

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WANTAGE C OF E INFANT SCHOOL**

Wantage

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123165

Headteacher: Mrs G Smith

Reporting inspector: Miss M A Warner  
(OFSTED No: 17288)

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 October 2000

Inspection number: 224216

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Voluntary Controlled
School category:	Infant
Age range of pupils:	4 to 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Street Wantage Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX12 8BL
Telephone number:	01235 762396
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Goodenough
Date of previous inspection:	19 January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Miss M A Warner (OFSTED No: 17288)	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Art	How high are standards? a) The schools results and achievements
		Music	How well are pupils taught?
		English as an additional language	Assessment
			How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs C Stormonth (OFSTED No: 16472)	Lay inspector		Attendance
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
			Accommodation
Mr T Aldridge (OFSTED No: 27426)	Team inspector	Mathematics	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		Equal opportunities	
Mrs J Cox (OFSTED No: 25074)	Team inspector	English	
		Geography	
		History	
		Foundation stage	
		Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wantage C of E Infant School is situated near the centre of the market town of Wantage. Although named as an infant school, it takes Year 3 pupils and is about the same size as primary schools nationally, with a roll of 187. The intake has changed over the last few years due to the closure of another local school and 60 per cent of pupils now come from within the catchment area. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, 10 per cent, is below the national average but has doubled in the last three years. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, 29.4 per cent, is above the national average. No pupil has a formal statement of need. Two point seven per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The percentage of pupils, who have English as an additional language, 1.6 per cent, is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry is average, with a small number of pupils reaching above-average standards.

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

The school is a very effective school. The standards pupils attain are well above those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils' achievement is very good in all key stages. Pupils' attitudes and the quality of teaching are very good. The leadership and management of the school at all levels is very good. The context of the school is above average and the schools income for each pupil is above average compared with similar schools across the country. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- Standards are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and are high in science. They are above those of similar schools.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher, key staff and governing body are very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good due to a strong, shared commitment to succeed, which is excellent.
- Children in the Foundation Stage receive a very good start to their education in the reception class and the quality of teaching and learning is very good in all phases.
- The quality and range of the curriculum and other learning opportunities are very good
- The school has very constructive relationships with the nursery and junior schools. This ensures good curricular progression across the phases.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and for their cultural development it is good. There should be greater awareness of a multicultural dimension to the curriculum.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and as a result they make very good progress.
- The school works closely with parents to support the pupils' learning. Links between parents and the school help to ensure high standards of achievement.

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

- There is too little provision and regular access to information and communication technology across the curriculum.
- The school does not have a planned curriculum across the whole school for personal, social and health education and extended opportunities should be given to all pupils to take on more responsibility in daily routines.
- The range and quality of the Year 3 library is limited.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The improvement the school has made since the last inspection in January 1998 has been very good and the school's capacity for continued improvement is excellent.

- Standards have improved considerably in reading, writing, mathematics and have greatly improved in science.
- The quality of teaching is now good or very good in all subjects observed.
- A scheme of work is in place for the Foundation Stage, which reflects the Early Learning Goals. The National Literacy Strategy Framework is used and has been implemented for English. An information and communication technology scheme of work has been in place since September.
- Assessment procedures are good or very good in English, mathematics, science, art, geography, history, music and religious education and satisfactory in other subjects. Assessment informs teachers' planning

for the full range of pupils' attainment, including the most able.

- The School Development Plan is an ongoing working document and meets the requirements of the previous report and the long-term plans for the school.
- The roles of the deputy head and governing body are clearly understood and both are involved fully in the strategic development of the school.
- There has also been a considerable improvement in the school's links with parents and the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	B	C	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	B	B	A	B	
Mathematics	B	A	A	B	

- Attainment on entry to the school is average, with a small minority attaining above-average standards in communication, language and literacy skills. By the age of five, attainment is above average in personal, social and emotional development and speaking, listening, literacy, mathematics and creative development. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them and their physical development is in line with expectations of children of their age.
- In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The science assessments the same year show that results were in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The results of higher-attainers in the same group a year later, in the option tests for Year 3, were also very good. Higher-attaining pupils have all been identified through the school's tracking system and they are set work that enables them to reach high standards. The progress pupils make in literacy is very good and in numeracy is good.
- Taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of pupils in the end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests was above the national average in reading and well above the national average in writing and mathematics. There was no difference between the performance of boys and girls in reading and mathematics but in writing the boys attained higher standards than the girls. Trends over the years 1996 to 1999, show a dip in 1998 in standards of reading but otherwise a continual improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in the current Year 3 are relative to the results of this year's (2000) National Curriculum test results. In reading, 86 per cent attained Level 2 or above; in writing, 96 per cent attained Level 2 or above; in mathematics, 96 per cent attained Level 2 or above.
- Standards observed during the inspection, in class and through the scrutiny of work, at the end of Key Stage 1, are well above expectations in art and music, above expectations in design and technology and in line with expectations in geography, history, physical education and religious education. They are below expectations in information and communication technology. Standards in Year 3 are well above expectations in art, design and technology and music and in line with expectations in geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. The progress that pupils with English an additional language make is good in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards commensurate with their abilities. Many of these pupils attain standards in line with other pupils in the National Curriculum tests. The achievement of pupils is very good in all three key stages.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons, are very enthusiastic, take turns, are well-mannered and have a very responsible attitude. They take pleasure in talking about what they are doing and are proud of their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have drawn up and signed their own class rules giving clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils show good self-discipline, although there are limited opportunities for them to show initiative. Pupils have some opportunities to take responsibility, which they carry out conscientiously and enjoy the trust placed in them. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school.
Attendance	Attendance continues to be good and rates of unauthorised absence are well below national levels. Much of the authorised absence is attributable to the taking of term-time holidays. The school does try to discourage holiday taking and asks parents to give education the greater priority but this advice is seldom heeded. Most pupils come to school on time and punctuality on arrival at school is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen, overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

- The quality of teaching is excellent in 12 per cent, very good or better in 56 per cent, good or better in 85 per cent and satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The teaching of literacy skills is very good. The teaching of numeracy skills is good.
- Strengths in teaching are the teaching of basic skills and teachers' knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy, the teaching of the Foundation Stage and of science, art, design and technology and music in both key stages and mathematics in Year 3. Teachers use assessment very well to help plan. The management of pupils is very good and ensures that good learning can take place. Teachers use questioning very well to challenge and promote learning. Lessons are taken at a good pace. Expectations are appropriately high. Weaknesses in teaching are in information and communication technology. The school meets the needs of high-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs very well and those with English as an additional language well.
- The strengths in pupils' learning are in their very good attitudes to learning, their interest in what is being taught and their ability to concentrate well. They work quickly and can talk knowledgeably about the work they are doing.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All pupils are offered a very good, broad and balanced, rich curriculum, which provides them with a very wide range of opportunities pertinent to their needs. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities, recorder and French lessons and many enriching activities, is good for a school of this phase and size.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils receive a broad and well-balanced curriculum and Individual Education Plans are well written. Pupils receive very good help with their English and, on some occasions, with numeracy.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school provides individually for their needs and brings in additional help when further assessment is required.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. A significant strength of the school. Provides a very stable background for learning. The promotion of spiritual and moral values is implicit across the whole school day and is a significant part of the school ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good, with some excellent procedures. The very good level of care and support for pupils is one of the school's strengths, creating a climate of security and well-being that improves the effectiveness of the curriculum.

- The school's partnership with parents is very good and is even stronger than it was at the last inspection.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy head and key staff is very good. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good due to a strong, shared commitment to succeed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. There is good expertise on the governing body and governors contribute strongly to the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, co-ordinators and governors all monitor performance well. The school's evaluation of its performance is very good.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school's plans to incorporate the nursery, infant and junior schools into one school are well-developed and the strategic planning involved and use of resources is very good.

- The school's staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good. The school applies the principles of best value well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School helps pupils become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Children like school, they make good progress and behaviour is generally good.</li> <li>• Most parents perceive that the school gives about the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and most feel well informed about progress.</li> <li>• They feel the school works closely with them and that it is well managed and led.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• The lack of challenge for the more able.</li> <li>• The poor behaviour of a minority of pupils, especially in the playground, and poor supervision by midday staff.</li> <li>• Some wanted more information on pupils' progress.</li> <li>• Homework. Some parents wanted more.</li> </ul>

Inspection findings agree with the positive comments about the school and come to judgements on parents' main concerns as follows:

- The range of visits and visitors is good and the number of clubs satisfactory for this age of pupil.
- More able pupils were given work that was well-matched to their abilities.
- The behaviour in the playground was satisfactory. Further training has been arranged for non-teaching staff.

- Arrangements for consultation and the use of the open door policy are very good. Parents have many opportunities to talk to staff about progress and other issues. There is, however, some inconsistency in the writing of pupils' annual school reports: presentation varies; areas of pupil weakness are seldom indicated; advice and targeting for improvement is inconsistent.
- The school sets the type and amount of homework indicated in the school's policy attached to the home/school agreement that every family has signed. This homework was judged to be appropriate for pupils of this age.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Attainment on entry to the school is average, with a small minority of children having reached above-average standards in communication, language and literacy skills. Through very good provision in the reception class they make good progress in all areas of their work. By the age of five their attainment is above average in their personal, social and emotional development, speaking and listening skills, literacy, and in their mathematical and creative development. Other skills, including knowledge and understanding of the world about them, are in line with the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.
2. The 1999 National Curriculum end of Key Stage 1 test results, based on the average points scored, were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments show that standards in science were very high, in the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average in all three subjects. The school is providing for higher attainers well. The 1999 National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 were above the average for similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics. This particular cohort of pupils had a larger number of higher-attaining pupils than most other classes in the school.
3. The results of higher attainers in the same cohort, a year later, in the option tests for Year 3, were very good. In reading, 46 per cent attained Level 3 and 34 per cent attained Level 4 (the level expected at the end of Key Stage 2). In writing, 61 per cent attained Level 3 and 3 per cent attained Level 4. In spelling, 51 per cent attained Level 3 and 10 per cent Level 4. In mathematics, 67 per cent attained Level 3 and 5 per cent Level 4. In reading and spelling, boys performed slightly higher than girls; in writing, girls performed much higher than boys; in mathematics, boys attained much higher than girls.
4. Higher-attaining pupils have all been identified through the school's tracking system and they are set work that enables them to reach high standards.
5. Taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 was above the national average in reading and well above the national average in writing and mathematics. There was no difference between the performance of boys and girls in reading and mathematics but in writing the girls attained higher standards than the boys.
6. Trends over the years 1996 to 1999, show a dip in 1998 in standards of reading but otherwise a continual improvement in reading, writing and mathematics.
7. Standards in the current Year 3 are relative to the results of the this year's National Curriculum test results. In spite of this particular cohort having a larger number of pupils with special educational needs than is usual in this school, the reading results show that 86 per cent attained Level 2 or above, which is lower than the previous year but higher than in 1998. In writing, 96 per cent attained Level 2 or above, which is higher than both 1999 and 1998; in mathematics, 96 per cent attained Level 2 or above, which is almost the same as in 1999 and higher than in 1998. In the science teacher assessments, standards were above the national average.
8. The progress pupils make in literacy is very good and in numeracy is good. No statutory 'end of key stage' targets are expected at the end of Key Stage 1 or in Year 3, but the school constantly reviews standards and sets itself targets, comparing itself with similar schools as well as those nationally. These targets are both realistic and challenging and have helped to and continue to raise standards.
9. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are well above expectations in art and music, above expectations in design and technology and in line with expectations in geography, history, physical education and religious education. In art, pupils develop a very wide range of skills, have a clear understanding of what they are taught, such as when studying pointillism, and some pupils attain high standards. In music, they have a good understanding of rhythm, of how a rest is effective and know a good range of songs by heart, singing tunefully. Standards are below expectations in information and communication technology because pupils are given too few opportunities to develop their skills. Standards in Year 3 are well above expectations in art, design and technology and music and in line with expectations in geography, history, physical education and religious education. In design and technology, for example, pupils are given very good opportunities to investigate and disassemble a range of products before making a

decorated box with a hinged lid. There was insufficient evidence available to make a judgement about attainment in information and communication technology at the end of Year 3.

10. The progress that pupils with English as an additional language make is good in both key stages. The school provides individually for their needs and brings in additional help when further assessments need to be made. Level 3 was recently achieved in the National Curriculum tests.
11. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards commensurate with their abilities. Many pupils attain standards in line with other pupils in the National Curriculum tests. They make very good progress towards the precise targets set in their Individual Education Plans. Progress is aided by the additional help provided by the learning support assistants and by the very good support provided by the co-ordinator, in small withdrawal groups.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to the school and learning are very good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children like coming to school. Pupils enjoy their lessons, are very enthusiastic, take turns and are well-mannered. Pupils take pleasure in talking about what they are doing and are proud of their achievements. Pupils in a Year 2 art lesson were justifiably pleased with the clay models made in the style of Henry Moore and were eager to describe how they had achieved different effects. In nearly all classes pupils settle quickly to their activities and show very good concentration and persistence in what they are doing. They handle resources with great care and have a very responsible attitude.
13. Standards of behaviour have also been maintained at a very good level. Pupils have drawn up and signed their own class rules giving clear guidance on the standards of behaviour expected. The school's behaviour policy is attached to the home/school agreement so that parents are fully aware. They are involved at an early stage if there is a problem. There was no evidence of bullying seen during the inspection and the majority of parents are satisfied with standards of behaviour and with the way the school handles any incidences of intimidation. There have been no temporary or permanent exclusions during the previous year.
14. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils throughout the school and all are valued. Pupils are treated in a very caring yet mature way by staff. They respond positively to this and there is a high level of mutual respect shown. Pupils show a good level of consideration for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This is supported by the effective teaching of religious education and by relevant themes in assembly and the time given for reflection. Pupils accept one another, regardless of background, race or special educational needs, and they support one another well when working in pairs or in larger groups. They are taught to understand the impact of their actions on others and are very polite, friendly and open in their discussions with visitors.
15. The personal development of pupils is good, overall. Most pupils show good self-discipline, although there are limited opportunities for them to show initiative. Pupils have some opportunities to take responsibility. Older pupils are expected to assist in various aspects of school life, such as helping with play-time equipment and acting as door monitors. They carry out these responsibilities conscientiously and enjoy the trust placed in them. Younger pupils are also expected to be involved in responsible tasks, such as returning the registers to the office and tidying the classrooms. There is currently, however, no policy or consistency across the school for encouraging pupils to take responsibility. The personal development of pupils is greatly enhanced by the wide range of visitors to the school, such as the police, theatre groups, and the local clergy, as well as by numerous educational visits.
16. Those pupils on the special needs register behave well in classrooms and in small groups when they receive extra support from the teacher or learning support assistants. They develop respect for each other's work and feelings and are positive about each other's efforts. They are willing to talk about their work and develop confidence in speaking, reading and writing.
17. Attendance continues to be good and rates of unauthorised absence are well below national levels. Much of the authorised absence is attributable to the taking of term-time holidays. The school does try to discourage holiday taking and asks parents to give education the greater priority but this advice is seldom heeded. Most pupils come to school on time and punctuality on arrival at school is good.

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

18. The quality of teaching is excellent in 12 per cent, very good or better in 56 per cent, good or better in 85 per cent and satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of lessons. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
19. The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a significant strength. The teacher and the learning support assistant show considerable expertise in the teaching methods they use. The teacher has instigated good assessment procedures for tracking the children's progress and all staff make relevant entries in records kept on each child. All these records are used successfully to plan children's next steps in learning.
20. The teaching of English and literacy skills is very good in literacy lessons and in other subjects. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy skills is good across the school.
21. The teaching of basic skills and teachers' knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy are very good. The teaching of mathematics is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Year 3. Teachers use questioning skilfully to help pupils build on previous knowledge. This is particularly evident for the higher attainers and those with special educational needs. The teaching of science is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in Year 3. The investigative approach, introduced since the last inspection, and the clearly-thought-through way pupils record their work is proving very successful. The teaching of music, by a specialist, is excellent in Year 3 and by class teachers is very good in Key Stage 1. The teaching of art is good in both key stages, enabling gifted pupils to achieve high standards. The range of work covered is outstanding and excellent records are kept of work across the school. The teaching of design and technology, geography, history and religious education is good in both key stages and in physical education is good in Key Stage 1.
22. Teachers use assessment very well to help plan lessons. Work is well-matched to the attainment of different pupils and pupils are clear as to what they are going to be taught. The management of pupils is very good and ensures that good learning can take place. Teachers also use questioning very well to challenge and promote learning and resources are used well. Lessons are taken at a good pace and expectations are appropriately high. Weaknesses in teaching are in the planning for, the methods used and in the use of time and resources in information and communication technology.
23. The school meets the needs of high-attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs very well and those with English as an additional language well. Target-setting has been successfully introduced for all pupils, linked carefully to learning and progress in English and mathematics, in order to raise standards further.
24. Particular strengths in pupils' learning are in their very good attitudes to learning, their interest in what is being taught and their ability to concentrate well. They work quickly and can talk knowledgeably about the work they are doing. For example, in English, pupils are very enthusiastic and work hard during their English lessons and in the Literacy Hour. They concentrate well and are very keen to produce good work. They take a real pride in presenting their work neatly and carefully. In lessons they know what is expected of them and their behaviour is always good, which raises attainment and accelerates progress. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and are confident when contributing to class discussions. They are very good at listening to other pupils' ideas.
25. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils benefit considerably from individual help in small groups and are withdrawn where this is thought necessary. The special needs teacher has a very good understanding of the pupils' needs and provides an interesting and stimulating range of group and individual tasks to raise pupils' attainment and self-esteem. Class teachers are very aware of pupils with special educational needs in their classes and usually plan work specifically for the pupils' learning needs. The pupils receive good support from the classroom support assistants, who are well-briefed and very efficient. Pupils with special educational needs are valued by the co-ordinator and the learning support assistants who ensure that they make progress by building effectively on their previous learning experiences.

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

26. Inspection findings show that all pupils are offered a very good, broad and balanced rich curriculum, which provides them with a very wide range of opportunities pertinent to their needs. It builds on the nursery school curriculum and prepares pupils well for the curriculum they will cover in the junior school. The statutory requirements to teach the National Curriculum and religious education are met in full. The school has very good long-term and medium-term planning in place in all curriculum areas. This is well-structured and provides very good learning opportunities. This enables all pupils to gain in appropriate knowledge and understanding and make good progress. Policies and recently updated schemes of work in all subjects ensure that pupils progressively develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding. In many foundation subjects, these are based on the current guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and have been recently or are being updated in line with the revised National Curriculum introduced in September 2000.
27. Teachers plan carefully together in year groups and across the school. This ensures that there is very good continuity and progression, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. What pupils are expected to learn in the short-term planning is clear and usually carefully shared with pupils. Activities are usually suitable for the different ability groups in all subjects. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with specific activities clearly identified according to individual needs.
28. The time allocated to all subjects is appropriate, in line with national recommendations, and enables pupils to be taught in sufficient depth, except in information and communication technology. In the past two years the school has concentrated on the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which has been introduced very effectively and had an impact on raising standards in English. Similarly, since September 1999, the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced successfully across the school and teachers have adapted their teaching styles well to the new challenge, with a resultant improvement in standards. The school has not lost sight of other curriculum areas and has worked hard to ensure a balanced curriculum. All subjects receive appropriate coverage, except information and communication technology. Co-ordinators are effective in their curriculum areas providing good support in planning and monitoring of pupils' work, especially in English, mathematics and science, which has had an impact on raising standards and improving the quality of learning. Classrooms and corridors provide high standards of stimulating displays, which further enhance the curriculum opportunities offered to pupils and enrich their learning.
29. The school's provision for extra-curricular activities is good for a school of this size and for pupils of this age, providing recorder and French lessons and many enriching activities. The curriculum is well-enhanced culturally with a wide range of visitors into the school, such as theatre groups and musicians, and a large number of visits to places of interest in the local area and further afield. Good use is made of the local environment, especially in science, history and geography.
30. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the opportunities on offer. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They receive a broad and well-balanced curriculum and Individual Education Plans are well-written, containing specific targets for pupils to achieve. Careful consideration is given as to whether support is more effective in the classroom or in small group lessons with the special needs teacher. Pupils receive very good help with their reading, spelling and comprehension skills and, on some occasions, with numeracy.
31. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good, overall, although a whole-school policy has yet to be developed. Pupils undertake some responsibilities in classes, such as taking registers, tidying-up and taking part in a termly class assembly which supports their personal and social education effectively. However, opportunities to take responsibility for their learning and using their initiative are less well-developed. Older pupils have good opportunities to take on additional responsibilities, such as helping at break-times, with collective worship preparation, and helping in and about the school. Pupils also take part successfully in the Mayor's Carol Concert and visit elderly citizens, singing, dancing and talking. Health education, healthy eating and drug education is included in the science curriculum and pupils have a good understanding of these issues.
32. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This is a significant strength of the school and provides a very secure and stable background for learning. The

promotion of spiritual and moral values is implicit across the whole school day and is a significant part of the school ethos.

33. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual development, which is a big improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect on their surroundings, develop a sense of wonder and curiosity about the world, and increase their knowledge and insights into values and beliefs. All who work and learn in the school are valued. In lessons and collective worship, termed assembly by the school, pupils are given many occasions to consider their own values and attitudes and reflect and express themselves on spiritual matters. Acts of collective worship are planned well around themes and meet legal requirements. They provide a very good opportunity for thought, prayer, singing, quiet reflection and celebration. Pupils have the opportunity to develop a real sense of identity and community spirit sharing common experiences. There are very good relations with the local church with the local priests attending on a regular basis. Year 3 pupils attend a termly mass with the junior school children and all in school attend in the summer. In religious education lessons they learn about their Christian heritage, other religions, and the chance to develop an understanding of tolerance. The school regularly celebrates a range of Christian Festivals such as Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Ash Wednesday and Easter, and this reinforces the Christian tradition of the school. Good opportunities are provided in English, science, art and music for thought and reflection, with most teachers making very good use of resources to provide examples; for instance, in a Year 2 art class, which evoked awe and wonder when showing pictures of Henry Moore statues.
34. Provision for pupils' moral education is very good and pupils are taught what is acceptable behaviour and what is not, so that most pupils want to please. Religious education, celebration of Remembrance Day and assemblies emphasise the need for good moral values. Pupils are given many opportunities to develop a sense of right and wrong and examine their actions. Good codes of conduct, drawn up by pupils, are displayed in classrooms and reference is made in some classes to these during lessons. The school's clear assertive discipline procedures and bullying policy are shared effectively with pupils and parents so that all are aware of expectations and that there is a consistent approach. Fund-raising activities encourage pupils to consider others less fortunate.
35. Provision for social development is very good and the school provides a wide range of activities to develop pupils socially, although this is mainly aimed at Year 3 pupils. These pupils act as door monitors, take registers and are responsible for playtime games boxes. The pupils work well together, help each other and listen to each other both in and out of the classroom. In all classes, pupils have responsibilities such as register monitor and keeping areas tidy. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including recorders, French and 'cello clubs, and an orchestra in the summer term. Older pupils make visits to Wantage Day Centre and the October club where they sing and play to the elderly people. Each class leads a class assembly termly and at the end of each term there is a concert to which parents are invited.
36. Provision for cultural development is good. The pupils are taught to appreciate their own culture throughout all areas of the curriculum. This is achieved by visits to places of historical and geographical interest, local farms, nature reserves and museums. It is further enhanced by visits to the school by visitors, theatre groups and musicians. The school has developed successfully close links with community organisations such as the police, health and fire services to further enhance the curriculum. Multi-faith work in religious education, and music lessons, art and English all make significant contributions to an understanding of varying cultural traditions and beliefs. Pupils are given sufficient insights into non-western cultures through work in art, food technology, music and in geography with an in-depth study of Kenya. The school is currently in the early stages of establishing links with a South African school through the local church.
37. Relationships with the local nursery and junior school, to which most pupils continue after the age of eight, are very good and this ensures that movement between the schools is carried out smoothly and effectively with the least possible disruption to pupils' learning. As well as visits from teaching staff, a wide range of educational records and other information is passed to the receiving school to ensure continuity and progression. A close link has recently been established with the nearby sports centre where the Year 3 pupils go for swimming. Subject co-ordinators regularly meet teachers from the junior school and other schools in the family group to discuss curriculum issues and provide support for each other for the benefit of the children.



38. The community makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning in several ways. A number of local business and retail organisations have provided valuable support with enhancing the school environment and providing equipment through the good links that the school has cultivated.

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

39. The good level of care and support for pupils reported at the last inspection has been sustained and is one of the school's strengths, creating a climate of security and well-being that improves the effectiveness of the curriculum. The procedures and practices reflect the high priority afforded by the school to the welfare of pupils as a means of raising standards. Parents and pupils report that they feel well supported by the school and that they would find it easy to approach the school with any problems and concerns.
40. The school has excellent procedures to promote good attendance. Registers are consistently maintained and the school follows up all absences, reducing unauthorised absence to minimal levels. The school works very well with the local Education Social Workers whenever there are any attendance and punctuality worries.
41. The procedures for managing and promoting good behaviour are also very good. Staff know pupils very well and there is an effective range of strategies in place to manage a small minority who present a range of challenging behavioural difficulties. Early intervention, and working closely with parents, helps to prevent any poor behaviour that disrupts learning. The school takes steps to eliminate any form of harassment and is highly successful in this regard and behavioural incidents seldom occur. When pupils misbehave in the playground they know they have to apologise and make friends again. Some parents were concerned about the quality of lunch-time behaviour management. The school is arranging for some training for new lunch-time staff as part of their induction to improve skills in managing pupils in the way the school would prefer.
42. The arrangements for child protection are excellent and meet all the statutory requirements. The headteacher is the designated person and has a special expertise in this area. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and training is up to date. When pupils are sick or injured they receive a high level of care even though there is no medical room. Those pupils who have a range of medical conditions are known and catered for well. The health and safety risk assessments are thorough. Issues are prioritised and are subject to swift remedial action. One issue that presents a potential risk to pupils is the open access to the fire escape to the first floor of the old school building.
43. Personal development is not monitored formally. Staff know pupils very well and from the time pupils start at Wantage Infant School they are instilled with good values of respect and consideration for others and learn the difference between right and wrong. There are high expectations of pupils conforming to routines; for example, the calm and silent start to morning assembly each day. These values and expectations are constantly reinforced along with good manners and help pupils to develop good social skills and improve personal development. Although personal and social education is not structured or taught systematically, staff take opportunities, when issues arise, to talk about the particular concern and ensure that pupils' opinions are well-informed, as they have guidance on those issues.
44. The school has made very good improvements in assessment procedures since the last inspection. They are good or very good in English, mathematics, science, art, geography, history, music and religious education. They are satisfactory in design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education. Assessment also informs teachers' planning for the full range of pupils' attainment, including the most able.
45. Good procedures are in place for assessing pupils with special educational needs and work is planned carefully to meet their needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator and the support staff are vigilant when recording the progress of pupils with special educational needs. There are very good links with support agencies, such as the speech and language service, and the school ensures that pupil's needs are assessed regularly by the educational psychologist.

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

46. The school's partnership with parents is very good and is even stronger than it was at the last inspection. The school places great emphasis on working closely with parents and does all it reasonably can to ensure that parents are made to feel welcome and that they are kept well-informed about the day-to-day life of the school. The parents' questionnaire showed an overwhelmingly positive picture of their great satisfaction with the school, leaving no doubt that the links between parents and the school help to ensure higher standards of achievement.
47. A few concerns were, however, expressed at the parents meeting and some parents took the opportunity to write additional comments on the back of their questionnaires. A few concerns were raised about homework. The school sets the type and amount indicated in the homework policy attached to the home/school agreement that every family has signed. This homework was judged to be appropriate for pupils of this age. Some parents also raised the issue of the lack of challenge for the brightest pupils. The inspection found that these pupils were given work that was well-matched to their abilities. More parents expressed misgivings about the poor range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection found the range of clubs to be satisfactory and extra-curricular activities, including visits and visitors to the school, good. A minority of parents felt that they were not sufficiently well-informed about their children's progress. The inspection concluded that the arrangements for consultation and the use of the open door policy are actually very good and parents have many opportunities to talk to staff about progress and any issues. There is, however, some inconsistency in the writing of annual school reports. Those reports that are word-processed have much more information than hand-written versions; but the reporting of progress is always at least satisfactory even when the teacher's handwriting is large. Areas of pupils' weaknesses are, however, seldom indicated and advice and targeting for improvement is also inconsistent.
48. The links with parents are very good, overall. Parents are very actively involved in their children's learning and the life of the school. Staff make themselves available every day to talk to parents. The 'Friends of Wantage Infant School' is a very active group providing many opportunities for parents and local people to help raise valuable funds, and the school has a busy social calendar. Parents help both in the classroom and with swimming lessons and trips and elsewhere as need arises. Parents are widely consulted about school issues. A series of public and private meetings, when parents could openly express views, was arranged about the forthcoming school unification and move to the new location. The home/school agreement also benefited from parents' input. There was standing room only at the numeracy and literacy meetings and a parents' course on 'how to support maths' that was held recently was over-subscribed. During the inspection week the headteacher, very commendably, sent all parents a copy of the book 'Learning Journey', which is a guide to the National Curriculum and how parents can support learning. All these, and regular friendly newsletters, half-termly topic outline information sheets and the opportunity to communicate daily in pupils' reading record books, enable parents to be actively involved in their children's education and to assist and encourage them in their work. The overall level of information is very good and the school prospectus contains all the information it should have. The governor's annual report to parents, however, does not fully comply with all the statutory requirements. Pupils' absences are not correctly recorded and the financial statement is not detailed enough.
49. The school maintains very good links with those parents who have children with special educational needs. Parents receive notification of their children's needs and are kept informed from stage two of the Code of Practice. Regular meetings are held to ensure that parents are aware of all aspects of their children's needs. They are encouraged to be fully involved in their children's learning. For example, Individual Education Plans are shared with parents, so that they can support pupils learning at home.

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

50. The leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy head and key staff is very good and has resulted in a very good improvements being made since the last inspection because of their strong, shared commitment to succeed. The headteacher has changed her management style and as a result is very effective.
51. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. They have a wide range of expertise; for example, in statistics, health and safety and in the church, which enables them to carry out their duties expertly and conscientiously. They contribute strongly to directing the development and work of the school and have been instrumental in ensuring that the school has moved forward since the last

inspection.

52. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is very good. There are very effective procedures in place. The headteacher, deputy head, co-ordinators and governors all have monitoring roles and carry them out well. Assessments are analysed in detail by a governor with specific expertise and these results are reported back to the full governing body. The headteacher keeps detailed records of pupils' results, which are used to monitor progress and inform decisions as to where support is needed.
53. The strategic use of resources, including specific grants and other funding, is very good. As a result, initiatives have been successful. The school's plans to incorporate the nursery, infant and junior schools into one school are well-developed and the strategic planning involved and use of resources is very good. The audit report, carried out in June 1999, was very positive and the few recommendations made have all been addressed. The school considers the principles of best value effectively in managing its resources.
54. The school is staffed with appropriately qualified, mainly experienced teachers who work very well as a team and are very committed to the school. The co-ordinators carry out their roles effectively.
55. There is very good management and administration of the provision for pupils' with special educational needs. The co-ordinator is experienced, and understands pupils' needs well. The paperwork complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs and is completed very meticulously and conscientiously. The classroom support is targeted well to help pupils achieve the highest possible standards. The governor for special needs is kept fully informed, and visits the school regularly to monitor the special needs provision. There are termly reports to the governing body on the progress and effects of the special need provision. Learning resources for pupils' with special educational needs, which are predominately for reading and writing, are good and have improved since the last inspection. Learning resources, in general, are good throughout the school, except for the quality and range of books in the Year 3 library.
56. Most of the school accommodation allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. Parts of the old school building, however, have some inherent problems that hinder learning. The ground floor Year 3 classroom, in particular, became very hot during the inspection when the sun shone and there is the added problem of poor air circulation that led to some pupils complaining about feeling ill and not being able to work properly. There is also open access from the playground to a high level fire escape to the first floor. This staircase has railing spaces that are too wide and this presents a risk to young children.
57. The accommodation is very clean and is maintained to a high standard by a hardworking and dedicated caretaker and cleaning staff. Display is a strong feature, celebrating pupils' art very effectively and helping to create a stimulating place to learn and play.
58. The school is a very effective school. The standards pupils attain are well above those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils' achievement is very good in all key stages. Pupils' attitudes and the quality of teaching are very good. The leadership and management of the school, at all levels, is very good. There is an excellent, shared commitment to succeed. The context of the school is above average and the school's income for each pupil is above average compared with similar schools across the country. The school gives very good value for money.

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

In order to maintain standards and continue to provide a quality education for all pupils, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve provision and regular access to information and communication technology across the curriculum (this has already been identified by the school and is a high priority on the School Improvement Plan). (Paragraphs 9, 22, 28)
- Plan and implement a personal, social and health education curriculum for the whole school and extend the opportunities given to pupils to take on more responsibility in daily routines. (Paragraphs 15, 31, 43)
- Improve the quality and range of books in the Year 3 library. (Paragraphs 55, 73, 78)

Other weaknesses, not included in the issues for action, but which need consideration by the school:

- Meeting statutory requirements, by recording pupils' attendance more fully, and a more detailed financial statement in the governors' annual report to parents. (Paragraph 48)
- Bringing the quality of all pupils' annual reports up to the standard of the best. (Paragraph 47)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

52

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

36

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	44	29	15	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR– Y3

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	187
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y3

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	55

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000 (1999)	28	34	62

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	27
	Girls	30	34	33
	Total	55	59	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (94)	96 (93)	96 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	27	27
	Girls	32	30	31
	Total	57	57	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (92)	94 (98)	92 (100)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

## Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	172
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	23.4

### Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	4
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## 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.

## Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	371,539
Total expenditure	376,927
Expenditure per pupil	1,730

Total aggregate hours worked per week	85
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Balance brought forward from previous year	45,223
Balance carried forward to next year	39,835

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	196
Number of questionnaires returned	98

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	45	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	44	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	40	20	2	1
The teaching is good.	56	41	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	43	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	28	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	46	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	66	32	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	36	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	32	29	7	6

**Where numbers do not total 100, this reflects the fact that some parents chose not to answer all questions.**

### **Other issues raised by parents**

- Lack of challenge for the brightest pupils.
- Poor range of extra-curricular activities.
- Not sufficiently well-informed about their children's progress.
- Some parents complained about the poor behaviour of a minority, especially in the playground, and poor supervision by midday staff.





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

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

59. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good, and it has a significant effect on children's learning and progress. This is one of the strengths of the school and is a considerable improvement on the provision that was observed at the time of the previous inspection. Children enter the reception class at the beginning of the term in which they are five, with a range of social and early learning skills. For most children these are in line with children of a similar age. A small minority of children achieve levels in communication, language and literacy which are above those normally seen, but many have mathematical skills that are slightly below the average. The majority of children already attain the third stepping-stone in terms of their personal, social and emotional development and this is confirmed by an initial assessment of children's achievement. Through very good provision they make good progress, overall, in all the areas of their work. Inspection findings suggest that by the age of five the children are above-average in their personal, social and emotional development, speaking and listening skills, literacy and in their mathematical and creative development. Other skills, including knowledge and understanding of the world about them, are average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Early Years with support well-designed to meet identified needs. The reception class is a calm and stimulating learning environment where the children feel happy, confident and secure. During the inspection, the nineteen children in the reception class were working and playing very well together and are very settled into class routines already.
60. The quality of teaching in the reception class is very good and is a significant strength. The teacher and the learning support assistant show considerable expertise in the teaching methods they use and the very good learning opportunities that they provide across the range of children's work. The staff organise the groups of children well and provide good quality, appropriate resources. This fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and the very good behaviour of the children. Children are developing higher levels of concentration, initiative and independence than they had on entry because of constant encouragement by the staff. The teacher has instigated good assessment procedures for tracking the children's progress and all staff make relevant entries in the records kept on each child. Parents provide very useful information about children's achievements prior to entry and records of children who have attended the on-site Nursery are shared. All these records are used successfully to plan the next steps in learning. The reception class is very effectively led and managed. The learning support assistant has a significant input into planning and teaching and staff work very successfully together as a team.
61. By the time children leave the Foundation Stage their personal, social and emotional development is above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. This demonstrates good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching, as children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Children respond very positively to their experiences at school, forming amicable relationships with their peers and attending well to their teachers. Children are encouraged, at specified times, to choose activities for themselves and they are encouraged to take turns and to share toys and equipment. They co-operate well in pairs and in small groups. For instance, in outdoor play, they share large wheeled toys without fussing and they help each other to fasten aprons when painting. Adults are excellent role models; they listen with genuine interest to what children have to say and speak with courtesy and consideration. Children are encouraged to be polite in return; for example, they usually say "please" and "thank you" when they receive help. The staff also promote children's personal development very effectively, by ensuring that the equipment and resources that the children use are easily accessible to them and help them to become independent.
62. Attainment is above the national goals in communication, language and literacy for five-year-olds, with strengths in speaking and listening and literacy. The children's use of spoken English is good and the majority of them speak in clear, well-formed sentences. The children listen to stories attentively and readily share books with each other and with adults. The staff talk with children to very good effect in all the areas of learning and are good listeners. They show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Children handle books appropriately and with confidence. Many of the children are beginning to pick out separate words in the text and a higher-attaining child reads well with fluency and expression, achieving standards in line with the average Year 2 pupil. Children take books home to share with their parents and this involvement has a noticeable impact on attainment. Writing is incorporated into many activities. For example, children write their names on their paintings. Most write their names unaided and those who can not, copy from their name card. Higher-attaining children have a

good understanding of initial letters and identify rhyming words. Work sampling indicates that by the end of the reception year, higher-attaining children write well-structured short sentences with an appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. Letter formation is good, with most letters correctly formed and fairly even. The teaching of communication, language and literacy has many strengths. Adults are very skilled at encouraging discussion in class and in group lessons. Elements of the Literacy Framework are used well by the teacher and a good understanding of phonics is developed through very good use of big books, such as 'Dan, Dan the Flying Man'. As a result of this very good teaching, children can identify many rhyming words such as 'fan' and 'can'.

63. Towards the end of the reception year, the higher-attaining children achieve levels in mathematics, which are above those of most five-year-olds. All the children achieve the early learning goals for this area. Skills and understanding are developed through sorting and matching activities. For example, children sorted a collection of socks into long and short sets. They found the task of putting socks in order of length quite challenging but perceived and achieved success. They identify confidently numbers that are 'bigger or smaller than four'. All children make good progress in extending their understanding of numbers through daily use and practice. For example, they sing or say number songs and rhymes, such as 'One elephant went out to play', and hold number cards to connect the word with the numeral. Children use mathematical language with confidence and this is reinforced very well in other areas such as physical education lessons, where children are asked to make long and short shapes with their bodies. This area of learning is particularly well taught. The work set challenges all children and the teacher uses interesting and exciting resources such as 'Mr. Fox' a glove puppet, who has difficulty in sorting the numbers on the washing line. The children delight in pointing out Mr. Fox's errors.
64. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing appropriately and they attain levels similar to those of most children of their age. Opportunities are provided for children to develop technological skills through their use of construction toys during play activities with both large and small apparatus. The children use the computer with confidence and many children can already control the mouse and recognise many letters on the keyboard. Children explore their environment, for example, as part of their work on 'Colour'. They enjoy the sight and feel of autumn leaves and keep a class 'Autumn Diary' to learn about seasonal changes in Autumn and Winter. Adults support children well in investigating their surroundings and encourage them to find things out for themselves. They provide children with imaginative tasks and give them a wide range of learning experiences to develop their understanding of the world.
65. The provision to promote children's physical development has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school has purchased bright, appealing outdoor equipment which children enjoy using every day. The children make good use of the secure outdoor play area to develop their gross motor skills and to use space safely. They show good control and co-ordination when propelling the new, wheeled, vehicles and they use good avoidance techniques as they travel around the playground. The staff make good use of language to encourage children in their physical responses. The children are on course to reach national targets by the end of the reception year.
66. Children attain above-average levels in their creative work. Children's creative and artistic skills are evident in the bright displays of work and in the impressive art portfolios of work from last year's reception class. They engage in painting enthusiastically and enjoy creating their own individual portraits of 'Dan, the Flying Man'. Children use material to good effect to create self-portraits on hessian backgrounds. Their painting displays an abundance of brilliant colour and enjoyment. They sing together, recite rhymes and use appropriate actions to words and music with varying levels of confidence. The children are particularly adept at role-play. They use props and other resources with great imaginative skill when playing in the 'Rainbow Café'.

## **ENGLISH**

67. The results of the 1999 tests, at the end of Key Stage 1, indicate that standards in reading and writing are well above the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. Teacher assessments are in line with the national tests and they show that pupils also achieve well above average standards in speaking and listening. Over the last three years, attainment in reading has been above the national average, and well above in writing, so the picture that emerges is one of consistently high achievement. This represents a considerable improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
68. Inspection evidence reflects the national assessments and indicates that pupils in the Year 2 classes attain standards that are well above those of pupils of a similar age. The school has improved the "about

average" standards indicated in the previous inspection. Year 3 pupils attain standards that are above those of other eight-year-olds. Standards are above as opposed to well above because of the relatively higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 3. Pupils read and write with confidence, fluency and understanding. Higher-attaining pupils display an impressive interest in words and their meanings. All pupils have neat, legible handwriting. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good support and their attainment is in line with the national average.

69. The school has implemented the literacy hour successfully in all classes, which is based upon careful consideration of the pupils' needs. Within the Literacy Hour due attention is given to reading and writing and speaking and listening and pupils are taught spelling structures, specific grammar vocabulary and punctuation, which accelerates their progress in reading and writing.
70. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above average and they make very good progress. This is begun very effectively in the reception class where pupils' opinions and ideas are listened to with sensitivity and interest by all staff and fellow pupils during class discussions. In the Year 1 classes, pupils make very good progress in developing and extending their speaking and listening skills when discussing texts during the Literacy Hour. Pupils respond very well by listening carefully and asking relevant questions as to the precise meaning of specific words. Pupils' confidence in speaking in front of the whole class is consolidated and developed even further by pupils in the Year 2 classes having the opportunity to give oral explanations of their learning in many subjects. In all classes, pupils pay close attention to what the teacher is saying and reply to questions with thoughtful comment and detail. Year 3 attains standards that are above those normally seen and are very confident, coherent and sensible when discussing aspects of school life with an inspector.
71. Pupils' attainment in reading is well above the national average and pupils make very good progress. Reading is given a high priority and pupils, in all classes, demonstrate a good attitude towards books. Pupils understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and know and use terms such as 'author, blurb, illustrator and contents' correctly. The home/school partnership is a very successful feature of the reading programme. Parents receive very useful booklets clearly detailing the most appropriate ways to help their children. A focus on the teaching of the letter sounds raises attainment and accelerates progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the time they are seven, the higher-attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency and can discuss competently the characters in a familiar story. Pupils develop a love of literature and pupils in the Year 2 classes discuss their favourite books, with obvious enjoyment. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of authors and stories. Consequently, higher-attaining pupils show a good understanding of a range of texts and can refer to passages in books to support ideas.
72. Year 3 pupils continue to enjoy books and attain above-average standards. However, many of the non-fiction books in the Year 3 library are old and unappealing and there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to practise their research skills in the library. Time is set aside each day for pupils to read quietly, and teachers regularly read to their classes from a good selection of fiction, poetry and information books, proving good role models with their own clear diction and love of literature. A particularly good example of this occurred in a Year 1 literacy lesson. After listening carefully to the teacher, the pupils read the text *"Polar Bear, Polar Bear What Do You See?"* with clarity and expression, ensuring that their voices "rose" when they asked a question.
73. Year 2 pupils' attainment in writing is well above the national average and pupils make very good progress. Year 3 pupils attain standards above those normally seen. Pupils receive a good start to their writing in the reception classes, where they are encouraged to write independently and to use their knowledge of phonics in their writing. This good achievement is extended in Year 1, where the pupils write clear and logical sentences using capital letters and full stops. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 produce an impressive range of work, which includes fiction, poetry, information, instruction and review writing. Most of this work is of a good standard, and pupils take a real pride in presenting their work carefully. They respond well to the consistent challenge to "have a go". Year 2 pupils learn to write interesting stories with good understanding of useful "time" words such as "later" and "meanwhile." This gives structure and cohesion to their writing. Year 3 pupils write exciting "Autumn" poetry, using wonderful descriptive language such as *"Colours of crimson and terracotta"*. Standards of spelling are good, especially for the higher-attaining pupils, and pupils learn their weekly spellings conscientiously. Pupils are confident when using spellings in their writing and good progress is maintained through their ability to check spellings with the teachers and in dictionaries. Handwriting is taught in all classes, and pupils' writing is very neat and well formed. There is a consistent approach to this in all classes and teachers set a good example with their own neat, clear handwriting. There are some examples of pupils using information technology to word-process their writing

skilfully.

74. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic and work hard during their English lessons and in the Literacy Hour. They concentrate well and are very keen to produce good work. They take a real pride in presenting their work neatly and carefully. In lessons they know what is expected of them and their behaviour is always very good, which raises attainment and accelerates progress. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and are confident when contributing to class discussions. They are very good at listening to other pupils' ideas. They enjoy supporting and helping each other and enjoy celebrating each other's successes. Older pupils can empathise with characters in stories and can express mature emotions. They demonstrate a joy and love of literature.
75. The quality of teaching is very good. It ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Teachers show great confidence and good knowledge and understanding of English. They inspire pupils with their interest and enthusiasm and provide excellent role models with their superb story-reading skills. Lessons are planned very carefully to build on pupils' existing knowledge and experiences. All teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. They have high expectations of what pupils can do and work is planned for different needs. Pupils of all ability levels are given challenging and interesting work, which is a considerable improvement since the last inspection when this was considered not to be the case. Teachers maintain a brisk lesson pace and keep pupils busy. This is particularly evident in the Literacy Hour lessons where pupils waste no time in settling to group activities after sharing a class discussion. Teachers intervene well to consolidate and advance Literacy Skills. A strong feature of teaching is the skilful use of praise and encouragement, which does a great deal towards increasing pupils' confidence in all aspects of English but particularly in writing. The teachers value all pupils' contributions and there is often sensitive questioning of the least able which includes them fully in discussions. The individual target-setting in writing books has a significant impact on the pupils' progress in specific areas such as presentation and punctuation. Homework is used effectively to support what the pupils learn in Literacy Hours. Where lessons are not so successful, it is because the pace of the lesson is too slow, and on some occasions tasks do not match what pupils know, can do and understand. For instance, pupils do not understand the words "odd one out" on a worksheet and so complete the work incorrectly. On one occasion, some pupils with special educational needs missed the introduction to a literacy lesson and as a result produced sentences rather than poetry, which was the aim of the lesson.
76. The curriculum is very broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. Arrangements for monitoring progress in literacy are very good. Assessment of reading, writing and spelling is thorough and regular; difficulties are identified at an early stage so that extra support can be given. For instance, the school is currently reviewing its teaching of spelling as a result of last year's SATs performance. There is very good planning for the development of literacy skills closely linked to the National Literacy Strategy. The school is very aware of the importance of practising reading and writing in other subjects and very effectively links literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum.
77. The subject is very well led and there are very useful guidelines for all aspects of English. Support staff are actively involved in lessons and are well prepared. They make a very useful contribution to the assessment of pupils' progress. Resources for the Literacy Hour are good, but the books in the Year 3 library require replacing and there are barely sufficient non-fiction texts in the Year 1 library. The use of information technology is still at an early stage in English, although pupils do have opportunities to word-process their writing and practise their spelling skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. Test results and teacher assessments for 1999 show that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 and above was well above average. These figures also indicate above-average proportions of pupils achieving Level 2B and above, and a well-above number reaching the higher Level 3. The results placed the school above pupils in schools of a similar nature. This marks a significant improvement since the school was last inspected, when attainment was found to be only similar to national averages. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The school's results over the past four years have been consistently well above the national average. The school's results for the national tests this current year also show that standards are above average, similar to 1999. This is because this is a different group of pupils with a high proportion of pupils identified with some degree of special need. When reading the results of tests and assessments it is important to note that the

published data does not take into account the number of pupils who enter the school during the key stage or the number of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with levels of attainment in mathematics that are just below average, so that they have made good progress by the age of seven and the end of Year 3.

79. Inspection evidence shows that, at the end of Key Stage 1, the attainment of the majority of pupils is above national expectations and there is a significant number of higher-attaining pupils who are well above. Pupils are given good opportunities to discuss their mathematics during lessons and this aids their understanding. They make good use of their developing knowledge to add 9 and 11 to numbers. They arrange numbers in order to 100 and are acquiring a good understanding of place value. By the end of Key Stage 1, they halve and double numbers and add numbers confidently using tens and units involving exchange. They order and count on and back in 2s, 5s and 10s and name numbers in hundreds. They recognise regular plane and solid shapes and higher-attaining pupils clearly explain their properties. They know clock times, such as quarter and half past, and relate these to their daily routines. They are developing good strategies for manipulating numbers, and explain them confidently. In their work on shape, pupils name and recognise a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes and describe their properties. The majority of pupils use centimetres confidently to measure and draw lines. Pupils make good use of tables and graphs to record their work and to find information.
80. By the end of Year 3, most pupils are attaining standards above that expected. They use number strategies well to solve number problems and clearly understand inverse operations. Most have a good understanding of place value and work confidently using hundreds, tens and units and round numbers to the nearest ten, hundred and thousand. They give change confidently from £1.00 and have a good understanding of equivalent fractions. They are developing their strategies for solving problems successfully and are gaining confidence in explaining their thinking to others. They undertake surveys, record their work in different ways and interpret the results.
81. Since the last inspection progress has been very good. The school has implemented the Numeracy Strategy successfully and teachers have improved their planning for lessons, providing different work for ability groups. By thoroughly analysing information from test results, teachers have identified areas of weakness in pupils' achievement. The school has focused successfully on these areas in its teaching and planning to improve standards. These developments, together with improvements in the leadership and management of the subject, and quality of teaching, are having a positive impact on standards and pupils' achievement.
82. The quality of teaching and learning is good or better in over half the lessons and some very good practice was observed in Year 2 and Year 3. Most teachers have a very good understanding of the subject. They use this effectively to help pupils grasp new concepts. Where difficulties arise they are able to use another approach to help pupils understand. They use questions skilfully to help pupils build on their prior level of understanding and to deepen their thinking. This is noticeable with pupils who have special educational needs and higher-attaining pupils. In the best lessons, teachers have a very good depth of mathematical knowledge, particularly in numeracy, which helps them to provide challenging activities for higher-attaining pupils and helps to improve pupils' achievement. Teachers use the Numeracy Strategy very well as a basis for their planning. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which teachers share with pupils at the start of the lesson, and this helps pupils to focus on what they are to learn and their level of concentration increases. Teachers ensure that where support staff are used they are well-briefed on the learning objectives and how they can support pupils' learning. They work closely with groups of pupils and have a beneficial impact on the progress that pupils make.
83. Teachers have good expectations of what pupils can do in the lower part of the school. In the upper part, teachers often have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and this is reflected in the level of attainment. In Year 2 and Year 3 lessons, most teaching helps pupils to learn in an atmosphere of high motivation where all are expected to share their ideas. It allows pupils to recognise mathematical patterns and to share alternative strategies to solve problems. This deepens pupils' thinking, knowledge and understanding. Across the school, teachers use methods and organisation which are well-matched to the purpose of the lesson so that the behaviour of most pupils is good.
84. Teachers assess effectively what pupils know, understand and can do, and use this information well to plan for progression. They ensure that activities are well-matched to pupils, needs. The closing part of the lesson is used effectively by most teachers to pose questions of pupils and they often use probing questions throughout the lesson to gauge the extent of pupils' learning. Where they discover common difficulties, which slow learning, they carefully explain concepts again and allow pupils to increase their

rate of progress. They often use a question and answer session to increase the range and use of mathematical language and by doing so help pupils to develop their understanding of when to use certain words correctly. This aspect of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' progress and achievement. The use of homework is satisfactory and has a beneficial impact on pupils' progress, especially with older pupils.

85. Most pupils have very good levels of concentration because of the motivation provided by their teachers. Most understand what they are learning because learning objectives are shared well by most teachers and pupils appreciate the reasons for learning particular skills and concepts. Pupils with special educational needs often make very good progress towards achieving their targets. They are well supported by both school and visiting staff. The work expected by most teachers ensures that pupils work hard and try to do their best. When teachers set timed targets for the completion of work it often has a beneficial impact on the pace at which pupils work. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is up to date and in Year 3 the quality is good, with teachers helping pupils to understand how they can improve their work by setting targets.
86. The teaching of the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The monitoring of the coverage of the subject is very good and the co-ordinators monitor thoroughly the standards attained. They provide very good leadership for the subject. Very careful analysis of test results has helped to bring about improvements in the way that the subject is planned and taught. An effective programme for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is in place and is having a very beneficial effect on raising standards. Procedures for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress are very good and records are regularly updated. Information gained from assessment is used very well to support pupils' future learning. The school has implemented the Numeracy Strategy successfully and numeracy is taught effectively across the school. It is promoted in different subjects, such as history, where pupils understand the concept of the past through time-lines; in science, where they record their findings by plotting graphs; and in geography, recording traffic surveys in pictorial form. Literacy is supported through the recording of information and through explanations of how strategies help to solve problems. However, information and communications technology (ICT) is not always used effectively to support mathematics and pupils have insufficient opportunity to use ICT to support the mathematics curriculum. The level of resources is good, they are used well in lessons and have an effective impact on pupils learning.

## **SCIENCE**

87. The National Curriculum teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, in 1999, show that standards in science were very high. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was well above the national average. In this year's assessments, in spite of the cohort having 26 pupils on the special needs register, 63 per cent attained Level 2 or above and 31 per cent attained Level 3. Over the last four years the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 or above has remained similar, except in 1999 when 100 per cent attained this level, but the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 has increased markedly, with 3 per cent attaining Level 3 in 1997 and 31 per cent in 2000.
88. Attainment, in lessons in Key Stage 1, is above average and in the work seen is well above average. This is because of the emphasis now given to investigative work, the well-thought-through ways in which pupils record their work, so that their time is spent in focusing on the scientific aspect of the work rather than in writing up their findings and the wide variety of ways in which these findings are recorded. They use tables, complete grids, label drawings, compile block graphs, and complete given sentences. They write their own comments, illustrate their work and circle the correct word out of a given selection of words. Pupils make books on specific topics. They have considered healthy eating, made a survey of illnesses they have had and looked at how they use their different senses. They have completed a variety of investigations into different cars and have studied common British birds. They have found out and recorded what happens to different materials when water is poured on to them and how absorbent they are. Pupils' learning has been very good. They have learned to use the skills of prediction in their investigations; they explain carefully why things happen; for example, why some toy cars move faster than others; they have learned to put objects into sets and have carried out their own research into such topics as forces.
89. Attainment in Year 3 is above expectations in class and much work in their books is well above average.

There are many opportunities given for higher-attaining pupils to write up their experiments in greater length and in more detail. They too focus on the investigative aspect of the subjects and record their answers well. They use their teacher's plan or write up their own findings when recording the methods used, predicting what would happen, showing the results and drawing conclusions from those results. They draw diagrams to show, for example, how a switch works. A topic on plants includes studying how a plant is pollinated and how seeds are dispersed. Another on soil shows that pupils can separate different mixtures of soil to find out what they contain. They have studied air resistance, sound and conductors and insulators. Learning has been good. They have learned how to ensure that an investigation is a 'fair test'. They have learned, for example, to use a thermometer to measure heat, can make a simple circuit and know how to change the sound of a drum.

90. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and sometimes excellent. They enjoy their investigations, carry them out with care and discuss their findings well with a partner. Occasionally younger pupils can be restless in the introduction to a lesson, which results in them not fully understanding the task. Where lessons are excellent there are many opportunities for pupils to show initiative and they respond well to questions concerning the different ways in which the same investigation could be carried out. Questioning and the use of demonstration is used very well to promote their learning and pupils are fascinated with the results they see.
91. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 1. Only one lesson was seen in Year 3 and teaching was satisfactory with good features. Assessment is used well, both on a daily basis and at the end of a module. A strength of teaching is in teachers' subject knowledge and in the opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills, including spelling, in a variety of ways. Both literacy and numeracy skills are used in the writing-up of experiments. The effectiveness of the practical methods used has been instrumental in raising standards. Time is used very well, with pupils working at a good pace with a very good range of resources. The emphasis on introducing and using scientific vocabulary also makes a strong contribution to raising standards. Pupils compile a glossary of scientific words. When there are weaknesses this is because the task is not sufficiently explained to the pupils in a manner they understand and their interpretation of the task is different from what is expected. For example, when choosing the best wrapping paper for a parcel they chose the one that looks the most attractive for a present rather than one on which the address can be read clearly; or they misunderstand the question of whether a heat-resistant cup is better than a cup which is less heat resistant, if one wants to finish a drink quickly. Sometimes unexpected resource problems arise when an investigation is carried out for the first time but support staff are invaluable in helping teachers to ensure that the lessons run smoothly. Teachers are aware of these difficulties, discuss problems of explanations with colleagues and revise their teaching on future occasions in the light of their discussions with good success. Planning is very good, with clearly focused work and provision for pupils of different attainment. Teachers plan ahead which groups they will particularly work with during the lesson; for example, extending the more able and supporting the lower attainers.
92. The leadership and management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has worked with the Local Education Authority's advisor, to raise standards from below average at the last inspection to high standards in the 1999 National Curriculum teacher assessments. The advisor has given demonstration lessons and has observed teachers working, giving supportive advice afterwards. This is a considerable achievement and should be commended. Improvement has been excellent. The co-ordinator, who is a specialist, monitors teaching and the curriculum regularly through classroom observation and a scrutiny of pupils' books. The school has a good record keeping system, which includes record being kept for the pupils at the back of their exercise books. Regular meetings have been held to help teachers move forward and the whole-school approach to the subject is very effective. The policy is up to date, although it has yet to be shared with the staff, and the scheme of work matches Curriculum 2000. The school has a very good range of resources in each classroom and a portfolio of levelled work demonstrates what should and can be achieved in each year. Visiting theatre groups have very successfully brought a further dimension of the subject to the school.

## **ART**

93. Attainment is well above expectations, with some pupils reaching high standards at the end of both key stages. Pupils' work has been collected across the school and displayed in large folders and books and shows that a very wide range of skills have been mastered by the time they leave the school. The standards in these records in all three key stages are high and demonstrate a very considerable degree of improvement since the last inspection, when they were judged to be below average. Whilst these examples may well reflect the highest standards in each year group there is no doubt that high-attaining pupils are given every opportunity to succeed. Through scrutiny of displays and observation in lessons, pupils' attainment, overall, is judged to be well above average in Key Stage 1 and above expectations in the present Year 3. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are, for example, studying the work of Henry Moore and make clay models in his style. They use the skills they have been taught well, and have a clear understanding of what they have to do, because of very good teaching. In Year 3 they also study a famous artist and understand the importance of blending different shades, using different media to create effect. The appraisal of each other's work helps to raise standards as pupils discuss what is good and what they can learn from each other's work. They have a very good understanding of what pointillism is because of good to very good picture resources. Year 3 have studied Van Gogh, Cezanne and Seurate, amongst other artists and have learned how different artists use various techniques to convey meaning.
94. Learning is good in lessons and very good in relation to the wide range of skills and activities pupils cover across the school. Good links are made between subjects and pupils recognise these links, such as the different properties of materials they have learned about in science influencing how they will record what these materials look like by different types of shading. Much of the good learning is because of teachers' very good subject knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils are also very interested and can apply what they learn well. They are given the skills to succeed and because they attend and following instructions well, reach very good or good standards. They also share resources and take turns well. They settle to work quickly and are clear about the tasks that are set. Younger pupils are given responsibilities, such as giving out and collecting in equipment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, similar to their peers.
95. Teaching is good in both key stages and, from the high standards seen, must be very good in some lessons. Teachers have considerable knowledge and understanding of the subject. They prepare very detailed lesson plans, which often show very clear progression of thought and skills within a lesson and a focus for assessment. Pupils are managed very well and lessons are well organised. Pupils are well-motivated because teachers give thorough explanations, demonstrate skills well and use resources effectively. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of what they have to do. Teachers and support assistants reinforce well what has been taught, when they move around groups and expand ideas, making pupils think about what improvements they could make through a good use of questioning.
96. The management of the subject, led by a specialist with an art background, is very good. A particular strength is in the collection of work that has been compiled by the school and the way it is displayed. From this record can be seen high standards and a very wide range of art and design experiences. In-service training at the school, by the art advisor, included planning, progression and printing. Staff also visited the Portrait 2000 exhibition. A culture has been developed that allows continual feedback, which helps to develop continual improvement. A parent helper comes in to work with more able pupils, and teachers keep detailed records of pupils' achievements. The school is now well-resourced. The additional resources, which have been provided since the last inspection, have helped teachers to raise standards in the subject and to compile the portfolios, showing progression across the school. Pupils are entered for various competitions and their work is displayed locally. The subject is a strength of the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

97. Design and technology is taught as a blocked subject, alternating with art in Key Stage 1, and was not on the timetable in all classes during the inspection. However, from looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning documents, and discussions with pupils and teachers, it is clear that pupils develop good skills and knowledge in design and technology as they progress through the school. Standards, at the end of the Key Stage 1 and Year 3, are above expectations for pupils of their age. Progress since the last inspection has been very good and the school has worked very hard to implement improvements. Standards have been considerably raised to these levels through very careful planning of the curriculum in line with National Curriculum requirements and an improvement in teachers' knowledge and



understanding, which has resulted in more focused teaching.

98. Evidence from the two lessons seen during the inspection and looking at pupils' work across the school show the quality of teaching, overall, is good and is sometimes very good. Teachers provide pupils with a very good range of opportunities to develop, plan and communicate their ideas. Opportunities ensure that pupils work with a variety of tools to develop a range of skills, such as cutting, sticking and joining using familiar objects such as paper, card, scissors, glue, and reclaimed materials. These activities are supported by a good range of construction kits to develop pupils' imagination and hand and eye co-ordination. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which is communicated effectively to pupils developing their knowledge and understanding including health and safety aspects. Very good termly planning ensures that pupils undertake at least two challenging activities which involve designing and making, focused practical tasks and evaluation. During these activities, pupils build on and extend what they know, understand and can do using skills and knowledge of materials and tools. For example, in Year 2, pupils use previous knowledge well when designing, making and evaluating a make-believe clock and baby's toy.
99. Year 3 pupils are given very good opportunities to investigate and disassemble a range of familiar products before designing and making a decorated box with a hinged lid. The curriculum is linked clearly to other areas and the cross-curricular approach provides pupils with the opportunity to extend their learning and use design and technology skills across other subjects. This is clear, for example, where Year 2 pupils make pancakes and a Wesak meal as part of studies in religious education, and Year 3 pupils make wheeled vehicles linked closely to forces in science. Teachers encourage pupils to use literacy skills well when evaluating their designs and models showing how they may be improved. Good links are made with mathematics activities in measuring and with art in decorating finished models.
100. Pupils are well-motivated by their teachers and enjoy design and technology activities, which means that their attitude and behaviour is very good. They show good concentration, co-operate well together, for example, when Year 3 pupils help each other using a bradawl to make holes to sew their fabric-covered books, and work at a good pace. They are keen to explain how models have been made and how they can be improved. This means that learning is good and that most pupils make good progress.
101. Co-ordination of the subject is very good and the co-ordinator leads by example teaching all Year 3 pupils. Teachers make very good use of the thorough and clear scheme of work when planning lessons and this has resulted in much improved standards for work. Monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work is carefully undertaken by the co-ordinator. The range and quality of resources is good and these have been carefully chosen to match the needs of the scheme of work. There is a useful document that details stages of progression in using a variety of tools and materials and there are plans to adapt this to provide assessment procedures for pupils which are currently not in place.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

102. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 3. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were judged to be below national expectations. Reasons for the improvement are a detailed policy and scheme of work based on national guidelines and a determination by the school to retain a broad curriculum despite time demanded by literacy and numeracy teaching.
103. Pupils' understanding is built on a range of experiences, which move the pupils' knowledge from local to wider and contrasting environments. The youngest pupils visit the local environment and record their findings pictorially. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have sound skills, often developed through topics or stories. Year 1 pupils consider different types of weather conditions and learn about islands. There is a good emphasis on correct geographical words, such as "sea, mountain, and river." Pupils in Year 2 explore their own locality and use their literacy skills very well to design and make a brochure describing the important features of Wantage. They learn to compare and contrast their own environment with the seaside town of Sidmouth in Devon. They identify similarities and differences between the physical features of the two locations as well as learning about the different occupations.
104. Pupils in Year 3 have learnt about different rivers and are very knowledgeable when discussing river systems. They learn about river sources and tributaries. They walk to a local brook and follow this up very successfully by charting the progress of the brook from its source to the River Thames. They locate symbols on a map and identify what these symbols mean using a key. Pupils compare and contrast

their locality with Kenya to develop their knowledge of other countries.

105. The quality of teaching is good and pupils' learning in geography is good as a result. The best features of geographical teaching were illustrated in a Year 3 lesson where the teacher provided very good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, made very good use of resources, and gave very good support to individual pupils to further their understanding of Ordnance Survey maps.
106. The school has a good policy and scheme of work to support geography teaching and learning. The subject is led by a very capable co-ordinator who has a clear vision of how the subject should be developed. Resources are good and used well with appropriate use being made of the local environment to widen pupils' knowledge. The school intends to develop pupils' learning further by making even more use of nearby resources such as the local museum. There is insufficient use of information technology in geography lessons.

## **HISTORY**

107. Only one lesson was seen in history in either key stage during the inspection, so judgements are made from looking at teachers' planning, displays and discussing pupils' past work. Attainment in history is in line with expected levels at the end of both Year 2 and Year 3. Standards are similar to the last inspection.
108. Pupils in Year 1 are developing knowledge and understanding of change as they compare differences between their school as it would have been one hundred years ago and as it is today. They learn about the Great Fire of London. They start to develop an idea of historical sources when they hear readings from the diary of Samuel Pepys.
109. Pupils in Year 2 learn about famous people. For instance, King Alfred the Great, Mary Seacole and Grace Darling. They make good use of their literacy skills to record accounts of these lives. They enjoy learning about the Victorians and realise how hard domestic life was then without the many labour-saving devices of today.
110. Pupils in Year 3 further develop their knowledge and understanding of historical events and periods by studying the Invaders: the Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. They are able to talk with appropriate knowledge and understanding about the cultures and lives of people in different periods. They can identify some of the aspects of life in Roman times and can compare these with life today, accurately pointing out the differences. They visit Reading museum to enrich and extend their knowledge of the Romans.
111. The teachers' planning, the standard of pupils' work and displays indicate that teaching and learning is at least good. In the lesson seen, the quality of teaching is good. The teacher makes good use of a video to extend the pupils' understanding of the events of the Great Fire of London. Pupils realise how quickly the fire spread in the wooden buildings. The teacher skilfully explains the differences between fighting fire in 1666 and fighting fire today with modern appliances.
112. An investigative approach to history is used effectively at both key stages. Provision is supported appropriately with visitors and visits to places of historical interest, for example, to museums; and there are plans to extend these visits. The school has purchased several artefacts and books since the last inspection. There is a policy, and a scheme of work based on government guidelines, and work is planned to ensure that pupils experience a varied and interesting history curriculum. History is a focus in the School Development Plan this year and the co-ordinator will use the opportunity to further update the curriculum in line with Curriculum 2000. For instance, there is insufficient use of information technology in the history curriculum.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Information and communications technology (ICT) has been identified by the school as an area for development and is a high priority on the School's Development Plan. There were very few opportunities to observe pupils using ICT during the inspection and judgements about standards and progress are based upon the use of computers and other equipment, scrutiny of portfolios of work, and talking to staff and pupils.
114. By the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding and use of ICT is below expectations because pupils have insufficient opportunity to develop their skills. During the inspection it was apparent that those pupils who have regular access to computer technology at home show more competence and confidence. Currently, teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to load programs independently, save information and have hands-on experience. Many pupils have a limited knowledge of the keyboard and keys. They are given the opportunity to develop ideas and make things happen, such as using word processing skills, but not all are sure how to change font and size. They use the computer to develop spelling and simple writing activities. They use an art program to create simple pictures, using a variety of tools. Most have had some experience of using the computer, with support, to handle simple mathematical data and program a robot. However, their knowledge and understanding of the benefits of using information technology in the wider world is less well-developed.
115. There was insufficient evidence available to make a judgement about attainment at the end of Year 3.
116. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. The school has only recently introduced new modern computers and upgraded software. Despite some teachers purchasing their own computers to improve their skills, staff knowledge and understanding is variable and teachers have not yet received training. The school, as a priority for raising standards, has identified further training needs and this is to be arranged using government money during the coming year and as identified in the School Development Plan. The management and integration of ICT and the need for pupils to spend more time on the computer and building computer time into daily timetables, has also been identified. The school has very recently introduced a thoroughly revised scheme of work and pupil assessment procedures but these have not yet had time to raise standards across the school.
117. Very few teaching opportunities were observed to give a judgement on the quality of teaching and computers were not always in use during the inspection. Planning is good, although due to lack of computers teachers find it difficult to deliver and to ensure that pupils have regular access to improve standards. Pupils often undertake the same task and no account is taken of individual pupil's prior attainment. Across the school, there is an inconsistent approach to recording when pupils use ICT and what they can do. Activities are not always matched to the needs of pupils and this does not always make effective use of ICT.
118. When given the opportunity, pupils enjoy using the computer and they are keen to learn. They work well individually, in pairs or in small groups, and teachers encourage them to show respect for the equipment and each other. They take turns and support each other well. Most show good concentration and perseverance, have positive attitudes and are well-motivated.
119. The co-ordinators provide good support and have a clear vision of what needs to be done to raise standards, and plans are in place. The very recently introduced and updated planning and scheme of work is a thorough document and includes teaching of specific skills and ways of integrating these into the curriculum. However, this, and the new assessment procedures, have not yet had time to raise standards. With only one computer for each class, the number of computers in the school is insufficient to ensure regular access for all pupils. There is a good range of suitable software but this has yet to be fully utilised to support areas of the curriculum. ICT is used to support some areas in English, mathematics, and art. All classes have a listening centre and headphones, which encourages pupils to work independently. Other resources to support ICT, such as programmable robots and audio-visual aids are good and used effectively.

## MUSIC

120. Standards of attainment are well above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above and sometimes well above average in Year 3. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In Key Stage 1 pupils listen carefully, play instruments well and answer all questions about the percussion instruments, correctly. They handle them with care. Pupils recognise and explore sounds in Year 1 and can repeat simple rhythms. In Year 2 they can keep a steady beat by clapping, tapping and counting and understand the meaning of a rest, demonstrating it in their clapping. They understand that by putting in a rest the music becomes more interesting. They also enjoy listening to different types of music and can name music that they know. They enjoy playing instruments. Pupils sing tunefully and know a good range of songs by heart.
121. Pupils are given good opportunities to perform. They sang a wide range of songs to parents for the school's centenary which included well-known Music Hall songs, Victorian children's songs and games and traditional nursery rhymes and sometimes with actions, such as in 'Oranges and Lemons'. They also told the story of 'Oliver' through the songs of the show, dressed in costume. Year 3 also learned songs from 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat' and performed these to parents, accompanied by pupils on recorders, violin and trumpet. The concert also included piano solos and a percussion item. Good opportunities, such as in assemblies, are given to pupils to play the instruments they learn to others, whether they learn in or out of school. Pupils have opportunities to learn the 'cello, violin, trumpet and recorders and on Friday afternoons they come together as a small orchestra.
122. The pace of lessons in Key Stage 1 is excellent. Teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and excellent in Key Stage 2 where it is taken by a specialist. Pupils have the pleasure of listening to instruments such as the flute being played to a high standard, live in music lessons. The contribution this makes to their spiritual development is very good. The school is fortunate in having many teachers who feel confident in teaching music and this is reflected in the very good teaching that takes place across the school. Lessons have a good range of different activities, expectations are high and discipline very good. As a result pupils listen well and learning is very good and sometimes excellent.
123. The management of the subject is good. The specialist co-ordinator has attended further in-service training and keeps herself up to date well through further meetings. Although she has not observed other teachers teaching she has been asked for and given them advice. There is an appropriate policy, which needs updating, and a scheme is being completed as a result of a course staff have been on. Pupils are given good opportunities to sing and play in the local community and parents, friends of the school and theatre companies are invited to perform to pupils. The school has a particularly large range of good quality tuned and untuned percussion instruments, including some instruments from different countries.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

124. Attainment in physical education at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3 is broadly in line with national expectations and pupils achieve well. In Key Stage 1, the pupils make good progress, overall. For example, they devise interesting and complex sequences of movement to carefully chosen music, working well together or individually. They explore ways of moving at different levels and speeds with enjoyment and increasing confidence and awareness of space and others. They make appropriate evaluations of each other's performance, developing the use of the correct language. They use these comments well to improve their performance. They are well aware of safety needs and handle equipment carefully.
125. Year 3 pupils are well aware of the need to warm-up and cool down before and after strenuous exercise. Apparatus and equipment is handled carefully, with a good awareness of the safety needs of themselves and others. They listen carefully, move with confidence, and practise individual movements and skills energetically but safely, especially during throwing activities. They speak confidently about what they are doing and offer each other helpful criticism, which is used to develop skills and understanding further. They understand the effect of exercise on their bodies. Swimming takes place for Year 3 pupils at the local Sports College and by the time pupils leave the school, about two-thirds can swim twenty-five metres or more.
126. Progress since the last inspection has been very good. The last inspection identified planning for progression and developing pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding as a major weakness and this

has been addressed very well. Resources have been updated and improved and the role of the co-ordinator has been clearly defined.

127. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good, but only one lesson was observed at Year 3 so it is not possible to make a judgement in this year group. Teachers and pupils are all dressed appropriately for physical education and teachers act as good role models. Planning is thorough, and teachers provide clear instructions and explanations so pupils know what they are to do. Most teachers describe learning objectives clearly at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what they are learning. Teachers use their knowledge well and lessons usually begin with a strenuous warm-up activity and end with an appropriate cool-down. Teachers understand the subject well and know how pupils learn and develop physically, which ensures that most pupils are well-motivated, keen and interested. The generally good management of pupils enables lessons to be conducted at a good pace. Where teaching is less sound, the lack of pace and enthusiasm for the subject on the part of the pupils is more noticeable. Where the teaching is good, the infectious enthusiasm and imagination of the teachers provides the pupils with a good model to copy and a challenge to do well. Teachers encourage pupils to strive for their best performances and to be honestly critical of their work. They stress the need for personal and group safety and this is an important feature of lessons. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
128. Pupils have good, positive, attitudes to physical education and are usually well-motivated and well-behaved during lessons. Physical education makes a strong contribution to their personal and social development, as they learn to respect others' opinions and achievements during evaluations and build strong relationships during paired and teamed activities. They also develop self-control through talking about their feelings and controlling them effectively. Teachers promote the use of correct language when the pupils talk about movement sequences and about the skills they have learnt. They provide the pupils with good examples of how to make useful and constructive criticism to help others to improve their performance.
129. There is a clear and recently updated policy and scheme of work and a comprehensive curriculum map which ensures progression of skills and knowledge and this is used very well by teachers. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and provides good leadership and support to colleagues. She is involved in monitoring the planning to ensure progression and has clearly identified the need for effective assessment, recording and reporting procedures. Good links have been developed with the local Sports College and advisor, and the co-ordinator is looking at ways to further develop the subject and extra-curricular activities. Teachers make effective use of the good quality resources and equipment. The hall and outdoor hard surfaces are used well to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of team games.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

130. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 3, attainment is broadly in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, which is similar to that found at the last inspection. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is clear from lesson observations, talking to pupils, and examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress, and a significant number of higher-attaining pupils, good progress. Quality daily acts of collective worship further support the effective teaching of religious education.
131. By the end of the Key Stage 1, most pupils understand about special times and places. They are familiar with the stories of Christmas and Easter and relate these to new beginnings and celebrations. They know about key religious figures from the Bible, such as Moses and Jesus, and stories such as the lost sheep, loaves and fishes and Zaccheus. They have good opportunities to talk about feelings such as anger, happiness, love and sadness, and caring and sharing. They learn about places of worship through visiting the local church and attend a yearly mass looking at artefacts used during the ceremony. As an alternative religion they talk about and hear stories of Buddha and Buddhism.
132. By the end of Year 3, they have extended their knowledge and understanding of some important figures in the Old Testament beginning with the Creation. They learn about major figures such as Adam and Eve, Abraham, Noah, Joseph and Moses and significant events such as the Plagues, the Passover, Exodus, and the receiving of the Ten Commandments. They undertake an in-depth study of the Easter story and extend their knowledge and understanding of stories Jesus told, such as the Centurion's Servant, the

Wedding at Cana and the conversion of St Paul. As an alternative religion they learn about Judaism.

133. Only three lessons were seen during the inspection, two in Year 3 and one in Year 2 and the quality of teaching was good and this is confirmed from the scrutiny of pupils' work. Teachers have good subject knowledge, plan lessons very well and are enthusiastic. They use a wide range of strategies and activities, such as playlets, writing diaries and newspaper reports, and discussion to motivate and stimulate. This means that pupils are keen and interested and are well managed. Teachers use questioning very well to make pupils think about issues; for example, in Year 3, when pupils were asked to consider how Esau and Jacob felt when they met each other. Consequently, pupils' attitudes to the study of religion are good. They behave well and listen to one other and are genuinely interested in the subject and this contributes to good learning. They listen attentively, concentrate and persevere to complete their tasks. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils and use plenary sessions well to evaluate lessons and assess pupils' learning. Most pupils enjoy their lessons and are interested in their work and show positive attitudes. They listen attentively to the teachers and to one another and sustain concentration. Most are well-behaved, settle quickly to activities, and show good concentration.
134. Progress in developing the subject since the last inspection has been good. The policy has been updated and an effective scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus has been introduced. Planning has been improved and extra resources have recently been purchased to support other religions. The subject is well led. The policy is in the process of being updated and there is a thorough curriculum map and scheme of work that gives good clear guidance to teachers. The co-ordinator ensures that appropriate resources are available and that all teachers are aware of the scheme of work and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus through monitoring of planning. Teachers plan carefully together in year groups and across the school to ensure equality of opportunity and progression. Planning and consultation with the Junior school is also good and this ensures continuity in learning between the two phases. The co-ordinator is aware of the standards achieved through her informal observation of pupils' work in classes and on display and through work presented in assemblies by each class. The co-ordinator has identified the need for assessment procedures to be put in place. There are good resources and artefacts for other religions, including videos, and these are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The local clergy have very strong links and visit regularly and have a very good input into the teaching of religious education. Religious education provides good support to literacy through drama and writing.