class has been restricted because of a small minority of disruptive pupils. This is an unsatisfactory situation impeding the progress of all children. The resources are poor and at times there is a lack of direction to the activities. Nevertheless, a group of girls showed good levels of imagination and resourcefulness when they turned kitchen furniture in the home corner into a bed and put a broken ironing board on the floor in order to re-enact familiar situations from home. They co-operated well. At other times, planned art lessons are not always suitable, in a mixed age class, for the youngest children. Similarly, in music lessons, the children are given too few opportunities to experiment with different instruments and activities are designed for the older pupils in the group.

## **ENGLISH**

52. The results achieved by eleven year olds in the 1999 statutory tests show that the pupils reached standards of attainment well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. The proportion of



pupils reaching higher levels was also above average. When compared with schools with similar characteristics, results were well above average. At the end of Key Stage 1, the results achieved by pupils in national tests in this same year were above average at all levels in both reading and writing when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. There is little difference between the results of boys and girls by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2. Since 1996, although there has been some fluctuation, the trend shows that there has been a significant improvement in standards overall. This improvement is above the national trend.

53. Evidence from this inspection confirms that, by the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils are attaining standards that are above the national averages in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Standards in Key Stage 2 are judged to be well above those normally found. The school has set realistic but challenging targets to ensure standards continue to improve.
54. In their speaking and listening skills, the pupils attain good standards. The school now has a greater awareness of the importance of planned opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. By the time they leave school, the pupils talk and listen in a wide variety of well-organised and purposeful situations designed to improve their confidence and abilities. The teachers give effective introductions to lessons, and as a result pupils are interested in language activities and listen attentively. The teaching is good in both key stages where the teachers make purposeful use of questioning. The Key Stage 1 teachers, in particular, listen to and value the pupils' responses well, thus providing good role models. The youngest pupils are getting used to sharing their news and speaking in pairs and there is good progress in speaking throughout the school. The pupils adapt their vocabulary and expression according to the audience. They are articulate and show confidence when they answer direct questions and talk about their work. The pupils make presentations in assemblies, showing clarity of diction. In class, they discuss their language activities and ideas in pairs and groups, and participate in role-play and organised debate making good use of Standard English. For instance, they competently discuss the derivation of words within their groups and present their findings succinctly to the rest of the class. In a small minority of lessons, the teachers of the older pupils do not always give them sufficient opportunity to extend or develop their responses, accepting one-word answers too readily. As a result, the pupils in Year 5, for example, are less confident in expressing their own thoughts and ideas when they are asked to give reasons for their choice of poetry.
55. Reading is satisfactory at the beginning of Key Stage 1 where pupils of all abilities enjoy talking about their favourite storybooks. The children know initial sounds and are building up a suitable vocabulary of familiar words but have not yet learned to use these to decipher new words. Progress is particularly good at the end of the key stage where the teaching is very good. Lively and enthusiastic introductions to the literacy hour encourage a love of books and language. The pupils have an above average understanding of both fiction and non-fiction books. They are familiar with many different technical features, including punctuation, and understand their purpose. The pupils enjoy talking about the characters and events in their books, appreciating humour and motive to a good extent. Parents are involved in their children's reading to good effect through the regular use of homework diaries that record the range of books read and any difficulties and successes encountered. A positive and useful dialogue is set up between teacher and parent.
56. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are well established as enthusiastic, independent and, in many instances, avid readers, enjoying a wide range of literature for pleasure and information. Standards of reading are well above average. The majority reads accurately and fluently, with good levels of understanding beyond the literal. They show close involvement with characters, discussing their motives and making thoughtful predictions about story lines. The most able tackle challenging texts, such as 'The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy' with intelligence and confidence. They are familiar with a wide range of modern and classical authors, often selecting books because they enjoy a particular author's style. The teachers encourage their pupils to use a wide range of reference books and dictionaries, and pupils have a well-developed understanding of their structure and purpose. They relish finding out the origins and meanings of words and this enriches their vocabulary to a good extent. All of these features are the result of the high quality teaching in Key Stage 2 where the expectations of pupils' work and behaviour are consistently high. The teachers at the end of the key stage have easy access to the library and make very good provision of books to develop the pupils' knowledge effectively. They nurture pupils' independent learning skills to good effect through well planned

homework tasks and encourage them to be more reflective in their own reading through critical analysis of books.

57. At the end of Key Stage 1, the standard of writing is above the national average, and it is well above average by the time the pupils leave the school. By the age of seven most pupils can structure sentences accurately with a logical sequence. The most able write lengthy and detailed accounts of their experiences with accurate use of punctuation, making confident and mainly accurate attempts at spellings, although some are not totally clear about words that sound the same but are spelt differently. The pupils' handwriting is of a good standard overall. It is neat and legible with letters accurately formed.
58. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are well above average. The pupils write confidently and independently for an increasing range of purposes and in a variety of styles. They produce well-structured narratives containing simple and complex sentences organised into paragraphs to communicate their thoughts and ideas to a range of different readers. The pupils plan and draft their work effectively, leading to evident improvement. For example, one typical pupil in a summary of 'Cider with Rosie' made effective changes in order to ensure consistent use of tenses. Throughout the key stage, pupils produce imaginative writing and poetry of a high standard, using descriptive vocabulary. This was evident, for example, in Year 4 when they wrote about a 'A Walk down the Pier'. The pupils' handwriting develops well into a joined, cursive style and the standard of their presentation is good.
59. The teaching is good overall, and at the end of Key Stage 1 it is often excellent. All lessons are well structured in line with the Literacy Strategy and planned effectively to provide tasks well matched to pupils' different abilities. The school has also introduced a good range of procedures to improve spelling. At the beginning of lessons, the pupils participate enthusiastically in games and activities that help to establish and reinforce learning effectively. In the best lessons, there is a good variety of stimulating activities that capture the pupils' interest and imagination. Relationships are of a high standard and the teacher expertly involves pupils of all abilities, setting challenging tasks with clear expectations. As a result, pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic and their behaviour is good. The teachers make good use of assessment procedures to ensure that the pupils build systematically on what they already have learned. Marking contributes effectively to this process, especially at the end of Key Stage 2, where the standard of marking is exceptional. In Year 6, the teacher not only writes consistently positive and encouraging comments, but also gives clear suggestions for improvement, which are acted upon and followed up, leading to very good progress by individuals. There is effective support from the classroom assistants for those pupils with special educational needs. This leads to further improvement and good progress by pupils of all abilities.
60. The teachers also promote literacy effectively through work in other subjects. The pupils read a range of texts and write accounts of their work in science, geography and history. For example, the pupils compare styles of writing in the books of the Bible in religious education lessons, and lively narratives following visits to places of interest make a further valuable contribution.

## **MATHEMATICS**

61. In the national mathematics tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, standards were above the national average and above the average when compared to similar schools. The results of the corresponding tests for eleven-year-olds in that year showed that the pupils' standards were well above the national average with a higher proportion of pupils attaining at both the expected and upper levels. Standards were also above average when compared to similar schools.
62. The results of recent years form a clear upward trend with standards rising faster than the national rate of improvement. A significant feature of this improvement is the above average proportion of pupils who achieve beyond the expected level. There are no significant differences between attainment of boys and girls at the end of either of the key stages.
63. The results at both key stages are confirmed by the scrutiny of the pupils' work that was carried out during the inspection. Overall, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are well above those found

nationally. It is clear from their work that a significant proportion of pupils is working well at a higher level. At Key Stage 1, the proportion on course to reach the expected level and higher level is above the national average. Throughout the school, all pupils including those with special educational needs are making good progress in their learning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be broadly in line with the national average with a below average number of pupils working at the higher levels. This advance is due largely to two factors: the high quality teaching in mathematics across the school and the effect of the introduction of the numeracy strategy. The implementation of the numeracy strategy has clearly addressed the issues raised in the previous report in relation to the teachers' planning, and has ensured a systematic approach to pupil's learning across the age ranges within each class.

64. Under the good guidance of the co-ordinator, the teachers throughout the school have raised standards in numeracy significantly. They have had good in-service training over the course of the last eighteen months in the teaching of mathematics and as a result they have established the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy effectively. A great emphasis has been placed on mental mathematics at the beginning of each session. This is well focused and has a good pace. For example, the pupils in a Year 6 class were observed competently calculating in their heads the addition of two decimal numbers to give pre-determined totals. They confidently explained how you could break down the numbers in different ways to make an easy calculation. They showed an agility of mind in their quick and accurate responses. The rapport between the teachers and the pupils is good and this helps them to remain alert and interested in their learning. It is a strong feature in all mathematics lessons.
65. The amount of work completed over the course of this year is good and the pupils build steadily upon their previous learning. Throughout Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is either very good or excellent and consequently almost all the pupils are making either good or very good progress. The pupils can recognise numbers and place them in the correct order, counting forwards and backwards. By the time they are seven, they recognise repeating patterns and understand place value to three figures; they can sequence numbers up to a hundred and can double and halve numbers accurately. From an early age, the children accurately form their written numbers. The teaching also makes certain that most pupils know two, and three-dimensional shapes. The teacher's clear explanation of the learning objectives and the use of the mathematical vocabulary in its appropriate context enable the pupils to acquire correct terminology and use it in a natural way when working on the set tasks.
66. The pupils at Key Stage 2 again make good progress because of the good quality teaching. By the age of eleven, most of the pupils can make rapid calculations. They all have a clear understanding that there are many ways to arrive at a correct answer. They use approximations, halving and doubling well. The teacher encourages the pupils to answer and as a result, they are all willing to contribute and not feel undervalued should their answer prove incorrect. In Year 4, the pupils can translate shapes by overlapping both single and combined shape patterns, many at a complex level of working. The higher attaining pupils extend this work and combine both tessellation and translation of shapes at the same time. All pupils, including the lower attaining pupils, concentrate well. They enjoy the activities and work collaboratively to solve problems. The whole class sessions are of high calibre. The teachers use questioning very effectively to support the pupils in their explanation of their findings and ensure that they understand what they have learned. The school is using information technology well to support mathematical learning across all areas of the curriculum. For example, good use is made of pie charts and graphs in science.
67. The arrangements made for pupils with special educational needs are good. They are well supported in class, and teachers take care to prepare tasks that are suited to their needs. Their work is monitored well and they are making good progress in line with their capability.
68. The pupils enjoy mathematics and this enhances the quality of their learning. They work enthusiastically. Their behaviour in most of the mathematics lessons observed was good and they sustain high levels of concentration. When engaged in collaborative activities such as the mathematical games seen in Year 3 /4 lessons, they work well together, share and support each other constructively. Older pupils in particular, demonstrate very high levels of perseverance when working on the set tasks. Most pupils take pride in the appearance of their work and consequently their standards of presentation are good.

69. The subject is very well managed. The planning for the teaching of mathematics is good. It is consistent, well applied and ensures progression in the pupils' learning and understanding of mathematical concepts across the whole school. As a result of this methodical planning, all members of staff, including the classroom assistants, are clear in what they want pupils to do, know and understand by the end of each lesson. The tasks are appropriate and well structured. The pupils' work is regularly assessed and marked constructively, and further relevant targets are set. Homework is given on a regular basis.

## SCIENCE

70. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum assessments of seven-year-olds in science showed that the proportion of pupils attaining the expected and higher levels was above the national average. However, standards were average when compared to similar schools. The proportion of eleven-year-olds achieving at both the expected and higher levels was also above average. Again, standards were average when compared to those of similar schools.
71. Over the last three years, the national test results show that there has been a steady rise in the pupils' attainment at both key stages. There has been an improvement in standards at both key stages since the last inspection in 1997, when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations for the majority of pupils. There was little difference in the performance of boys and girls in the 1999 national tests.
72. The inspection findings indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above average. Almost all pupils are working at the expected level and a good proportion is attaining beyond that. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress throughout this key stage. This is because the school is effectively using the national guidelines for science in this key stage to support their planning and provision. The pupils acquire a good body of knowledge that covers the key areas of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Much of their work is taught through investigations and the pupils have a good understanding of how these are carried out. They make good progress through the key stage in the development of the skills needed to carry out a fair test and they record their findings in an organised way. For example, in their investigations to find the warmest place in the classroom, the pupils made predictions and established ways of making the inquiry procedures fair. The pupils also record their work in an appropriate variety of ways. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 used maps and plans to note their findings in their work on the habitats of plants and mini beasts. They then constructed lists of plants and animals found.
73. In Key Stage 2, the pupils make steady gains in their learning. Standards are above average with almost all pupils on course to attain the expected level by the age of eleven. However, scrutiny of work suggests that only a few pupils are consistently working at the higher level. The national guidelines have yet to be fully implemented. The teachers in the upper key stage are adapting provision to ensure that in using the new materials, the pupils are not disadvantaged in their learning. From their work on the solar system, the pupils in Year 4 know why there is day and night. They also predict which materials will make good insulators in their work on keeping ice cold. The pupils in Year 6 learn about micro-organisms and how they cause disease. They also research the findings of early scientists who developed the Germ Theory. By the end of Key Stage 2 the pupils are able to debate well and use their prior knowledge to develop their arguments and thoughts.
74. The pupils' use scientific vocabulary and terms with increasing precision and the application of their general literacy skills in science is good. For example, their descriptive and explanatory writing is developed well. Their use of numeracy skills to support their learning in science is also good. In their investigations, many opportunities are planned for pupils to observe, measure and represent their results in the form of tables and graphs. At present, information technology is used infrequently to record and extend science work, but there are some examples of information technology enhancing science work effectively to record and present the findings of experiments.
75. The quality of teaching is good overall, and there is some very good teaching in both key stages. Consequently, almost all the pupils are making at least sound and often good progress. They steadily

build upon their previous learning and the amount of work completed over the course of this year is good. The teachers' clear explanation of the learning objectives and the use of scientific vocabulary in its appropriate context enables the pupils to acquire the terminology and use it in a natural way when working on their various tasks.

76. The teachers use a range of appropriate teaching styles, balancing theoretical and practical sessions well. They provide interesting and relevant experiences that match the purpose of the lessons and the pupils' interests. The teachers are skilful in their use of questioning to find out what the pupils know, and how their thinking is developing. They use this to gauge the pace and pitch of lessons. The pupils gain some idea of their own attainment and progress through teachers' questions and discussions. In Year 6 the teacher ensures that all pupils know what they are expected to learn and that they evaluate their performance and achievements prior to the lesson ending.
77. The management of science is good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements. The teachers are ensuring that the tasks become more demanding as the pupils gain greater knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are firmly in place, and the pupils' attainment is assessed at the end of teaching units. This information is used very effectively to set targets and ensure that the curriculum provided challenges all pupils appropriately.

#### **ART and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

78. The quality of the work in art and in design and technology is in line with that expected from pupils of this age. Throughout both key stages, the pupils make good progress in art and sound progress in design and technology. The pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in art and technological activities. They achieve at appropriate levels and make sound progress in their learning.
79. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements to the curriculum for art. As a result, there is a far better balance of activities and the levels of challenge now build more steadily as the children move through the school. For example, the youngest pupils use paper-tearing techniques in a range of activities, as part of their work on collage making. In Year 2, the pupils work together to produce a class collage in greens and blues, based on the work of Rousseau. In Year 3/4, they use a range of techniques to produce stained glass windows and by the time they reach Year 6 they are employing a range of techniques and media to create images in the style of Monet.
80. These improvements have come about because the school, well led by the co-ordinator, now gives due attention to the subject. The detailed scheme of work, which supports teachers well and ensures that pupils' learning builds on previous experiences, was devised with the support of a student teacher in her final year of training who wanted to experience some of the responsibilities associated with curriculum management.
81. Although there is evidence of improvement in the provision for design and technology, a coherent approach to the teaching of this subject has yet to be established. This is identified in the school development plan as a priority for the near future. In design and technology in Key Stage 1, the pupils are able to explore a selection of resources, such as construction toys and re-cycled materials. They also experience a range of work with textiles. For instance, the pupils in reception and Year 1 make pom-pom characters and those in Year 2 design cushion covers. In Years 3 and 4, they plan, design and make bags and use machines to stitch them so that they are fit for their purpose. By the age of eleven, the pupils can make and use paper patterns to create their own well-made soft toys. They demonstrate appropriate skills in the designing, making and evaluation of their products.
82. Parents and other volunteers make a significant contribution to the quality of work in these subjects. For instance, in a design and technology lesson, one teacher enlisted the help of a parent in exploring how to make dough plaques, which will be sold to raise funds to purchase classroom books. The expertise of the parent has a significant effect on the level of interest showed by the pupils. Overall, in both key stages, the pupils' attitudes to learning are now good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when they were considered to be unsatisfactory. In art lessons, for instance, the pupils stay focused and on task for long periods of time. They show a real enthusiasm for the subject. This is because the teachers challenge them well. The pupils can see purpose to the activities and show

a clear sense of pride in their work. The few lessons seen were well planned, and the quality of the teaching was good overall. The teachers' subject knowledge in art is sound and they are confident in teaching the

subject. However, their subject knowledge in design and technology is less secure overall. Most lessons are introduced with a clear exposition that reviews previous learning and extends the pupils' thinking. The teacher has high expectations of the pupils' attainment, the lessons move at a brisk pace

and the pupils apply themselves diligently. The concluding whole class sessions are focussed effectively

on what has been learned. Very good teacher and pupil relationships are clearly evident.

83. Art and design and technology are taught in discrete blocks of time. This enables the teachers and pupils to work in depth, particularly in art where they all focus on the same area of work. This supports the teachers throughout the school in their effective evaluation of both the provision and the pupils' attainment.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

84. The pupils make good progress in geography and the quality of their work is above average. By the time they leave school they have gained skills and competence about places both near and far. As with history, the subject benefits from an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who supports the subject well throughout the school. Judging from pupils' knowledge and the one lesson seen, the teaching is good. The pupils are keen to carry out research and ask and answer questions, for example, in their comparison of Kidlington and Pampegrande.
85. In Key Stage 1, the pupils explore the features of their local environment in a relevant, purposeful way. The youngest children make observations on a walk in the immediate locality and at the end of the key stage the pupils plan a route to a local playground. They follow a local street map and give directions using appropriate geographical language. They record in pictures attractive and unattractive features of the area, and decide how the environment could be improved.
86. In Key Stage 2, the pupils extend their study of the local area appropriately, for example, by collecting evidence about the traffic on the road outside school. They make further comparisons of different areas, developing their understanding of places to a good extent when they compare Kidlington with Malham in North Yorkshire and with a Peruvian village. They begin to understand how the features of an area affect the ways that people live and work. During discussions, they show a good understanding of the use of different maps for various purposes and can read and interpret keys and symbols. The pupils confidently describe the journey of a river using accurate geographical vocabulary, such as source and estuary. They show an interest in the subject and talk readily about the advantages and disadvantages of contrasting areas, such as the town and the countryside and compare their own town to the nearest city, Oxford. They have a sensible awareness of environmental issues such as pollution and man's influence on his surroundings.

## **HISTORY**

87. The curriculum for history is well established and competently overseen by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has maintained its significance in the school. There is a well-planned scheme of work organised within a two yearly topic cycle that ensures good coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. A very good programme of visits to places of historical interest and visitors into the school also make valuable contributions to the pupils' learning. These factors all contribute to the above average standards achieved by the pupils in both key stages.
88. In Key Stage 1, the pupils build an awareness of the sequence of events that have taken place since they were babies. For instance, they compare and order toys and forms of transport of today with those of the past. They gain a good level of understanding about life a long time ago and a well-developed sense of chronology through a series of carefully planned lessons. The pupils begin to draw conclusions about the quality of life in Victorian times when they examine the attributes of the steam train when compared to the diesel and electric engines of today. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils

have been introduced to a time line when they learn about the main events in the life of Louis Braille. In a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher provided an interesting and varied range of activities and resources to enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. Through skilful questioning, the teacher drew out thoughtful responses showing a detailed knowledge and a good understanding of the reasons for the events that took place. The pupils show interest and enthusiasm for the past.

89. The pupils in Key Stage 2 add significantly to their knowledge and understanding of historical sources when they research information about the Vikings and the Ancient Greeks, using a wide range of resources, including dictionaries and information technology. The pupils know the difference between fact and fiction and can talk about the reliability of different sources of evidence, such as an archaeological dig. They reinforce their chronological understanding by further use of time lines. During discussions, the pupils show enthusiasm and interest in the subject. They confidently describe the main characteristics and events of the periods of history studied, making sound comparisons and giving reasons why Henry VIII, for example, acted in the way he did. The teaching is good, with well planned and prepared tasks and resources. The pupils respond well to good questioning and challenging activities and work purposefully in pairs and groups, with enjoyment. Visits to churches and visits from grandparents provide valuable first hand experiences to enrich the pupils' knowledge of local history. Their experiences and knowledge are suitably recorded and standards are above those expected for the age group.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

90. The provision for, the teaching of and the pupils' attainment in information technology have all improved since the last inspection. The teachers and governors are aware of and acknowledge the need for further improvements, but information technology now plays a far greater role across the curriculum. Consequently, the pupils are achieving the standards expected of them at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1, the pupils have access to a good range of tasks that help them to develop their skills of both communicating and handling information. The teacher in Year 2 makes particularly good use of the technology to support the development of the pupils' literacy skills by getting them, for example, to improve the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". The teacher also uses the on screen 'Roamer' effectively to encourage the pupils to give accurate instructions to guide and direct.
91. In Key Stage 2, the teachers are now building effectively on the pupils' previous experiences. The class records of the work the pupils have undertaken show that they are progressing well in the development of skills and making increasing use of the technology to support their learning in other subjects. There are good examples of information technology supporting the pupils' learning in English, mathematics, history and science. In mathematics, for example, Year 6 pupils have been using spreadsheets to carry out investigations and LOGO to experiment with shape through simple REPEAT procedures. In a history lesson, the pupils successfully used an Internet search engine to locate information about Ancient Athens and Sparta. The pupils have positive attitudes towards learning with information technology and demonstrate a good deal of independence when working at a computer.
92. The teaching is satisfactory. Some of the teachers are confident in their own use of information technology and therefore make greater and more effective use of a wide range of applications. Others are less confident, but nevertheless ensure they are well prepared and sufficiently familiar with the software they are using to support the pupils in their learning. The governors are providing the teachers with good support and have plans to significantly improve the provision for information technology by developing a room where the teachers will have sufficient resources to work with larger numbers of pupils.

## **MUSIC**

93. The quality of the pupils' performance in music is above average. There is a strong musical tradition within the school and the opportunities for pupils to perform with others has continued to be developed and improved since the last inspection. In the only lesson seen in Key Stage 1, the pupils enjoyed singing together and modulated their voices well, following clear directions from their teacher. They also show a good appreciation of dynamics and rhythm. The pupils work successfully in pairs to create

musical patterns. Many of them can distinguish between high and low sounds and have a good degree of control of their voices.

94. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils sing together a suitable range of hymns and songs confidently and tunefully. They are building up a repertoire of songs they know well to sing on special occasions such as concerts and church services. They mostly pitch their voices accurately and can sing two part harmonies well. With encouragement, they successfully reach high notes. The contribution of a significant minority of pupils who take advantage of the opportunities to play a musical instrument is considerable. These instrumentalists conscientiously practice at home and as a result make gains in their skills and understanding. They apply themselves diligently to their tasks in lessons and co-operate fully with the visiting teacher. In a very short time, some pupils learn to play quite complex pieces and many go on to reach high standards.. They have a good knowledge of notation. There is a school choir and an orchestra in which a number of pupils participate as an extra-curricular activity. These pupils perform with others in assemblies and on public occasions at a variety of venues, such as at Blenheim Palace. During their performance of the Skye Boat Song, the pupils played competently and kept in good time with a good awareness of one another.
95. The quality of teaching is good overall. In Key Stage 1, the teacher models singing well and encourages good listening skills and high levels of concentration for short periods. The lessons are mostly well structured with clear learning objectives linked to the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, at times the pupils are required to continue with the same activity for too long and become restless. The teachers form good relationships with pupils and have high expectations. Consequently, most pupils mostly behave well and co-operate with one another. There is a suitable emphasis on improvement, and in hymn practice in Key Stage 2, the teacher constantly reminds pupils of the importance of good posture and breathing to sustain long notes. The pupils respond well and try hard to give of their best. In the past, they have benefited from visiting groups from different backgrounds and cultures, such as an African drumming band and a Christian pop group.
96. The music co-ordinator is skilful and enthusiastic. She and the headteacher provide expertise and good support to the less confident members of staff. A published scheme of work also provides clear continuity and progression and additional support for the non-specialist teachers.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

97. The quality of the pupils' performance has improved since the last inspection and is now above average. Throughout the school, a high proportion of the pupils demonstrates good skill levels in gymnastics and games. Their control and movement is also good in dance. All of the pupils are able to swim the required distance by the age of eleven and most exceed it.
98. The school uses a well-established scheme of work so that the teachers can plan their lessons to develop the pupils' skills and abilities in a consistent and coherent manner. The teaching is invariably satisfactory and often good. In Year 2, it is very good. All of the lessons seen were carefully planned and most moved along at a good pace. In one lesson, the gaps between exercises were a little too long but nevertheless the activities the pupils were engaged in were purposeful and effective. The teachers use a good range of resources to develop the specific skills they have identified in their plans.
99. The youngest pupils are taught physical education in a class that includes both reception and Year 1. There were two teachers present, the lesson was well structured and the pupils made appropriate gains in their learning. Nevertheless, there were too many pupils in the group to allow them to be continually active. Organising the pupils into two groups so that they can be taught separately would considerably enhance both the teaching and learning by creating more space and a greater range of opportunities for the pupils.
100. The school provides a good range of extra curricular sporting activities including football, cricket and netball clubs that are run by the physical education co-ordinator with the help of parents. It takes all available opportunities to be involved in a wide range of sporting activities such as a tag rugby festival, indoor athletics competition and recently a small group of pupils has been introduced to sailing. The pupils in Year 6 also have the opportunity to participate in adventurous activities during their residential



week in North Devon.

101. The school's resources are generally of good quality. Recently it held a sponsored run to replace ageing equipment and increase the range of resources for the younger pupils. Through partnership with other schools and involvement in national and local initiatives the school provides the pupils with opportunities to become involved in activities that are supported by specialist coaches such as the hockey workshop and the current club-school link to promote the game of tennis.