

INSPECTION REPORT

COLD ASH ST MARK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cold Ash, Thatcham

LEA area: West Berkshire

Unique reference number: 109958

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Plackett

Reporting inspector: Mr Christopher Gray
Rgl's Ofsted No: 21037

Dates of inspection: 18 - 22 September 2000

Inspection number: 224213

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Infant and junior |
| School category: | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils: | 5-11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Cold Ash Hill Cold Ash Thatcham Berkshire |
| Postcode: | RG18 9PT |
| Telephone number: | 01635-862600 |
| Fax number: | 01635-874562 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Mary Coulson |
| Date of previous inspection: | 12 - 14 February 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Christopher Gray Ofsted No: 21037 | Registered inspector | Mathematics | What sort of school is it? |
| | | Information technology | How high are standards? a) The schools results and achievements |
| | | History | How well are pupils taught? |
| | | | What should the school do to improve further? |
| | | | Financial efficiency |
| Margaret Morrissey Ofsted No: 9796 | Lay inspector | N/A | How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| | | | How well does the school care for its pupils? |
| | | | How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| | | | Staffing, accommodation and resources |
| Graham Johnson Ofsted No: 23054 | Team inspector | English | How well is the school led and managed? |
| | | Geography | Provision for pupils' personal development |
| | | Physical education | |
| | | Religious education | |
| | | Special educational needs | |
| Raminder Arora Ofsted No: 16773 | Team inspector | Science | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| | | Art and design | |
| | | Design and technology | |
| | | Foundation stage | |
| | | English as an additional language | |
| | | Equal opportunities | |

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The Office for Standards in Education
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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mark's Primary School draws its pupils from the village of Cold Ash near Thatcham in West Berkshire. Many pupils also come from the surrounding area. The school is for children aged five to eleven, and has 158 full-time pupils (74 boys and 84 girls). Children's attainment on entry is above the national average.

Pupils come from a variety of backgrounds; overall, their socio-economic background is above national averages. Approximately 0.6 per cent of pupils are entitled to receive a free school meal, which is well below average for infant and junior schools. There are five pupils for whom English is an additional language, though none is at an early stage of English language acquisition; as a percentage (3.2 per cent), this is higher than found in most schools. There are 25 pupils on the special needs register; at approximately 15.8 per cent of the school's roll, this is below the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational need, and, in percentage terms (2.5 per cent), this is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cold Ash St Mark CE Primary is a good school which is popular with parents. Pupils work hard and have good attitudes to their work. The standards they achieve when they leave the school are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school is well led by the headteacher. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science by the age of eleven is well above national averages.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are good.
- The quality of leadership is good.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Provision for pupils' personal development is good.
- The school provides good care and welfare for its pupils.
- The school has good links with parents.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in information technology, geography and history at both key stages and in religious education at Key Stage 2 should be of a similar high standard to that in English, mathematics, science and design and technology.
- Co-ordinators should share more of the responsibility for overseeing standards of pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching in their subjects across the school.
- Systems of assessing pupils' attainment need improving.
- The school's provision for higher attaining pupils has improved since the last inspection but there is scope for further challenge in all subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This school is continuing to improve, though a slow start was made after the last inspection in 1996. The last 18 months have seen considerable advances in the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection report. Schemes of work have been adopted for all subjects. The headteacher has led a thorough review of the curriculum and lesson planning which is having an important effect on how teachers focus their teaching and the way in which they offer challenge to pupils. The length of the school day has been brought into line with recommendations, though there is still some imbalance between subjects. A very late start was made on the issue of assessment, with the result that the school has not got as far in this development as it might have done.

The school has maintained its high standards in English, mathematics and science across the last four years and has improved standards in design and technology. Links with parents have been strengthened and are continuing to develop. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress since

the last inspection.

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 | A | A* | A |
| Mathematics | A* | A* | A | B |
| Science | A* | A* | A | C |

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

The table indicates that pupils' attainment is well above the national average in mathematics and science and in the top five per cent of schools in English. Compared with those of similar schools, results are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and similar to the average in science. All these comparisons show that the school is achieving good standards and a comparison with national trends shows that the school's overall results are improving at a similar rate. Pupils' results in 1999 exceeded the school's targets, which were over-cautious. Targets for next year represent an appropriate amount of challenge. The inspection's findings corroborate these results - attainment in the current Year 6 is well above average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, pupils' attainment is above expectations in design and technology at both key stages and in religious education at Key Stage 1. It is in line with expectations in all other subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good; pupils are keen to learn and almost all enjoy coming to school. They participate well in lessons, contributing comments and questions to show interest. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | The behaviour of the pupils in and around the school is good. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils from all year groups are able to understand the feelings of others and the effects of their actions. Pupils' personal development is good. |
| Attendance | Attendance levels are high and well above the national average. |

All staff and pupils relate well to one another. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching in the school overall is good. It is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons

and unsatisfactory or poor in four per cent (2 lessons). Teaching is good in 40 per cent of lessons and very good in 18 per cent. Teaching is better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1; there is also good teaching at Key Stage 1 but it is not as evenly spread. Pupils are managed well and this contributes to a good classroom ethos. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum and pupils are helped to evaluate their own learning at the end of most lessons. English, mathematics and science are taught well overall, though there are inconsistencies in the teaching of reading at Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are not heard to read sufficiently often. The provision for higher attaining pupils in all subjects needs strengthening. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. Pupils across the school learn well because teachers enable them to evaluate their own progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory overall; some subjects need more time allocation; literacy and numeracy strategies have been satisfactorily introduced. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good support is given by the co-ordinator, class teachers and assistants. Some individual education plans do not contain enough detail to be helpful to teachers. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | There is a small number of pupils whose first language is not English. The school gives them sufficient support to ensure that they learn at a similar rate to others in their classes. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. Pupils are strongly encouraged to value the beliefs of others. They develop a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong and progressively assume greater responsibility as they grow older. They become familiar with their own cultural heritage and have experience of some of the beliefs, stories, music and art of other cultures. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school takes good care of its pupils and provides them with very good welfare, health and safety. |

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning at home and are given good support and information from the school to do this. Over the last two years, schools were permitted to reduce their focus on subjects other than English, mathematics and science during the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours. This has now changed and the school needs to allocate more time to history, geography and religious education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the educational direction of the school, and has carried out a thorough revision of its management and curriculum since her appointment. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors are increasingly involved in the forward planning and monitoring of the school's work, and they discharge their duties satisfactorily. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school analyses the results of national and yearly tests and has recently begun to set individual targets for pupils. The headteacher has undertaken a thorough evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses since her appointment. |
| The strategic use of resources | Staffing, resources and accommodation are used efficiently. Overall, the school applies best value principles wisely to the acquisition and use of its resources. |

The levels of staffing and resources and the amount of accommodation are satisfactory overall. The

lavatories for the Key Stage 1 pupils are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and make good progress.• Behaviour in the school is good• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.• The school is well led and managed• Teaching is good.• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater consistency in the use of homework.• More challenge for higher attaining pupils.• More consistency in how reading is taught and heard.• More notice of school events.• More extra-curricular activities. |

The team endorses parents' positive views about the school. They also agree with parents on the need for increased provision for higher attaining pupils and about inconsistencies in how reading is taught. On the issue of homework, inspectors found that the current use of homework is good. The range of extra-curricular activities is good for a school of this size - one parent was more concerned with clash rather than range. The quality of information given to parents was found to be good, but the issue of timing of it was also raised at the pre-inspection meeting.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

National curriculum test results

1. Pupils' results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were close to the national average at the expected level (Level 2 and above) in reading, very high in writing and below average in mathematics; in the teacher assessments for science, results were close to the national average. In reading, the percentage reaching the mid point of Level 2 (2B) was well above average and in mathematics, above average. At the higher level (Level 3), results were above average in reading, writing and mathematics but below average in science. Looking at the average points score (where pupils' attainment at all levels is taken into account), results in reading and mathematics were above average and those in writing were well above average.
2. Compared with the results of similar schools, results on the average points score were average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. This shows that the standards pupils achieved in 1999 in Key Stage 1 writing were very good and that results in reading and mathematics were satisfactory. Provisional results for the 2000 National Curriculum tests show a considerable increase in the percentages at both the expected and higher levels in reading and mathematics. National comparators are not yet available.
3. At Key Stage 2, pupils' results at the expected level (Level 4 and above) in the 1999 National Curriculum tests were well above the national average in English and mathematics and very high in science. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level (Level 5) in English was very high; in mathematics and science it was above average. The average points score shows that results in English were very high compared with schools nationally; those in mathematics and science were well above average. The results of all four subjects taken together were well above average compared nationally.
4. Compared with similar schools' results, the average points scores were well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. These comparisons show that the standards achieved in 1999 were good and that the pupils made good progress. Provisional results for the 2000 National Curriculum tests are very similar to those of 1999; in science, there is a significant increase in the number of Level 5s which is not reflected in mathematics, where there is also a fall in the percentage at Level 4 and above. Again, national comparators are not yet available.

Trends in test results

5. At Key Stage 1, writing results have risen steadily across the four years since 1996. This is not the case in reading, where results have declined since 1997. It is unusual for a school to do better in writing than in reading and part of the reason for this is the school's focus on writing over recent years. But the inspection also found that there are inconsistencies in the teaching of reading - this is discussed at greater length in the English section (paragraph 101). Results in mathematics rose considerably from 1996 to 1998 but fell sharply in 1999, partly because the subject was not given as much emphasis as is now the case since the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. The results of 2000 suggest a return to the levels of 1997.
6. At Key Stage 2, results in English have risen steadily across the four years since 1996. Results in science were maintained at a high level until 1999 when there was a decline caused by fewer Level 5s. This appears to have been reversed in 2000, when the percentage of Level 5s almost doubled. In mathematics, the picture has been one of decline since 1997, a trend which seems to have been followed in 2000. Work in the present Year 6, and their test results at the end of Year 5, suggest that this trend is being reversed; however, there is evidence that the challenge for higher attaining pupils is not consistent in mathematics - this is discussed in more detail in the mathematics section (paragraphs 116-117).

The school's targets

7. The school has made a good start to target setting within the last twelve months. Targets are discussed with each pupil, they are made known to parents and are displayed prominently in each classroom. Some of the targets are academic; others are more general and they are updated regularly during the year. The school needs now to extend this system of individual targets. Staff already analyse results of end-of-year test to facilitate grouping. The next step is to use this information to set a target in the tested subjects for each child to achieve by the end of the next year and by the end of the key stage. There would then be a clear yardstick against which to measure the progress of each child.
8. Targets are set as required by law for National Curriculum Key Stage 2 tests. Those for 1999 and 2000 were cautious and were exceeded considerably by the results. Those for 2001 represent a good challenge.
9. The school analyses results by pupils' sex; there are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls at Key Stage 2. The picture had been the same over the last four years at Key Stage 1, but the results for the 2000 National Curriculum tests and assessments show that girls performed better than boys at the higher level. The school is analysing this currently. No similar pattern was found during the inspection in past work or in classrooms.

Standards achieved currently

10. Children enter the school with attainment which is above average in language skills, mathematics and personal development. Children make sound progress and, by the time they are five, their attainment overall is above average. By the time pupils leave school at the age of eleven, their attainment is well above average in English, mathematics and science.
11. In English, standards in writing are well above average at both key stages. By the age of seven, many pupils write accounts of their experiences in some detail, sequencing events accurately. By eleven, most pupils write fluently and for a variety of purposes and audiences. However, higher attaining pupils across the key stage are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop research skills or independent lines of enquiry.
12. Standards in reading are not as high at either key stage. By the age of seven, many pupils read with understanding and expression, but some pupils of all levels of ability have difficulty in tackling the middle sounds of longer words. In Key Stage 2, many pupils are keen readers but confident readers are not always heard to read often enough, nor are they guided towards a sufficiently wide variety of challenging texts.
13. In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of place value by the time they are seven. They recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes and they are beginning to use standard measures for length and time. They also experience the collection of data and the use of graphs. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of number. Most have quick recall of times-tables and know the associated division facts. Pupils use protractors to construct and measure angles and most know the names and some of the properties of a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. There was little evidence of work on data handling or probability amongst older pupils. The work sample shows that there are many occasions when the most able are doing the same work as the least able in a set.
14. In science, by the time they are seven, pupils understand the different parts of plants and carry out careful experiments to discover what a plant needs in order to grow. They also know what humans need in order to keep alive and stay healthy. They are beginning to make detailed observations as they participate in simple investigations. Key Stage 2 pupils have a wide knowledge across the subject. They record their observations showing an understanding of the need for accuracy and precision. By the end of the key stage, many pupils successfully engage in work more normally associated with Key Stage 3, though higher attaining pupils are not challenged consistently to extend their skills of research and scientific enquiry.

15. Standards in information technology are in line with expectations by the end of both key stages. In the communicating information strand of the subject, standards are above expectations by the age of eleven. In religious education, pupils achieve above what is expected in the agreed syllabus by the age of seven, but this standard falls by the age of eleven to an average level. Work in Key Stage 2 is often too directed by the teacher, which restricts pupils' freedom of expression. Whilst pupils display a good knowledge of the stories and customs of the faiths they study, they are not sufficiently aware of fundamental differences in those beliefs.
16. In geography and history, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations by the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 2, there is the same restriction of over-directed work, as observed in religious education. All pupils are provided with worksheets to complete which prevents them from finding out for themselves and expressing their own thoughts and experiences.
17. Standards in design and technology are above expectations - a high priority is given to this subject and pupils do well in planning, making and assessing.
18. Pupils' attainment in art, music and physical education at both key stages is in line with expectations. Singing and swimming are of a good standard by the end of Key Stage 2.
19. Pupils with special educational needs learn well and make good progress. They are well supported by learning assistants, who develop close working relationships with the pupils for whom they are responsible. Learning support assistants carry out programmes of work prepared both by class teachers and the special needs co-ordinator. These are generally well-designed; activities planned by class teachers mirror closely those planned for other pupils, while those organised by the co-ordinator are designed for pupils to practise particular skills.
20. There are five pupils whose first language is not English and none is at the early stages of English acquisition. The quality support offered them is satisfactory and they are enabled to make progress at a similar rate to the others in their classes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Children make a happy and confident start to school when they enter the reception class. They establish effective relationships with adults and with each other.
22. Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to their learning. They participate well in lessons, contributing comments and questions that show interest. The majority listen attentively, settle quickly to work and concentrate on their task. This is particularly evident when teaching is good. Pupils are interested and enquiring; for example, in a science lesson in Year 4, pupils were keen to research and investigate different sizes of hand after studying a skeleton and x-rays. Good examples of pupils sharing their work with the class were observed during the inspection; for example, in a Year 5/6 music lesson when pupils had been making compositions in groups, they discussed their work and accepted constructive criticism as well as praise. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting and during the inspection were pleased with the attitudes and values the school promotes and the confidence it gives to pupils in a strong, community atmosphere.
23. Behaviour in lessons, round the school and in the playground is good; on a visit outside school behaviour was exemplary. No issues of bullying or oppressive behaviour were observed and pupils and parents are confident any issues will be dealt with swiftly and sensitively within a no-blame policy. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
24. Pupils respond well to the opportunities they are given for personal development. They are involved in daily routines - for example, in all classes, there are monitors or helpers. Even reception children have designated daily jobs and they are also register monitors. As pupils move up the school, opportunities develop and by Years 5 and 6, pupils are useful members of the school community, supporting younger children at playtime and lunchtimes acting as "paramedics". Relationships in the school are very good. All staff and pupils relate well to one

another and the friendly relaxed atmosphere has helped pupils to settle down early in the new

school year. Pupils from all year groups are able to understand the feelings of others and the effects of their action on others. They share well, take turns and listen well to one another.

25. Attendance levels are high and well above the national average. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school, are keen to attend and arrive punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. The quality of teaching in the school overall is good. It is at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in four per cent. Teaching is good in 40 per cent of lessons and very good in 18 per cent. As at the last inspection, teaching is better at Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. There is also good teaching at Key Stage 1 but it is not as evenly spread.
27. One of the most successful features of the teaching is the relationship between teachers and their pupils. Pupils are generally managed well and this contributes to a good classroom ethos, though this is not as successfully established in Year 1. There is a very relaxed atmosphere in the school, yet pupils are encouraged to take on increasing responsibilities as they get older, which they do gladly. This atmosphere of mutual trust is an important factor in pupils' good learning.
28. Another important feature of the school's success is teachers' good understanding of the subjects they teach. This has been assisted by the good work undertaken in the last 18 months on the review of the curriculum and planning, led by the headteacher. In a very good science lesson for Year 4 on the human skeleton, the teacher's own knowledge enabled pupils to make fast gains in their understanding. They were keen to know why bones had more than one name, such as *thigh-bone* and *femur*, and many remembered both. Her knowledge of information technology enabled the teacher to make very good use of a fascinating CD-ROM, which allowed the pupils to view an x-ray of the whole skeleton and rotate it and zoom in on particular parts. The children thoroughly enjoyed the lesson and very good learning took place.
29. The last inspection found that teachers lacked guidance on appropriate tasks to undertake with their classes. The recent review, referred to above, has focused partly on lesson objectives - that is, what the teachers want their pupils, or groups of pupils, to have learnt by the end of the lesson. Schemes of work have also focused on lesson objectives, following national guidance. This is being successful and teachers are encouraged to evaluate lessons against the objectives, with pointers for consolidation or extension in the next lesson. This is in its early days and its effectiveness is mixed, but very good examples of it were seen in Year 2.
30. The weakness in teaching which most stands out in nearly all subjects is the provision for higher attaining pupils. This has improved since the last inspection, although it is still a key issue for the school.
31. In English, teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Higher attaining pupils are provided for in most lessons, following the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. But opportunities for independent research or enquiry are limited. The small size of the school library does not help.
32. In mathematics, teaching is good at both key stages. Pupils are developing good number skills and have quick mental agility, promoted by good teaching of basic routines. But again, the provision for higher attaining pupils is not consistent at Key Stage 2. Setting takes place in Years 3 to 5, but, as described in the mathematics section (paragraph 116-117), the extension work given to higher attaining pupils is not taking them far enough beyond others in the group. A comparison of National Curriculum test results in mathematics with those in English from 1997 to 2000 also suggests that provision for higher attaining pupils is not consistent across the core subjects.
33. Science teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Pupils are being taught the principles of investigative science well. Here again though, the lack of opportunities for independent work is a weakness.

34. This is also the main reason why pupils' attainment in history and geography is only average. Although there is good evidence of teachers' good subject knowledge and careful preparation, tasks are too restrictive at Key Stage 2, requiring limited response from pupils, with little opportunity for extension or free work. Teaching in these subjects is satisfactory overall. Time has also been a factor here, and in this, the school's decisions are understandable, since schools were permitted to relax the programmes of study for foundation subjects during the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies.
35. In religious education, teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 2, pupils are not taught enough about how religions differ and the tasks set are too restrictive.
36. Teaching in design and technology is good overall. This subject has been given a high focus, with appropriate stress on the component parts - designing, making and evaluating. Teaching in art and physical education is satisfactory overall. Teaching in music is good at both key stages. Most of the teaching is undertaken by the co-ordinator, whose own expertise is raising standards - those in singing are higher than at the last inspection.
37. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is undertaken by two teachers and is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator works on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the second teacher teaches the other days. The job share works appropriately. The staff plan a suitable range of activities. Their expectations of work and behaviour are appropriate and the tasks generally match the children's level of functioning and skill. However, the shape of the room makes it difficult for staff to keep an eye on all groups at the same time. Homework in the form of reading books is used particularly well to enhance children's progress. The staff work effectively as a team and support one another well.
38. Homework is also well used in Key Stage 1 and 2. It is set in a variety of subjects and followed up in class. Some parents commented at the pre-inspection meeting that the pattern had become inconsistent over last year, but its current use is good and enhances pupils' learning.
39. The special needs co-ordinator operates very effectively within the constraints of her limited contact with the school. Some pupils are supported in class while others are withdrawn for tuition, but the school has taken adequate steps to ensure that pupils do not regularly miss essential lessons in English and mathematics. Pupils' needs are identified early, and the school complies fully with statutory requirements regarding pupils with statements of educational need. Each pupil on the special needs register has an individual educational plan, but the quality of these is not uniform, some providing detailed advice to teachers on the strategies they should use to enable pupils to make progress towards their targets, others providing little helpful detail. Nonetheless, the support given by the staff to these pupils is consistently good.
40. The school does not qualify for special funding under the Ethnic Minorities and Travellers Achievement Grant, because of the very small numbers in need of specialised support. None of the five pupils concerned is at an early stage of English language acquisition. Reading Language Acquisition Peripatetic Project helps in assessing pupils' additional language needs. Teachers are well guided to plan and teach in order to meet pupils' identified needs.
41. The quality of pupils' learning is good. An important factor in pupils' learning is their own knowledge of their progress. Teachers mostly use introductory and final sessions well. All teachers use lesson objectives in their planning. Some teachers make them plain at the outset of the lesson, but this is not always done. When it is, it enables pupils to assess their own success during the lesson. Sometimes, lessons have so much content that there is too little time left at the end for a useful plenary session.
42. Teachers' use of marking is another contributor to pupils' learning and this is generally undertaken well in the core subjects, with comments for improvement being frequently made.

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

43. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. The curriculum provision for the foundation stage is in accordance with the early learning goals, successfully incorporated into National Curriculum in Key Stage 1 and planned appropriately. However, the outdoor provision is unsatisfactory because of lack of equipment.
44. Since the appointment of the new head, the school has satisfactorily addressed some of the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The planned curriculum is broad and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Religious education is provided in accordance with the West Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. Each subject has an overall curriculum plan, based on national guidance, which provides the framework for a broad and relevant curriculum. All subjects also have policies.
45. For pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, the organisation of the school day has been revised and most of the curriculum is carefully balanced to provide opportunities to meet the interests and aptitudes of all pupils, including children under five and those with special educational needs. However, history and geography at Key Stage 2 have less than the recommended allocation of time.
46. The school has successfully implemented both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The Numeracy Strategy is improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills and has also increased teachers' confidence in teaching the subject. In literacy, there are inconsistencies in the way reading is taught at Key Stage 1.
47. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all for pupils to learn and make progress, although higher attaining pupils are sometimes not enabled to progress as far or as quickly as they can. All children have full access to the curriculum and make appropriate progress. Pupils with special educational needs and the few with English as an additional language make good progress. Withdrawal sessions to accommodate individual or group teaching are kept to a minimum and wherever possible, pupils who receive support from assistants or adult helpers do so during lessons.
48. The range and number of extra-curricular activities are good. Pupils have opportunities to take part in clubs such as art, judo, football, tennis and French, which are well attended. Take-up for the art club in particular is good. There are some opportunities to play competitive sport against other local schools. This provision enhances pupils' learning well, particularly in art and physical education, and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development. There is a wide range of out of school visits to places of historical or geographical interest, which enrich the curriculum further.
49. There is a well-planned programme for personal and social education. The provision for pupils' personal development is good. Appropriate opportunities for pupils to learn about health issues such as dangers of drug misuse form part of the science curriculum. The statutory requirement to provide appropriate sex education as part of the whole-school curriculum has also been addressed. Pupils are suitably encouraged to make personal choices and take important independent decisions.
50. The school makes good use of the local area to support pupils' learning. Good links are developing with the community, such as out-of-school visits to places of worship. The use of speakers coming into the school is not so well developed. The school has effective links with contributory and receiving schools which has a significant impact on pupils' welfare, guidance and academic achievement.
51. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. That for pupils' cultural development has improved in quality since the last inspection.
52. The quality of the provision for pupils' spiritual development that the school makes in its acts of collective worship has been inspected separately under Section 23 of the School Inspection Act 1996. The provision made in class lessons and in other contacts between teachers and pupils is satisfactory. Pupils are strongly encouraged to value the beliefs of others, sometimes displaying

a good knowledge of their places of worship and customs, but are not sufficiently encouraged to explore those beliefs or to reflect on their merits. Good opportunities are sometimes created for pupils to reflect or wonder during religious education lessons, but these are not always exploited to their fullest extent. In one very good English lesson, pupils were encouraged to reflect on evocative vocabulary that prompted pupils to an appreciation of sensory experiences they had enjoyed.

53. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. Pupils develop a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong, and teachers take time and effort to explain why certain misdemeanours are not acceptable. Moral questions are sometimes explored in religious education lessons; for example, the consequences arising from the temptation in the Garden of Eden. Teachers expect that pupils will treat each other with courtesy and consideration. This generally reflects in the way in which pupils behave and in the way in which equipment and belongings are treated. Teachers provide good models for their pupils, who develop friendly but respectful relationships with them.
54. Provision for pupils' social development is also good. Pupils are encouraged to wait patiently for the teacher's attention, and to share materials and equipment fairly and sensibly when they are engaged on a group activity. There is clear improvement in pupils' understanding of the needs of others as they move through the school. Pupils progressively assume greater responsibility as they grow older, so that by Year 6 each is expected to perform a task for the benefit of others; for example, caring for the youngest pupils at lunchtime or preparing for school assemblies. Some pupils represent their class at the school council, offering views to the headteacher and organising social or charity events. Through the school's support of national charities, pupils are taught to care for others. Pupils develop a good understanding of their identity and social responsibilities within the local community because the school enjoys close links with the church and village, making a positive contribution to the life of both.
55. The school makes equally good provision for the cultural development of its pupils. They become familiar with their own cultural heritage - for example, through visits to the theatre and through music offered in assemblies or by visiting ensembles. Pupils learn about past cultures, such as those of the Tudors, Greeks or Egyptians, and compare their own lives with those of children living in India. Older pupils make comparisons between their lives and those of people living in rural Wales. Pupils enjoy stories from other countries, sometimes discussing these in depth during literacy lessons, and examine the work of different artists. However, pupils generally have too few opportunities to learn about the cultural diversity of Britain, and insufficient use is made of the representatives of other cultures to enrich pupils' understanding.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The school cares effectively for its pupils' welfare and safety. Child protection arrangements are good and comply with statutory requirements and local guidelines. Procedures for monitoring good behaviour and for ensuring that oppressive behaviour is eliminated are good and well known to pupils and parents, who receive information in the school prospectus to support the work carried out by teachers in the school. The school's open-door policy encourages parents to play a full part in pupils' welfare both at home and in the school.
57. The health and safety provision is good; it is well used by all staff and monitored by the governor with responsibility for health and safety (currently awaiting election) and subsequently the full governing body. Risk assessment is up to date and all equipment is well maintained with recorded checks. During the inspection, no new health and safety concerns were noted; the school has a concern over provision for lavatories for Key Stage 1 pupils, as described in paragraph 83. Overall, the school and the playground are a safe place for pupils and staff.
58. There are clear notices to support procedures for fire evacuation and fire drills are taken regularly and logged. Three members of staff have a current first aid certificate and first aid provision is very good. All serious accidents and head injuries are reported and recorded. The

school successfully promotes healthy and safe living through a good programme for personal,

social and health education. The school's healthy eating policy is used well. The school provides pupils with a healthy, nutritional lunch which is cooked on the premises.

59. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and are adhered to. Registers are correctly completed at both morning and afternoon sessions and are returned to the school office. There is informal daily monitoring each day by class teachers and formal weekly monitoring by the school secretary and head teacher. If necessary, the school works with the educational welfare officer.

Assessment

60. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory overall, though there are weaknesses in the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Though there has been some improvement in this area since the last inspection, the weaknesses outlined in the previous report have not been fully attended to. The school has yet to develop whole-school systems of assessing and recording pupils' attainment. Developing an assessment policy and procedures are an important part of the school's development plan.
61. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress over time in English and mathematics are effective. A range of assessments, including baseline, statutory tests, and the optional tests from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, are used well to monitor pupils' progress. The results of these assessments are used to arrange groups on the basis of prior attainment. Teachers have begun to support individuals and groups of pupils in setting targets for themselves and consequently work to assess and meet their needs. However, targets, though appropriate, are not always rigorously geared to an assessment of each individual's past and likely future performance.
62. Procedures for assessment and recording of attainment in science are inconsistent and those in information technology have just been introduced. There are no procedures of assessment in any other subjects. In general, teachers know their pupils well; their own evaluation of the short-term planning is rigorous and provides sufficient information to inform lesson planning and build successfully on previous skills of individuals and groups. However, there are no systems in these subjects for recording such evaluations consistently.
63. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early. They are monitored closely by the special needs co-ordinator and their progress recorded in detail. Consequently, their needs are met well in lessons and they make good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

64. The partnership with parents is good. Parents are encouraged to support children's learning at home and are given good support and information from the school to do this. Parents are generally pleased with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children.
65. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents are good; parents are well informed of pupils' targets for improvement. Through a range of methods including the very good school prospectus, school policies, newsletters, and increased meetings with teachers, there is clear communication between home and school. Pupils' annual reports give good information on their attainment. Parents are well informed of school events by monthly newsletters, though some parents at the pre-inspection meeting said they would like more notice. They appreciate the increased meetings to keep them involved in school life. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting felt they were able to approach the school with any queries or problems and were equally confident that they would be promptly heard and that the problem would be addressed. Home-school agreements are in place although a number of parents feel the agreement is superfluous as the school already had good practice in place.

66. Parents are supportive of the school. They help during the school day and on school visits and trips. Homework is well supported by parents; this includes reading with children, spellings and helping older pupils help with research.
67. There is a very active school association who raise considerable funds for the school to support pupils' learning. Their support in other areas is greatly appreciated by the school especially with crèche facilities for events and refreshments after church services and school productions. The partnership between parents and the school enhances the provision for learning and the relationships between staff, pupils, parents and the community.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

68. The headteacher has a clear vision for the educational direction of the school, and has carried out a thorough revision of its management and curriculum since her appointment in January 1999. She has introduced a number of initiatives directed towards the raising of standards; these include improvements in the quality and focus of teachers' planning, the monitoring of teaching and learning, and a review of the use of time and staffing resources. By appointing co-ordinators with responsibility for each key stage, she has established a management structure that ensures effective delegation of tasks and more focused discussion among groups of teachers about how standards in the school may be raised further. The headteacher has also sought to involve governors closely in the monitoring of standards by informing them in greater detail about pupils' performance and the management of the curriculum, so that the leadership of the school as a whole has become more clearly focused towards raising standards.
69. The headteacher and governing body identify suitable priorities and targets for improvement through the school's development plan. The current plan established an appropriate short-term view of immediate priorities for development after the headteacher's appointment, and now a three-year plan is being evolved to guide long-term strategies. The development plan appropriately incorporates the costing of each initiative; details of spending priorities for each subject are delegated to co-ordinators.
70. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is constantly developing, and governors have an increasing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are well briefed, both because there is close communication between the headteacher and chair of governors, and because they receive detailed reports from the headteacher about developments in the school. Governors are well informed of parents' views and have close contacts with both community and parish. Governors are active in their support of the school; each of the sub-committees of the governing body reports regularly to the full meeting on a range of relevant issues. Many governors visit the school regularly, and parents have good access to the school both through the headteacher and through their contact with governors.
71. The headteacher and key stage co-ordinators form the school's management team. Both co-ordinators lead key-stage meetings and consult with the headteacher and staff, but their other responsibilities differ. Those of the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator are more clearly developed; he also deputises for the headteacher in her absence and has regular release from the classroom to carry out other additional duties. Staff responsibilities for the co-ordination of subjects have recently been re-organised, but the role of the subject co-ordinator is generally not well developed. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science monitor teachers' plans for the term's work and scrutinise children's work. Other co-ordinators offer advice to colleagues when this is requested, but have no responsibility for monitoring the teaching of the subject and therefore have no clear idea of the overall strengths and weaknesses in the subject for which they are responsible.
72. The headteacher regularly monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching, observing lessons and offering constructive feedback to staff. She has focused wisely on specific areas for development each term, such as greater precision in the identification of learning objectives or the more effective deployment of learning support staff; these have contributed positively to the quality of learning. She has paced the introduction of initiatives judiciously, sensitive to teachers' personal and professional needs and taking these fully into account when assessing the development needs of the school.
73. The school's aims and values are sufficiently explicit, and are directed towards high standards in

work and behaviour. Relationships in the school are good. Teachers share a strong commitment and common sense of purpose towards raising standards, although there is scope for the further development of cohesive strategies by which this may be achieved. For example, the use of assessment procedures is underdeveloped, and there is a lack of a common approach to the teaching of sounds in reading at Key Stage 1.

74. The management of the provision for pupils with special education needs is satisfactory, and the school provides well for these pupils. Although working in school for only two mornings each week, the special needs co-ordinator communicates effectively with class teachers and learning support assistants to ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively. Individual education plans are drawn up systematically for each pupil, although these vary in the degree of detailed help they provide to guide teachers in their planning. Pupils' needs are identified early, and parents are appropriately involved in the formal review of statements of need. No governor currently has an overview of the special needs work of the school, although the governing body maintains a sound oversight of funds allocated for this.
75. The school's arrangements for appraisal have been in abeyance pending the introduction of performance management, but the headteacher has established a written plan for the coming term. Arrangements for the induction of new teachers are good. Newly qualified staff are well supported by a mentor and colleagues during the early weeks of their appointment, and they receive appropriate advice and training, both in school and from the local authority.
76. Educational priorities are well supported through financial planning. The school's development plan forms the basis for financial planning after account has been taken of staffing needs and government initiatives. The governors' finance committee plays a principal part in this and its chair ensures that governors are given a full explanation of targets and spending. A thorough check is kept on all budget headings by the efficient finance officer to facilitate this.
77. When the present headteacher was appointed, the budget was in deficit as a result of the funding of a mobile classroom. Governors took out a loan to cover this and there is one instalment outstanding. For this reason, last year's budget was set with caution, resulting in a carry forward figure slightly above recommendations. This has already been earmarked for the refurbishing of accommodation for the early years children - the present accommodation was found by this inspection to present problems.
78. The school's accounts were audited this year and all the recommendations have been incorporated in the action plan. All those issues relating to finance were of minor importance.
79. Specific grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs or the standards fund, are administered carefully and breakdowns show that they have been appropriately spent. Outside contracts are offered where possible and their value for money evaluated, as was the case with the recent cleaning contracts. Overall, the school applies best value principles wisely to the acquisition and use of its resources.
80. Good use is made of information technology. The computer suite is well used by pupils and much of teachers' planning is word processed. The school office makes good use of computers in word processing and in financial management.
81. The match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the National Curriculum is good. Although there are not enough pupils to teach all year groups in separate classes, the school employs additional, part-time staff to enable English, mathematics and science to be taught in year groups in Key Stage 2. This contributes to high standards, though provision for higher attaining pupils could be improved across the key stage. Learning support assistants are well deployed and well trained.
82. There is adequate accommodation to teach the National Curriculum. The open-plan area for Year 4/5 can cause some problems when pupils pass through; however, the school addresses this appropriately. The shortcomings of the early years accommodation were referred to above.

83. Both the school and the local education authority have identified unsatisfactory provision of Key Stage 1 pupils' lavatories, though their refurbishment has not been given priority by the authority. The lavatories open out onto a classroom and have poor drainage which makes for an unpleasant atmosphere. The school playing field has drainage and grass problems and is out of action for a considerable part of the year. Whilst using the local playing field compensates for this, the situation is not satisfactory.
84. Resources are adequate across the school, with the exception of equipment for the under fives' outdoor play. There is an adequate number of fiction books in the school library but there is a need for more non-fiction. In all other areas the quality, quantity and range of resources are at least sufficient.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

85. To improve further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- * Raise the standards of pupils' attainment in information technology, history and geography at both key stages and in religious education at Key Stage 2 by:
 - giving a more even balance between the time allocated to these subjects;
 - ensuring an even emphasis on all strands of each subject.

(Paragraphs 137-155; 167-172)
 - * † Give co-ordinators greater responsibility by:
 - involving them in developing systems of assessing and recording pupils' attainment;
 - giving them opportunities to review planning and monitor the standards of attainment and the quality of teaching.

(Paragraphs 61-62; 71)
 - * Provide greater challenge for higher attaining pupils at both key stages in all subjects by:
 - using the information from assessment to establish more clearly the levels of attainment pupils have already reached;
 - ensuring that work provided for them takes them further from that point;
 - giving more frequent opportunities for independent work.

(Paragraphs 30-35; 61-62; 103)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- * ensure a more consistent approach to the teaching of reading in Key Stage 1 in order to improve pupils' ability to build up words from their sounds; (Paragraphs 101)
- * provide greater detail in individual education plans in order to give more assistance to class teachers in planning to meet the pupils' needs; (Paragraphs 39; 74)
- * work with the local education authority to improve the provision of lavatories for Key Stage 1 pupils. (Paragraphs 83)

† denotes an issue already highlighted as a priority in the school's development plan (Numbers in brackets indicate a reference to the main paragraphs where the weaknesses are discussed.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 50 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 25 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 0 | 18 | 40 | 38 | 2 | 2 | 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 | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 158 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 25 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 12 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 9 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 3.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999 | 13 | 12 | 25 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|-----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 11 | 13 | 11 |
| | Girls | 10 | 12 | 10 |
| | Total | 21 | 25 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 84 (94) | 100 (100) | 84 (100) |
| | National | 82 (80) | 83 (81) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 12 | 11 | 12 |
| | Girls | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| | Total | 22 | 21 | 22 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 88 (85) | 84 (100) | 88 (100) |
| | National | 82 (81) | 86 (85) | 87 (86) |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999 | † | 18 | 25 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | † | † | † |
| | Girls | 18 | 17 | 18 |
| | Total | 24 | 23 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 96 (100) | 92 (94) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 70 (65) | 69 (59) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | † | † | † |
| | Girls | 17 | 17 | 18 |
| | Total | 2 | 23 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 92 (94) | 92 (100) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 68 (65) | 69 (65) | 75 (72) |

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

† Fewer than ten.

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 2 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 142 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 2 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 7.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 20.8 |
| Average class size | 26.3 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 6 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 101 |

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999/2000 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 300,498 |
| Total expenditure | 284,973 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,792 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 2,444 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 17,969 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 158 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 44 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 50 | 48 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 41 | 52 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 25 | 64 | 5 | 0 | 7 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 18 | 64 | 11 | 7 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 45 | 45 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 27 | 59 | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 59 | 25 | 11 | 2 | 2 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 36 | 52 | 5 | 0 | 7 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 32 | 45 | 14 | 5 | 5 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 43 | 32 | 9 | 0 | 16 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 41 | 50 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 41 | 43 | 11 | 5 | 0 |

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

A number of parents made additional comments in the questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting. Many of these were in praise of the school, its new headteacher and her staff. Several parents felt that more challenge could be offered to higher attaining pupils. Others looked for greater consistency in the teaching of reading and the use of homework. Some parents thought that there is insufficient notice about school events. Others think the range of extra-curricular activities is limited.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

86. Four year-olds are admitted to the reception class at the start of the academic year. Most have had pre-school experience in the local playgroup or a nursery class. At the time of inspection, fourteen children in the reception class were attending part-time.
87. Most children's level of attainment on entry, as indicated by the school's baseline assessment, is above that expected for their age. Children's overall standards of attainment by the end of the foundation stage remain above the national expectations of the early learning goals. Children are developing a broad range of learning experiences within the nationally recommended areas of learning. Most of the children are on line to reach above the expected standards in the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. Based on the inspection evidence, most children achieve well and attain the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world, the creative area of learning and physical development by the end of the foundation stage. Children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time and in lessons by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. Children with special educational needs receive equally good support. The quality of provision for under-fives and the standards attained were not reported in the last inspection.
88. The early years' curriculum is satisfactorily planned. It provides experiences that are relevant, imaginative and enjoyable - for example, creative work such as cooking, painting and play-dough work. The planning reflects all areas of learning and is appropriately linked to the advancement of children's skills, knowledge and understanding. It is extended to embrace the literacy and numeracy strategies. Assessments take place on entry to the reception class but currently there are no consistent procedures for assessing children on a day-to-day basis in all areas to check and record their on-going progress.
89. The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is satisfactory overall. The staff plan to provide a generally suitable range of activities with clear intentions. They know how young children learn and extend their responses sensitively. Teachers' expectations of work and behaviour are appropriate and the tasks generally match children's level of functioning and skill. Homework in the form of reading books is used particularly well to enhance children's progress. The staff work effectively as a team and support one another well.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

90. By the time they leave the reception class, children are achieving and exceeding the early learning goals in this area. This shows sound achievement and reflects the skilful teaching of the staff. Children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve in a variety of learning situations. Children quickly settle down and feel happy and secure at school. They make sound progress as they learn to co-operate; share and take turns. They work both as part of a group and independently. Most children begin to form positive and respectful relationships and to communicate effectively with one another and with adults. The staff act as good role models for children and explain clearly what is expected of them. Some simple classroom rules are shared with all. Children generally listen well and understand set routines. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and guided to behave sensibly at all times. Children show consideration and respect for property and each other. They are attentive and eager to learn, and enjoy sharing their work with any available adult. Most children participate enthusiastically in teacher-led and self-initiated activities. Teaching is good. The learning areas are always well prepared and organised with a good range of interesting activities. The children are managed very skilfully and kept purposefully occupied. Their play and responses are supported and extended sensitively.

Communication, language and literacy

91. Most children are on course to achieve and exceed this early learning goal. The children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books with adults and with each other. Most children speak clearly in full sentences and respond well to stories and songs. Children with speech difficulties are skilfully supported through constant encouragement to talk and share experiences. Most staff show that they value their children's efforts at communicating. Children talk about their experiences interestingly and develop new vocabulary - for example, when making and talking about their 'Humpty Dumpty' rhyme books or other aspects of their work. Most children in the class are gaining satisfactory control in developing early writing skills. They can draw and paint with increasing control and a few higher attainers produce meaningful short sentences.
92. Most children in the reception class write their own name unaided and many average attainers put together short and simple sentences to copy. Good progress is made when adults work in small groups or on a one to one basis to give children individual attention. The introduction of the literacy strategy is having a significant impact. The children enjoy using the big books, and are given planned opportunities, for example, daily discussion times to talk about their work and develop new vocabulary; for example, through the 'Jolly Phonics' actions and stories of letters.
93. All the adults use talk to good effect and are good active listeners. Children enjoy imaginative free play in the class shop. Children handle books carefully and know how these are organised. Many children in the reception class associate sounds with words and letters. All children are encouraged to take books home and share with adults. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers effectively familiarise children with written vocabulary through stimulating activities to focus on key words. Literacy lessons are modified to suit the very young and effectively promote the development of early reading, writing and spelling skills. Teachers' regular evaluations of planned work help build on what has already been achieved.

Mathematical Development

94. Most children exceed the early learning goals in mathematics by the end of foundation stage. Children are able to match, sort and count using every day objects. They count and order accurately up to ten and recognise the number symbols. Opportunities for practical activities are generally well planned for children to make representations and write the number symbols correctly. Most children recognise basic shapes and gain knowledge of capacity and weight from practical experiences with sand and water. Some older children describe objects by position, shape, size, colour and quantity. They enjoy working with large and small construction equipment and jigsaws. Some older children demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of how to solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction, and use vocabulary such as, 'add one more' or 'take one more away', 'how many altogether?' and 'how many left?' Teaching is satisfactory. There is effective adult involvement in children's activities and useful timely assessments are made of the individual children's progress. The teachers successfully plan suitable activities - for example, 'eggs to cups' for one to one correspondence. Pupils are suitably helped to move forward through talk. Teachers plan a variety of activities to consolidate the correct use of language involved. An effective use of number rhymes and songs further enhances pupils' learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

95. Most children are on line to achieve this early learning goal. They have an adequate general knowledge of their own environment when they start school. Adults support children's understanding and encourage learning of how they have grown since they were babies. Children build on their knowledge about where they live and support their understanding of self and the family through activities such as role-play in the home corner. They work with sand and freely explore properties of malleable materials. They use paint to mix different colours, but many do not yet name basic colours correctly. There are opportunities for children to explore with everyday objects of interest; as well as select from a variety of reclaimed materials to make imaginative models and develop skills, such as cutting and building. The children have developed their skills sufficiently in asking questions to find out how things work. In one session they asked a visiting adult with a baby, some very good questions about what the baby can and cannot do. Most children demonstrate developing computer skills expected for their age. They show increasing

control in the use of mouse, to move items on the screen. There is effective adult intervention in activities and encouragement to children to explore new ideas. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

Physical development

96. Most children meet the expectations of the early learning goals in this area. In the main school hall, children have a regular opportunity for singing games, physical education and movement with music. They move imaginatively, demonstrating satisfactory body control and awareness of space in the physical education and movement lessons. However, provision for outdoor play is unsatisfactory because there are not enough resources.
97. Children use construction toys and malleable materials with appropriate tools, and demonstrate reasonable hand and eye co-ordination. Children make models out of constructional equipment and reclaimed materials. They develop confidence in the use of different joining materials and tools such as scissors and glue. Teaching is satisfactory; teachers plan effectively to provide calm and sensitive support and show a good understanding of how young children learn. The staff have a sensitive awareness of children's safety.

Creative learning

98. Most children are on course to meet the expectations of early learning goals. They experiment with paint and use their observations and imagination to create pleasing results. They are given opportunities to explore colour, texture, shape and form, through working with a wide range of materials to create collage or paint patterns on a 'Humpty Dumpty' egg. Children also use malleable materials and construction toys to make models. They sing and clap rhythms and express enjoyment. There are opportunities for children to explore sound and depict ideas and feelings through using percussion instruments. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Support staff work closely with teachers and make positive contributions to children's learning, as when participating in the role-play for shopping and helping children to select most appropriate materials for their models. Teachers talk to the children and ask relevant questions to extend their vocabulary.
99. Indoor resources for the foundation stage are sufficient and accessible. These are well organised and used effectively for all areas of learning. The teaching areas are limited in space and currently not organised imaginatively into logically defined and visually attractive learning areas. There are plans to move reception into more appropriate accommodation.

ENGLISH

100. Standards in English are well above the national averages for pupils at both seven and eleven years of age. This inspection largely found that attainment is at the level suggested by national test results in 1999, and the school's results for the current year are likely to be broadly similar when national figures are available for comparison.
101. However, within this broader picture there are some variations for different aspects of the subject. At Key Stage 1, trends in reading show that standards have declined a little over the last three years while those in writing have improved steadily. The school's results in reading were broadly in line with those of similar schools, while they were well above average for similar schools in writing. The inspection found that pupils of different levels of attainment at Key Stage 1 do not always display the skills to sound out new words with confidence, and that there are inconsistencies in the school's approach to the teaching of sounds in reading before the age of seven. A second factor is that the school has focused more closely on raising standards in writing at both key stages during recent years; this has made a positive impact on the quality of writing pupils achieve. As a consequence, results in English as a whole at Key Stage 2 have improved in line with the national trend during the past three years. Overall, standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection, especially in writing.

102. The inspection shows that standards in speaking are well above average across the school. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to express their views and to enter discussion with others, both during the literacy hour and in other lessons. Teachers generally use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding; in some lessons they are challenged to think carefully and to reply at length. In one Year 2 lesson for example, pupils were expected to reflect in silence on the question posed before offering an answer. By the age of eleven, pupils begin to empathise with sentiment expressed in poetry and prose, and to capture that mood when they read aloud. Standards in listening are above the national average at the age of seven, and well above by the age of eleven. Pupils at Key Stage 1 generally listen attentively, but sometimes teachers have to work hard to create a calm working atmosphere because pupils are anxious to impart information. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, they develop longer spans of concentration, listening carefully when others are speaking and displaying understanding of the views of others.
103. The findings of the inspection are that attainment in reading across the school is above the national average. By the age of five, many pupils recognise whole words and identify individual sounds. Some already read simple texts. At seven, many pupils read with understanding and expression; some read confidently and display a wide general knowledge acquired from the books they have read. Some pupils of all levels of ability have difficulty in tackling the middle sounds of longer words they encounter for the first time, though they have a secure understanding of initial and final sounds. This is because they do not always possess the strategies for tackling more difficult sound blends or for breaking words into their constituent syllables. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are well supported in their efforts to read, both at school and at home, and careful records of progress are kept. At Key Stage 2, many pupils continue to read avidly, but confident readers are not always heard to read with sufficient frequency, nor are they guided towards a sufficiently wide variety of challenging texts which they can explore independently. Many of the oldest pupils read with fluency and expression and speak confidently about the authors they like, justifying their preferences. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in their reading, and these pupils make good progress.
104. Across the school, standards in writing are well above the national average. At seven, many pupils write accounts of their experiences in some detail, sequencing events accurately. They apply the same skill to their science work, describing the phases in the life cycle of a butterfly, or recounting the activities of an ant. Higher attaining pupils write imaginatively and confidently, expressing opinion and thought clearly and beginning to have an awareness of the needs of the reader. Many use full stops and capital letters accurately to demarcate sentences, and some understand that commas may be used to clarify meaning. The school's efforts to raise standards of writing since the last inspection are clearly reflected in the pupils' work. By the age of eleven, most pupils write fluently, some demonstrating a confident use of style. They write for a variety of purposes, seeking to persuade or advance a viewpoint, making a simple analysis of a poem or writing instructions for a game. However, higher attaining pupils across the key stage are not always given sufficient opportunities to develop research skills or to develop independent lines of enquiry. Many pupils handle punctuation well, using speech marks accurately; commas or brackets are sometimes used to add personal comments or asides to assist the reader's understanding. Some develop a confident use of style and deliberately seek to engage the reader in what they have written. Those with special educational needs make good progress; they are often set tasks similar to those for other pupils, but are well supported in their work by ancillary staff.
105. Standards in spelling are well above average. Pupils are taught to spell systematically, and teachers have a high expectation that pupils will learn the words they are set. School and home co-operate well to ensure that pupils are well supported in their learning. Joined handwriting is taught from Year 1, and pupils achieve satisfactory standards across the school. By the age of seven, many pupils join their writing accurately. By eleven, many have developed a fluent hand. Standards of presentation are generally satisfactory, but there is no particular emphasis on the highest standards of work, and little evidence that pupils are exhorted to high achievement in this aspect.
106. There are five pupils from homes where English is not the first language, though none is at the early stages of English acquisition. The overall quality of support for these pupils is satisfactory and they are enabled to make progress at a similar rate to their peers. Reading Language Acquisition Peripatetic Project provides assistance in assessing pupils' additional language

needs. Teachers are well guided to plan and teach in order to meet pupils' identified needs.

107. Teaching in English at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, and there is some good teaching in Year 2. Good teaching is characterised by careful explanations and by the setting of appropriate expectations of what pupils are to achieve. The introduction of new ideas is carefully structured, and pupils are offered tasks well matched to their ability. In a very small minority of lessons, however, teaching is unsatisfactory because lessons do not progress with sufficient pace and because higher attaining pupils are not adequately challenged in their work. Basic skills in reading and writing are satisfactorily taught, and the principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been introduced appropriately. Parents support well the efforts of their children in learning to read and write, and close co-operation between home and school makes a positive contribution to high standards in the subject. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good overall, and sometimes very good. Teachers use questioning closely to determine pupils' understanding, and encourage the development of relevant discussion which prepares pupils well for written tasks. The work set is appropriately challenging for pupils of all levels of ability; teachers constantly monitor their progress towards the completion of tasks, and are always ready to intervene if pupils misunderstand or require clarification. In one very good lesson, the teacher's voice was used well to create mood and feeling as pupils were preparing to write shared poems, a skill which the pupils adopted well when they read out their work.
108. The English curriculum is sufficiently broad. A full range of skills is taught, and the National Literacy Strategy is used appropriately to support learning. The English curriculum generally offers sufficient progression in the learning of skills, but there is a lack of consistency in the approach to teaching sounds in reading at Key Stage 1, and the school has no scheme of work for this aspect of the subject to which teachers may refer. The English co-ordinator, in post for less than one year, does not yet have effective influence on the development of the curriculum. The headteacher has monitored teaching and learning in the subject, and the results of internal and external tests have been analysed effectively. Assessment procedures are in place, but their use in enhancing pupils' individual performance is not yet well developed. Fiction resources are sufficient, and the school has taken steps to ensure that non-fiction stocks are improved. The English curriculum is sometimes enriched by visits to the theatre and through contact with drama groups.

MATHEMATICS

109. Pupils' attainment by the age of seven is above the national average. In the National Curriculum tests in 1999, results at Level 2 were below the national average, although the percentage reaching the mid point of Level 2 (2B) was above average. Results at the higher level (Level 3) were also above the national average. Using the average point score (where pupils' attainments at all levels are taken into account), overall results were above the national average. Compared with schools of similar characteristics, the average point score results were average. The provisional results for the National Curriculum tests of 2000 are considerably higher than those of 1999 at both the expected and higher levels, but national comparisons are not yet available.
110. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of place value. They split a two-digit number into tens and units and use this method with a blank number line to help them add up mentally. Lower attaining pupils show a good knowledge of number bonds to ten and begin to add two numbers vertically. Higher attaining pupils know how to find a missing number, as in the sum $29 + \square = 49$. These pupils are also clear about place value in numbers over 1,000. Pupils recognise and name simple two-dimensional shapes and they are beginning to use standard measures for length and time. Higher attaining pupils identify the most appropriate metric units for a given task; for example, they decide whether a given distance would be best expressed in centimetres, metres or kilometres. Pupils experience the collection of data and the use of graphs using information technology in science work.
111. By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is well above the national average. Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests were well above the national average at Level 4 and above and those at the higher level (Level 5) were above the national average. Taking the average points score, the overall results were well above the national average and above the results of similar schools. The provisional results for the National Curriculum tests of 2000 are lower than those of 1999 at Level

4 and above and similar at Level 5; again, national comparisons are not yet available.

112. In the 1999 tests, the percentage achieving Level 5 was significantly smaller than in English. This is repeated in 2000, when the number of Level 5s in both English and science was considerably higher than in mathematics, though the number in mathematics included two pupils who achieved Level 6. Tests administered to the present Year 6 at the end of their Year 5 suggest that the number of Level 5s in 2001 will rise significantly. These facts suggest that there is some inconsistency in the provision for higher attaining pupils - the Level 6s suggest good provision whilst the lower number of Level 5s than in English or science suggests otherwise. This is discussed below.
113. Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of number. Most have quick recall of times-tables and know the associated division facts. Higher and average attaining pupils are learning the skills of approximation; they know how to round up or down and they calculate a rough answer to a multiplication sum in order to form a judgement of how reasonable is their answer to the actual sum. Lower attaining pupils are also clear on most of their tables facts and they know where they have gaps. They understand several written methods of multiplication. Pupils use protractors to construct and measure angles and most know the names and some of the properties of a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Although younger pupils learn to make and interpret graphs, there was little evidence of work on data handling or probability amongst older pupils.
114. Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and they learn very well because of the quality of teaching. Teachers across the school manage their pupils well to produce an ethos of hard work, where most pupils want to learn and make good progress. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and the numeracy strategy is appropriately used.
115. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. A strength of the teaching is the support given to all pupils during lessons by both teachers and learning assistants, including pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are at pains to make sure that all pupils understand the objective for the lesson and that they are completing the tasks at an appropriate rate. Pupils are given good encouragement to explain their methods of calculation and teachers frequently ask for suggestions of quicker or easier routes to an answer. This develops pupils' mental arithmetic skills well.
116. A weakness in teaching at Key Stage 2 is the inconsistency of the provision made for higher attaining pupils. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 are arranged by prior attainment into three sets whilst Year 6 pupils are taught together. This arrangement means that Year 4 are benefiting the most because there are three sets open to them. The Year 4 scrutiny shows that the range of work between the least and the most able is appropriately wide.
117. Year 5 pupils have only two sets open to them. The least able are taught with the Year 4 group, but the Year 5 group has a wide spread of ability, from the most able nine-year-olds to the most able ten-year-olds. This group is split into further groupings based on prior attainment and work is matched to ability. But the work sample shows that there are frequent occasions when the most able are doing the same work as the least able in the set. Similarly, in the Year 6 class, whilst higher attaining pupils are generally given harder work, the level of challenge presented is not always as high as it might be and pupils are sometimes repeating what they can do already.
118. At the time of the last inspection, it was commented that most pupils were under-achieving; this situation has been improved through the use of grouping and the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy, though there is room for further improvement as discussed above. Standards are now similar in terms of national averages to those found in 1996, though there has been some variation over the years.
119. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has a good understanding of the subject and the Numeracy Strategy. In common with other co-ordinators, she has had little opportunity to review regularly the standards of attainment and of teaching across the school. There is an appropriate system of assessment geared to the key objectives for each year. The co-ordinator intends to augment it with a portfolio of pupils' work, giving examples of each level of attainment.

SCIENCE

120. Pupils' attainment in science is above average by the time they are seven and well above average by eleven. The results of 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessment for seven-year-olds indicate that standards were broadly in line with the national average but well below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining higher level (Level 3) was below the national and similar schools' average. In 1998 teacher assessments, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and above was very high. The provisional results for 2000 show high standards once again and mark a significant improvement over the last year. The results of National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds indicate that standards have been consistently very high in comparison with the national average over the last three years. In 1999 the percentage of pupils who attained the higher level (Level 5) was above the national average. In comparison to schools with similar backgrounds, pupils' attainment was well above average. In the 2000 tests, the percentage of pupils attaining and exceeding the expected level has risen significantly. The national comparative data for these results is not available yet. The school's good results show a marked improvement on those recorded in the previous report. Another significant improvement is the well-planned and effectively carried out work in investigation and experimentation across both key stages.
121. By the time they are seven, pupils in their study of living things understand the different parts of a plant and record their findings in books. They carry out careful experiments to discover what a plant needs in order to grow; for example, growing hyacinths and daffodils and keeping a record of their growth. They also study the parts of a human body and recognise that in order to keep alive and stay healthy, a human being needs good diet, exercise and sleep. They investigate to find out that humans and animals grow at different rates. When looking at physical processes, pupils list how electricity is used in the home. They experiment with batteries, wires and bulbs to demonstrate their knowledge of how to make a bulb light up. They use the correct language to demonstrate scientific understanding of conductors and insulators, and, when investigating magnetism, use words such as 'attract' and 'repel'. Before starting an experiment, pupils make predictions and sensible suggestions. Younger pupils in the key stage carry out investigations to develop the use and awareness of senses. Pupils show developing understanding of what is a fair test when exploring the changes caused to materials through processes such as heating and cooling. Year 2 pupils name a variety of materials correctly, comparing and classifying them appropriately according to their properties. They are beginning to make more detailed observations as they participate in simple investigations - for example, finding out about materials that are waterproof. They talk confidently about their work. Although higher attaining pupils sometimes have further challenging tasks, working with partners of different levels of attainment does not always give them opportunities to tackle work that is more demanding.
122. By the time pupils are eleven, they understand the classification of materials under headings such as solids, liquid and gas, and describe the effect of change, such as heating or cooling, on a range of materials. Most pupils confidently conduct investigations relating to mixing and separating materials. They record their observations showing an understanding of the need for accuracy and precision in their investigative work to produce meaningful results. By the end of the key stage, many pupils successfully engage in work more normally associated with Key Stage 3 of the National Curriculum. However, higher attaining pupils are not challenged consistently to extend their skills of research and scientific enquiry.
123. In both key stages, pupils show good achievement in the acquisition of scientific skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs achieve appropriate levels and make good progress. From an early age pupils receive a good grounding in scientific knowledge and methods of enquiry. Most pupils, confidently represent their findings appropriately with drawings, graphs, charts and tables, making valid scientific conclusions.
124. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. In the best lessons, most teachers use probing and open-ended questions to elicit fuller response, prompt further enquiry and provide challenge. A key element of good science teaching observed is the high priority given to investigative and experimental work. Pupils are encouraged to make good use of literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers' own knowledge of the subject and scientific understanding is good in most lessons. Most teachers carefully plan an appropriate sequence of

activities, with clear and specific learning intentions. The organisation and use of time and resources to support learning are generally effective. Pupils are organised in small groups appropriate to the activity. Sometimes, teachers' introductions take too long and this affects the pace in some lessons. Older pupils review their achievements and are guided to set their own targets. However, teachers do not make or use assessments rigorously enough or consistently to record pupils' day-to-day achievements and to adapt and plan work to meet their differing needs. This results in some activities sometimes being too challenging and others lacking challenge.

125. The newly adopted national scheme of work now effectively guides teachers - an improvement since the previous inspection. Medium-term lesson plans link closely to this scheme. However, too often teachers use the scheme without sufficient regard to what pupils of different abilities already know, and what they need to learn next. The co-ordinator does not monitor teaching and pupils' results in order to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning, and thus inform the development of the subject. There is no system of assessment, though the school has prioritised this need.
126. The subject is satisfactorily led with clear educational direction. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic in her role to raise standards. The school is sufficiently resourced and resources are used effectively.

ART AND DESIGN

127. During the time of the inspection only two lessons were observed. Judgements on pupils' standards of work and achievement across the school have been made by scrutinising samples of work and the displays around the school, as well as talking to pupils and members of staff. Pupils attain standards in line with the national expectations. Most pupils show satisfactory progress across both key stages in the basic skills of collage, drawing and painting. These results show good improvement since the last inspection when standards, particularly in Key Stage 1, were judged to be unsatisfactory.
128. Pupils in both key stages are confidently developing an understanding of some of the aesthetic elements of art. They mix colours carefully and use different shades in their work. Pupils' skills and their knowledge of shape, texture and form in art are satisfactory. There are examples of three-dimensional work made from a range of modelling materials, particularly in Key Stage 2. There is a lack of emphasis on the work inspired by famous artists and direct observational work using a range of available objects and artefacts throughout the school.
129. The younger pupils in Key Stage 1 have opportunities to make imaginative models out of constructional materials and also handle clay and play-dough. Year 2 pupils sketch and paint, often with careful attention to detail. Their collage work is of sound quality. In Key Stage 2, there are examples of good sculptures made by Years 4 and 5 as part of a challenge, involving skills of planning, designing and making. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given opportunities to explore the work of famous artists, for example their drawing work inspired by Alfred Manessier's painting of 'Cock Fight'. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were involved in a challenging task of using the techniques of comic strips, developing an understanding of gestures and movement in drawing. Most pupils demonstrate good powers of observation, accuracy of detail, shape, form and size in drawing and colouring with different media such as pastels, oil based paints, pencil colours and felt-tips. Pupils are sufficiently encouraged to evaluate and make improvements to further develop own work. The use of sketchbooks for pupils to record their work of observational drawings or experiment with line and tone is not developed.
130. In the two lessons seen, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall. Teachers have sound subject knowledge. They plan and prepare effectively, and provide suitable challenge to develop pupils' art and design skills and ability to explore with imagination and feeling. The school is following the national guidance in their schemes of work in order to teach the required skills systematically across the school. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and effectively shares her own expertise in the subject. There is a well-attended art club after school, effectively led and organised by the co-ordinator.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

131. No lessons in design and technology took place during the week of the inspection. Judgements on pupils' standards of work and the quality of teaching have been made by scrutinising samples of work and talking to pupils and members of staff. Pupils' achievement across the school is good and they attain standards that are above the national expectations. The overall standards and quality of teaching in design and technology have improved since the last inspection. The good standards are mainly because of the high priority given to the subject and the well set out schemes of work. Pupils produce work of good quality. There is appropriate emphasis on the design aspect of the subject and on pupils' ability to assess and improve the quality of their completed products.
132. In Key Stage 1, most pupils learn to use simple tools to cut, shape, mould and join materials such as paper and textiles as well as salt dough and clay. Younger pupils handle scissors with increased skill and use paper, glue and staples to join and make three-dimensional models. Pupils' workbooks contain photographic evidence of models such as vehicles and hand puppets designed and made from reclaimed materials. They are encouraged to give appropriate attention to safety, neatness and detail, as when stitching patterns on puppets, weaving designs, making a fruit salad or decorating the finished product. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 develop their knowledge and skills in the planning and design aspect of the subject. Year 2 pupils note down ideas for materials and tools to make their product. They are suitably encouraged to develop the use of appropriate language and understand the process. Good use is made of food technology. Pupils make biscuits and develop the use of step-by-step plans for making a bag to carry them and test it out successfully.
133. By age eleven, pupils have good knowledge of levers, pulleys, axles, chassis and joints. They confidently generate ideas and produce more than one design. Most pupils show accuracy and detail in their designs and first test their ideas before making the final product. There are good examples of designing and making products such as egg cups by Year 3 and a Jack in the box by Year 4. Year 5 and 6 pupils carefully observe and investigate the uses and principles of pneumatics such as a syringe or a balloon pump. Most pupils successfully use their own plans to ensure a quality product that looks like their own design. They are developing making skills, such as measuring and marking out, and independently choosing from a range and variety of building and joining materials. They learn to consider appropriateness of size, power and strength of the finished product. Younger pupils in the key stage have good experience of clay and working with salt dough.
134. The attitude and response of pupils towards learning are good. They enjoy design and technology and work collaboratively in pairs and small groups. They bring their own ideas and skills well to the tasks. Pupils listen attentively and become absorbed in their work. They work hard and take pride in the finished product.
135. Overall quality of teaching, as judged from recorded work, is good. Teachers have secure knowledge of the subject. They plan effectively and take sufficient time to teach correct techniques and appropriate vocabulary. Pupils are guided effectively in their choice of materials and techniques. As a result, they make good progress in acquiring craft skills. Teachers are careful to focus on the development of safe and controlled skills.
136. The co-ordinator uses her expertise to good effect in supporting colleagues. She is enthusiastic and has clear direction for the subject. It is given a high profile and special events are organised to celebrate pupils' achievements. The monitoring role of the co-ordinator is not fully developed. Resources in the subject are good in range and quality to meet the demands of the curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

137. By both the ages of seven and eleven, standards which pupils attain in geography are in line with those expected nationally. No geography teaching was seen at Key Stage 2 during the inspection, but sufficient evidence to make a judgement on the standards in the subject was obtained by analysing work, interviewing pupils and teachers, and examining records and

planning.

138. Pupils' progress in learning across the school is satisfactory, and standards in geography have improved since the time of the last inspection, when the subject did not fulfil the requirements of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 1, pupils of different attainment all make similar progress. At Key Stage 2, however, higher attaining pupils do not make as rapid progress in their learning as expected because written work is heavily teacher-directed; as a consequence, these pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to demonstrate what they know and understand.
139. In Year 1, pupils make short walks to become familiar with the neighbourhood of the school. They draw simple maps of the locality, indicating on them the principal features they recognise. They begin to understand that maps and plans can be used to represent the spatial relationships between objects, and that symbols represent information. Building well on this experience in Year 2, pupils draw maps of imaginary places in plan and elevation. They learn about the essential differences between town and country, and understand the importance of symbols in representing different types of weather. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 learn more about weather patterns, and have some understanding of the water cycle. They learn to use co-ordinates to describe location. They make simple comparisons of the climate of India with that of Britain, drawing some conclusions about how climate affects people's lives. Older pupils build further on this work, examining how different peoples cope with extremes of heat and cold.
140. No teaching was seen at Key Stage 2, but that at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Here, teachers set tasks that are appropriately challenging for pupils of different attainment. Tasks are clearly explained, and are preceded by clear expositions and good use of questioning which gains pupils' interest and enables them to acquire a clear understanding of what is expected. Teachers generally have high expectations for their pupils; these are manifest in the tasks they set. They pace their work well, but occasionally the time allowed for written tasks is too short and work is not completed. Pupils' behaviour is generally good, but teachers have to work hard to maintain the concentration of a minority of pupils when they are engaged on individual tasks.
141. The curriculum is just sufficiently broad to meet statutory requirements. Geography is taught sufficiently frequently in Years 1 and 2 to ensure that pupils make progress in their learning. However, for Years 3 and 5 the intervals between blocks of geography teaching are too long to guarantee adequate continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The role of the co-ordinator is not well developed. There is little monitoring of the curriculum and no formal assessment procedures, so the school cannot be sure that pupils are acquiring knowledge and skills at the expected rate. Visits are used well to enrich the curriculum; for example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 undertake an annual field study in Wales, while younger pupils visit Newbury or the River Pang. Resources are generally satisfactory, but more atlases are required to support the work of pupils at Key Stage 2.

HISTORY

142. Pupils' attainment by the ages of seven and eleven is in line with national expectations. Key Stage 1 pupils learn about the difference between *old* and *new* when they look at toys. They study the village of Cold Ash to learn about *then* and *now*. Year 2 pupils go on to learn about famous people such as Louis Braille and Grace Darling. They write in their own words what they have remembered from class discussions.
143. Pupils in Key Stage 2 study periods of history and this is approached chronologically. Year 3 have studied Egyptians, Year 4 Romans, Year 5 Tudors and Year 6 the Victorians. A change in the current year to learning history in classes rather than year groups has meant that this programme is in the process of change. The work scrutiny for each year shows that pupils have studied the topics to a good depth, with a wide range of sub-topics. Year 5/6 pupils are currently learning to use secondary sources to make inferences. They used a wide ranges of photographs of Queen Victoria and her family to make deductions. For example, by comparing those showing her with the Prince Consort with those showing the Queen in mourning, they were able to make a deduction about the period of her life in which the Queen was widowed.
144. Pupils enjoy their history work and the scrutiny shows good presentational skills, though the

scope for free expression is limited at Key Stage 2 by the nature of the worksheets, as discussed below.

145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Very good teaching was observed in the Year 5/6 lesson already described, where careful encouragement led the children to reject pure guesswork in favour of justifiable inference. The weakness in teaching in Key Stage 2 is the reliance on worksheets. Although these are of good quality, they require too little input from the pupils, who are required only to complete the odd word or short sentence. There are insufficient opportunities for free writing and this inhibits the development of pupils' literacy skills. The sheets also provide little extension work for higher attaining pupils - for example, in developing research skills.
146. The subject is managed satisfactorily. As mentioned above, the school has moved from year group teaching to class teaching in Key Stage 2. The long-term plan, which draws on the national scheme of work, has been adapted for the present term only. The school has identified that, in the past, planning concentrated on pupils' knowledge at the expense of developing their historical skills. This imbalance is currently being remedied, as the lesson involving photographs shows. A further adjustment is necessary to bring the amount of time available for the subject closer to national recommendations. (The amount of time had had to be reduced in previous years, following recommendations involving the introduction of literacy and numeracy hours.) In common with other colleagues, the co-ordinator has had little opportunity to monitor teaching and learning across the school. There is also no consistent system of assessment.
147. Since the last inspection, pupils have been able to develop a better sense of chronology and the scheme of work has been written to encourage this. More opportunities for free writing at Key Stage 1 have been provided, but this is now a weakness at Key Stage 2.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

148. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations overall by the ages of seven and eleven. In the aspect of communicating information, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 2 is above expectations.
149. Key Stage 1 pupils have information technology lessons in their classrooms. Year 2 pupils are becoming familiar with the layout of the keyboard and most are developing good mouse control. They learn to collect data in science work, such as the heights of pupils in the class and they enter it into software. They know how to produce different types of graph and understand what is shown. They print their work and are learning how to save it. They learn to program the Roamer (a floor robot) to make it go forwards and turn to the right or left, building on their knowledge of turns from mathematics.
150. Year 6 pupils have lessons in the new information technology suite as well as being able to use computers in their classrooms. Year 6 pupils are learning to access their e-mail accounts, to read their messages and reply to them. They are aware of the dangers of communicating with strangers over the internet. They have learnt to edit text and combine it with information from different applications. They have had experience of control technology using *Superlogo*, which builds on their knowledge of shape and angle from mathematics. Classroom computers support learning in other areas, such as a CD-ROM used by Year 5 pupils to research the human skeleton during a science lesson.
151. Pupils enjoy using the new equipment and they behave well. In most lessons, pupils have one computer between two, and they share the facilities fairly and without fuss. They show respect for the sensitive and valuable machinery and learn well as a result of their good attitudes.
152. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, though one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Teachers have a satisfactory understanding of the subject and are familiar with the software they have to use. The weakness observed was the giving of too much technical information (on how different machines store information) to young children at too abstract a level for them to understand. Computers in classrooms tend to be too squashed together.
153. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. There are only seven machines in the information

technology suite but good use is made of them by organising classes into groups. Teachers sometimes work with the group in the information technology room, using support staff to work with other groups in the classroom. This works well. Other staff teach specific skills to the whole class at once; although this is difficult in such a small space, the use of this technique for short periods of time ensures that teaching is consistent. A weakness is that opportunities are not often taken to match tasks to pupils' ability - either in terms of information technology skills or of skills from other areas of the curriculum, such as literacy.

154. The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator. He has carefully adapted the national scheme of work to fit the circumstances of the school and has introduced an associated system of assessment. As a key stage co-ordinator, he sees the planning of his colleagues in Key Stage 2 and discusses their work with them, though he has had no opportunity of monitoring their teaching or of regularly reviewing the planning in Key Stage 1. He intends to establish a portfolio of pupils' work to illustrate what is expected at each level of attainment and to augment the resources for control technology.
155. The last inspection found teaching to be satisfactory overall - this situation has improved at Key Stage 2. It was also found that pupils had insufficient experience of drafting and editing work; this has now been remedied.

MUSIC

156. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is broadly in line with what is expected of seven-and eleven-year-olds.
157. Year 2 pupils show ability to handle instruments carefully when they pass a tambourine around a circle of children without letting it make any sound. They are learning what is meant by "pitch". Most of them can distinguish high notes from low and many give good examples of both, such as a baby's cries or the big church bell. About a quarter of the children were unsure at the start of a lesson about the relationship between pitch and size, as on the notes of a xylophone. But, by the end, after a series of good practical experiments, they had grasped this firmly.
158. Key Stage 2 pupils study the full range of the subject and they experience songs and music from a variety of world cultures. For example, Year 4 and 5 pupils sing traditional songs from Japan and from the Red Indians of America. Year 6 pupils listen to ancient street cries from China and then attempt to compose their own pentatonic tunes to street cries they have written themselves in groups. The standard of singing amongst the oldest pupils in the school is good; the Chinese songs they were learning were difficult in rhythm and range, and they sang them unaccompanied. The part where the song imitates the clashing of cymbals ("Byah-yah-yang") was particularly effectively sung. Singing is also good in assemblies, though some of the actions are not always appropriate for use when standing in close lines.
159. The overall quality of teaching is good; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. The co-ordinator teaches most of the lessons himself and his work is consistently very good. He gives good tips for remembering, such as reminding children that a mouse is a small, squeaky animal, to help them remember that high sounds are made by the smaller notes. Lessons are well structured with good warm up, attention to good quality performances and encouragement to pupils to offer constructive criticism on one another's work. Occasionally, the lesson has too much content to get through in the allotted time. Lessons taught by the few other staff who take music sometimes lack structure - for example, a good warm up activity to settle the children down for the main activity. Pupils are not always given enough encouragement or opportunities to refine their performance.
160. A small number of pupils receive instrumental tuition on the violin, brass and guitar but timetabling arrangements made it impossible to observe these sessions. Some of these children attend the weekly after-school orchestra, as well as other pupils who do not have peripatetic lessons - recorder and percussion players. They are enthusiastic and make a good sound.
161. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator advises other teachers informally, assisting with their planning from the scheme of work, but he has had little opportunity to form an

overview of their teaching or the standards achieved. There is currently no whole-school system of assessment.

162. The last inspection recommended that a scheme of work be adopted and a more even balance of the National Curriculum requirements be achieved. These have both been carried out, though pupils are generally better at singing than they are at composition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

163. It is not possible to form a judgement about standards of physical education at Key Stage 1 as only one lesson was seen. At Key Stage 2, overall standards are in line with those expected nationally. Standards in swimming exceed expectations. No direct comparison of standards with those seen at the last inspection is possible, because no lessons were seen then for pupils between the ages of seven and eleven.
164. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in their learning. They practise a full range of gymnastic, swimming and games skills. For example, Year 3 pupils learn to throw and catch balls of different sizes and begin to understand that different techniques are employed for different games and purposes. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 refine the skills they have learnt, combining gymnastic movements in smooth sequences, and practising different methods of rolling, stretching and coming to rest. Those at Year 6 build well upon previous acquired swimming skills, refining and gaining confidence in their stroke techniques. In swimming, the tasks set are well matched to pupils' attainment, while in gymnastics and games practice, higher attaining pupils are invited to act as models for others by demonstrating their particular skill. Although pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise new techniques, they do not always receive sufficiently detailed explanations on the strategies they may use to acquire them. They therefore practise sometimes without having a clear idea of how to achieve the desired objective. Teachers organised their lessons well and closely control them; this contributes significantly to the quality of pupils' learning.
165. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. Lessons are generally well planned and ensure a good balance of explanation, observation and activity. Teachers give clear explanations of the activities they wish pupils to practise, but sometimes do not offer sufficient detail on the strategies pupils should use in order to master a particular skill. Behaviour in lessons is generally good; pupils are taught to listen carefully to instructions, and activities are well supervised. In most lessons, teachers monitor well the progress of each group, giving encouragement but sometimes omitting to offer advice on how individual performance may be improved. Lessons generally move at a good pace, and sufficient time is allowed to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to practise different skills. At the end of lessons, teachers review well what the techniques practised and pupils are invited to demonstrate the particular skills they have acquired.
166. The curriculum for physical education is sufficiently broad for pupils of all ages, and a good range of extra-curricular activities is offered to pupils at Key Stage 2. The school takes a full part in locally organised competitive sports, which include netball, football, rugby and swimming. The curriculum co-ordinator has a good oversight of these, but her role in monitoring class teaching is not well developed. The school's policy for physical education has not been reviewed in recent years, and no common scheme of work has yet been adopted, with the result that the school cannot be sure that teaching builds systematically on the skills pupils have previously learned. Resources are generally adequate; there is sufficient equipment to support games teaching and apparatus work, although some of the mats for gymnastics are worn and in need of replacement. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to take part in outdoor activity challenges during their annual school journey.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

167. By the age of seven, pupils reach a standard in the subject above that expected in the West Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. It is not possible to make a direct comparison with standards obtaining at the time of the last inspection because then no lessons were seen. By the age of

eleven, standards in the subject are in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus, and have neither improved nor declined since the last inspection.

168. Pupils in Year 2 display good knowledge of some aspects of Christianity. Those in the current class are very articulate and exhibit an unusually high degree of understanding and interest in the subject in relation to their age. This has a significant impact on standards. Many understand that Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he was crucified and that he returned to heaven. They explain simply some of the motives that provoked God's actions described in Old Testament stories. For example, they understand why the Flood was sent and God's anger with Adam and Eve. Building on their understanding of why and how special days are celebrated, acquired in Year 1, pupils become familiar with the reasons for some of the ceremonies and celebrations that take place inside the church. They describe accurately the purpose of the font, the altar and stained glass windows. Pupils are aware that people worship God in different ways, and name other religions without being able to describe how they differ from Christianity.
169. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding are at the expected level. Pupils manifest a more detailed understanding of Bible stories, for example they describe the temptation of Jesus and the events surrounding the Last Supper. They write about the arrival of Christianity in Britain and of the missionary journeys of the apostles. They have some knowledge of other religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism, and describe in detail some of their customs and celebrations, such as Yom Kippur and Hanukah. Many pupils display a lively interest; this is evident in the way in which they discuss and write about the subject. However, they are unable to describe fundamental differences in belief.
170. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is good overall. Teachers use questioning well to determine pupils' understanding, and encourage them to reflect on their learning before they undertake written tasks. Lessons are well structured and appropriate time is allocated to each activity so that pupils' interest and their pace of learning are maintained. In one good lesson, pupils held the attention of the class, entering an impromptu debate while the teacher took a supervisory role. Once they have set the task, teachers generally monitor pupils' progress well, visiting each group and checking their understanding. At Key Stage 2, teaching is satisfactory overall. Good teaching at Key Stage 2 is characterised by clear lesson objectives and good explanations; these emerge from the pupils' written work. Teachers generally set appropriate targets for the completion of work, encouraging pupils to write and illustrate their work carefully. However, the work offered is often too heavily teacher-directed, with the result that average and higher attaining pupils have too few opportunities to develop research skills or demonstrate what they know and understand. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages make good progress in the subject, and are well supported in their work.
171. The school offers a curriculum that is sufficiently broad, but there is some imbalance at Key Stage 2, where older pupils display a good knowledge of the stories and customs pertaining to Christianity and other religions without being sufficiently aware of fundamental differences in beliefs. The co-ordinator has produced a useful scheme of work for religious education based on the agreed syllabus. This provides helpful guidance to teachers when they plan their work. The co-ordinator, a part-time teacher, is not well placed to exert a strong influence over the curriculum, and his role is not well developed. Teaching and planning in the subject are not regularly monitored, so the school cannot be sure that pupils build systematically on their knowledge and understanding.
172. The headteacher and governing body maintain close links with the parish church, and these make a positive contribution to pupils' religious education. Pupils regularly visit the church for services, becoming familiar with the building and the work of the clergy. Visits are occasionally made to places of worship used by other faiths, such as the synagogue in Reading, but their representatives do not visit the school with sufficient frequency to make a contribution to pupils' understanding of the beliefs of others. Resources are generally adequate to support the curriculum, although there are insufficient artefacts to support teaching or independent learning.