

INSPECTION REPORT

STEAM MILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Cinderford, Gloucester

LEA area : Gloucestershire

Unique reference number : 115522

Headteacher : Mrs. J. Williams

Reporting inspector : Mrs Elizabeth Camplin
3586

Dates of inspection : 13th – 16th November 2000

Inspection number : 224288

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Steam Mills Cinderford Gloucestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. A. Blethyn
Date of previous inspection:	12 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Peter Brown O.I.N 9744	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How the school cares for its pupils Partnership with parents
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Steam Mills Primary School is situated on the outskirts of Cinderford in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire. It admits pupils from 4 to 11 years of age and has 118 on the roll. This is an increase of 20% since the previous inspection when the roll was already rising. The school is popular with parents because of its reputation for excellent standards. It serves an area well beyond the local catchment. Currently there are 21 children in the Reception year and they are taught with 8 children from Year 1. Attainment on entry is broadly average and the trend in baseline assessment results since they started being collected is typical of most schools nationally. Three children are known to be entitled to free school meals and they represent a very low percentage compared with the national average. This accounts for the school being placed in the top band for the comparison of test results. Despite this, pupils' backgrounds are broadly average. Most families live and work in an area of rural deprivation. Twenty-two children are on the special educational needs register. One child has a statement. As a percentage of the school roll these figures are average compared with other primary schools. There are no pupils with English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Steam Mills is a good school. It is very effective in enabling children to achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science. It also ensures pupils reach at least the expected standard in all other subjects except, at Key Stage 2, design and technology. Teaching and learning is particularly good at the junior stage and more than 90% of teaching is sound or better. The school has benefited from the strong leadership of the recently retired headteacher. It continues to have good leadership from her successor who has a clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The capacity of governors and staff to improve the school further is very good. The school is cost-effective and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It is earning a reputation, in the local and wider community, for excellence in the standards it achieves by the age of eleven. Through very good teaching at Key Stage 2 children achieve highly in English, mathematics and science.
- It makes effective use of teachers' subject expertise and the skills of supporting adults to develop children's special aptitudes in music and physical education. It provides very appropriately for those who need special help with their physical, personal and language development.
- It fosters positive attitudes to school, good standards of behaviour and high levels of attendance. Children are well mannered, caring of each other, and respectful and co-operative in lessons and around the school.
- It organises many worthwhile and well attended activities at lunch-time and after school that enrich the curriculum.
- In the context of change in the leadership and management of the school, the headteacher, staff and governors are already working very well as a team to plan for future improvement.

What could be improved

- The extent to which children throughout the school exercise initiative, gain confidence and skill in oral and practical work, and make the best possible progress in foundation subjects, especially in design and technology at Key Stage 2.
- The way in which teachers exploit opportunities to involve children in understanding what they do well and what they must do to improve their learning.
- The curricular provision in the areas of learning at the Foundation Stage to ensure consistently sound or better teaching and learning.
- Management systems and procedures that focus on professional development of newly appointed staff, governors' fulfilment of their statutory responsibilities and the systematic review and improvement of school policies and guidelines.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. It has made good improvement since then having placed appropriate priority on raising standards in core subjects. Action taken has been highly successful with standards reaching very high levels at Key Stage 2 this year. The quality of teaching has much improved at Key Stage 1 and high attendance is now a significant contributory factor to pupils' continuity of learning. Standards in most foundation subjects have been maintained but the school can still do more to improve curricular provision, especially in design and technology and for Reception children. Governors still need to strengthen their knowledge of statutory requirements and plan more effectively for the longer term to make the very best use of resources.

STANDARDS

Attainment data, in the form of numerical tables, is omitted from the report because the number of pupils in Year 6 in 2000 was fewer than ten.

Throughout the school pupils achieve good standards in most subjects, doing especially well by the age of eleven. The success of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy has helped to raise standards. At Key Stage 1 this year children's performance in reading and mathematics was higher than average and matched those in similar schools. They were well above average in writing, and exceeded results achieved by similar schools. Eleven-year-olds are consistently attaining highly in mathematics and science and their performance in English considerably improved this year over last. Average attainment over a four-year period is high compared with all schools and the Key Stage 2 trend in improving results is above the national trend. Standards in geography, music, and physical education are good at both key stages. They are satisfactory in design and technology at the age of seven but unsatisfactory at the junior stage. Achievement in control technology and religious education should also be higher by eleven. A shortage of learning resources is the main reason for pupils' inexperience in information and communication technology (ICT) but teachers are beginning to address this issue through the School Improvement Plan. Reception children make sound progress from attainment on entry to school and achieve the goals expected of the age group. Very few exceed them because the Foundation Stage curriculum is not yet of a high enough quality, notably in the imaginative and creative aspects of provision.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Children are very keen to learn when lessons are stimulating but passive when they are not sufficiently involved.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils are well mannered and respectful. Their conduct is very good in the best lessons. It can be boisterous in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Sound overall. Children work harmoniously together and are sensitive to the needs and difficulties of other pupils. They are responsible and by the junior stage in particular are ready to exercise more initiative and independence in the management of their learning.
Attendance	Good overall. Very high level of attendance, no exclusions, but punctuality at the start of the day needs to improve.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Strengths are:- Teacher expertise and ability to enthuse pupils in English, mathematics, science, physical education and music; strong and successful emphasis on the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills; lessons in core subjects at the junior stage particularly demanding and matched to needs so that pupils, including those with special educational needs, work very hard; teachers at both key stages expect and usually receive, the best from pupils; management of pupils and quality and use of homework very effective and make a strong contribution to the pace at which pupils work and make progress.

Weaknesses are:- Insufficient time, at the end of lessons, to evaluate progress made with learning objectives, or to forecast what children are ready to learn next; the quality of learning at Reception is sometimes hindered by too slow a pace, lack of sufficient stimulating activities and inadequate teacher involvement in children's play; unrealistic expectation for pupils to sustain silence for long periods have an adverse effect on the quality of learning in religious education at Key Stage 2.

91% of lessons were satisfactory or better. Of these 31% were good and 14% very good. 9% were unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. Core subjects are planned rigorously and have a very strong impact on standards achieved. Planning for progression in foundation subjects is less rigorous, and unsatisfactory in design and technology at Key Stage 2. The curriculum for the new Foundation Stage has potential to improve.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is very effective. Classwork is appropriately planned and when withdrawn from the classroom pupils follow activities that consolidate skills and understanding but that are relevant to what is happening in the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. Children are taught good manners, to be honest, caring and tolerant and appreciative of social, cultural and economic diversity. They benefit from a positive learning atmosphere but more opportunities could be provided for aesthetic and spiritual development, for taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care and welfare arrangements are sound and the partnership with parents is actively promoted through the home/school agreement.

Extra-curricular activities and use of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. The school has an effective partnership with parents. Policies for encouraging good attendance and positive relationships work very well. Many parents help with school activities but some aspects of communication between home and school need to improve. Assessment of progress in core subjects is very good but is weaker in foundation subjects. Procedures for eliminating risks and hazards could be better.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are sound overall. The new headteacher provides good and perceptive leadership. She is well supported by her teacher colleagues.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound overall. Governors are highly committed. They have a satisfactory overview of educational provision but lack of experience and limited knowledge of statutory requirements result in some shortcomings in fulfilling them.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has taken very effective action since the last inspection to raise standards in core subjects. It has been less vigilant at the Foundation Stage and in some National Curriculum subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Best practice in deployment of special grants to raise standards in literacy and numeracy.

Other strengths are:- delegation for the co-ordination of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the provision for SEN; headteacher and governors share a good vision for future improvement and have a strong chance of success. *Weaknesses include:-* underdeveloped induction systems; performance management behind schedule; some statutory information excluded from the annual report to parents; no clear cycle for the review of school policies.

Staff are well qualified and effective. Accommodation is adequate but has some shortcomings. Resources for learning are sound though an audit needs to be conducted to identify relative strengths and weaknesses. The school achieves a good balance between its costs and effectiveness.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are highly satisfied with standards achieved by eleven and are happy with teaching and learning methods. • They are pleased with the range of extra-curricular opportunities, particularly for music. • They feel relationships are secure and based upon mutual respect between children and adults. • They feel informal contact between home and school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They think the behaviour management and rewards policies could be more effective. • They would like to receive better information about their children's progress. • A minority would like Parents' Meetings to be organised in the evenings.

Parents' views were fully taken into account. The team was able to substantiate all of their positive views and endorsed the need for better information about progress and the implementation of the behaviour and reward policies. Attendance at afternoon meetings for parents is high but few fathers attend at that time. Staff and governors should consider this in their future planning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Since baseline tests were introduced Reception children, on admission to school, have achieved results in early language, mathematical and social skills that are fairly typical of schools nationally. When re-tested at the end of the first year their attainment is still broadly average. Children make sound progress but there is no added value at this early stage.
2. At Key Stage 1, results of statutory tests in 2000 were above the national average compared with all schools, and average compared with similar schools, in reading and mathematics. They were well above average in writing and above the average achieved by similar schools. The percentage reaching Level 2 in science teacher assessments was very high and in the top 5% nationally compared with all and similar schools. Taking account of performance data held by the school about attainment on entry, pupils achieved well.
3. Less than ten pupils took the tests for pupils at Key Stage 2 this year. Their performance was very high in comparison with similar schools in all core subjects but the group is too small for their individual results to be published.
4. Because the school's cohort sizes at both key stages were so relatively small this year, taken in isolation they could be unrepresentative of trends in the school's performance. However, analysis of attainment in the years spanning 1996 to 2000 shows that results have steadily improved in tests relating to reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1, and in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. Compared to national averages the school's performance at the end of the junior stage for all core subjects is very good, being above the national trend. Results in mathematics and science at eleven are particularly impressive, whilst those for English have lagged slightly behind. There has been no significant variation overall between the achievement of boys or girls either at school or national level.
5. The school has not been complacent in its response to its positive performance. It evaluates outcomes each year and where it identifies specific difficulties or gaps in provision it takes effective remedial action. For example, handwriting was successfully addressed after the 1999 results at Key Stage 1 and vocabulary extension and better comprehension skills were appropriate key targets this year leading to pupils achieving a higher percentage of Level 5's in English. Taking account of prior learning the school has set relevant and challenging targets for Year 6 next year.
6. Standards of work seen during the inspection were good overall. Pupils achieve highly in all core subjects at Key Stage 2. At both key stages pupils apply numeracy and literacy skills well, where relevant, in most foundation subjects, especially science and the humanities. Junior pupils read a wide range of texts, including modern and classical stories, drama, poetry and information books in their study of language and literature from different periods of time. They use their knowledge of the structure of English to write with increasing confidence and competence. For example, work in Class 3 on poetry resulted in some very imaginative poetry writing and Class 4's study of Shakespeare's Macbeth led to some good written work in interpreting medieval language. At both key stages pupils' oral communication skills are not as good as their writing, but in most lessons teachers make appropriately high demands of them.

7. Factual knowledge in mathematics and science attainment targets is very good. Pupils have good strategies for using their knowledge to manage investigations and find solutions to problems. They use knowledge of data handling, shape, and measure to support their learning, particularly in science and geography. A good example from middle junior work was sorting, weighing, and classifying waste materials, recording results and reaching conclusions about pollution and the benefits of recycling.
8. There are no National Curriculum subjects in which pupils achieve less than the expectation for the age group other than design and technology at Key Stage 2. Junior pupils are capable of capitalising more on sound knowledge and skills, acquired at the infant stage, in identifying needs, designing, making and evaluating products. All pupils are developing good computer skills and they use ICT appropriately for research and word processing. They need more experience in control technology in order to make more progress in this aspect of ICT. Standards in art could be higher with more of an emphasis throughout the school on the progression of skills and art appreciation. At Key Stage 2 standards in religious education, though sound, have the potential to be higher when continuity of teaching is restored. Pupils do well to reach above the expected standards in geography, music and physical education with pupils with special educational needs making particularly good progress. They benefit from regular targeted support for literacy skill development, and generally firm but sensitive behaviour management. Special aptitudes for music and games are developed very well both through lessons, additional tuition and extra-curricular activities.
9. Standards are satisfactory at Reception though there needs to be more of an emphasis on covering all the early learning goals set out in the new Foundation Stage curriculum. Children make predominantly sound progress in mathematical development, and in acquiring early reading, writing and communication skills. Reception children of all prior attainment achieve below expectation and make slow progress in literacy when lesson activities lack challenge or are not supported by an adult.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They enjoy their school experience and value the contribution school makes to their academic and social development. Particularly when the quality of teaching is good, they demonstrate a positive motivation to learn and develop as individuals. Pupils at Key Stage 2 consider the school effective in preparing them for their future secondary education. Levels of self-esteem are high at all ages, and most children display confidence both in the classroom and at play. Interest in school activities is strong. After-school clubs are well supported, and pupils express positive opinions on the contribution they make to the quality of school life.
11. Relationships are usually good, with children displaying a high level of concern and respect for each other. Pupils also demonstrate good relationships with members of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. There is a genuine appreciation for the efforts made by teachers to provide a learning environment that is both stimulating and supportive.
12. Behaviour in the classroom is good, particularly when teaching is stimulating and appropriately paced. Usually, pupils are attentive, noise levels are at an acceptable level, and disruption through inappropriate behaviour is rare. Behaviour in the playground, although occasionally boisterous, is satisfactory and no incidences of oppressive behaviour were observed. A lack of appropriate equipment at play-time deprives pupils of opportunities to be stimulated by alternative and more productive activities. Older

children in Years 5 and 6 have developed their own anti-bullying policy and, perhaps as a result, voice strong opinions as to the damaging effects of bullying and the need for it to be quickly identified and eradicated. They appreciate the school procedures for the reporting and monitoring of inappropriate behaviour and consider them to be effective.

13. Although pupils generally relate well to each other, opportunities for collaboration and teamwork are underdeveloped. Likewise, opportunities for the exercise of initiative and responsibility are limited. Consequently, children can sometimes be seen as rather passive and lacking in spontaneity.
14. Levels of attendance are very good at all ages and exceed national averages. Levels of unauthorised absence are low, falling below national averages. The school places a high priority on maintaining high attendance levels, and this emphasis is recognised and supported by parents. The punctuality of pupils arriving at school is, however, less satisfactory. A number of pupils were observed arriving late for registration and this made it more difficult for teachers to commence the first lesson on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is effective in providing secure continuity of learning from Reception to Year 6. Approximately 50% of the lessons observed were of good or better quality whilst over 90% were at least satisfactory. A little under 10% were unsatisfactory.
16. Most teaching is sound at the Foundation Stage. Children respond sensibly to a friendly classroom atmosphere and positive behaviour management strategies. Emphasis is placed on developing skills in language and literacy, mathematical knowledge and understanding, and the foundations of other National Curriculum subjects. These aims are achieved when the teacher is directly supporting children with learning activities. This occurs most often during the opening sessions of literacy and numeracy hours when questions and explanations are carefully adapted to the needs of Reception children. Music-making sessions are also successful and there are many opportunities for children to experiment with sound and sing favourite rhymes and songs. On these occasions time and resources are used productively, children try hard, concentrate well and make good progress.
17. Some teaching at Reception is unsatisfactory because the teacher has an inadequate overview of what the children are doing. Not enough thought is given to explaining to children a clear purpose for all the activities provided. Children make few gains in learning when left for long periods to provide their own amusement, or when given repetitive tasks that fail to stimulate them.
18. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is consistently sound or better. The work is usually demanding and different activities are set to meet the needs of the lower to higher attainers. Very effective use is made of support staff to help children with special educational needs. The teacher and classroom assistants make sure children understand what is expected of them and are generally successful in their communication. They encourage children to have high expectations of themselves for what they can achieve and this adds to pupils' levels of motivation. Lessons proceed at a good pace and dialogue with children is interactive and constructive, particularly in literacy and music sessions. Just occasionally a quiet learning atmosphere is hindered by unnecessary over-projection of the teacher's voice.
19. The best teaching occurs at Key Stage 2. The management of pupils is firm but good-humoured in almost all lessons. It is consistently of good or better quality in English and

mathematics. This makes a significant difference to the pace at which children make progress and develop the knowledge and understanding to apply literacy and numeracy skills in many different contexts. The quality of dialogue in literacy lessons in both the lower and upper junior classes about the structure and power of language is impressive. It is also very good in mathematics with a clear focus on enabling children to apply the four rules and prior knowledge of shape and measure in new situations. Pupils are intellectually challenged to extend their vocabulary, express ideas imaginatively, and find solutions to mathematical problems in oral and written tasks. Activities are planned to stretch the children and they do not find them easy. However, with sensitive encouragement from teachers and classroom assistants they persevere and make good progress.

20. Most morning sessions begin with children handing in homework from the night before. Children enjoy a variety of tasks to do at home, and are conscientious in completing their reading, spelling, and number practice targets. They also undertake research for other subjects including science and geography. The home/school partnership is making a positive difference to children's study skills and confidence to work independently of the teacher.
21. Just occasionally teaching at the upper junior stage does not cater effectively to meet the needs of a class of mixed-age and ability. Unrealistic expectations for pupils to sustain silent listening for long periods have an adverse effect on the quality of learning in religious education.
22. All teachers could improve upon the way they use time at the end of lessons to evaluate how well children made progress with their learning objectives, or to forecast what children are ready to learn next. They could also encourage them to take more initiative and undertake more collaborative tasks. Pupils' knowledge of their own learning is sound but with more focus on working collaboratively and shared evaluation of lessons they could be more involved in determining their future learning targets.

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

23. The school provides a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils, and provision soundly meets statutory requirements, including daily acts of collective worship. Since the time of the last inspection in 1996, the school has made very good improvements in some areas of curricular provision, most notably in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. This concentration on the core subjects has meant that in some other foundation areas, notably design and technology at Key Stage 2, there has been less attention paid to fully ensuring continuity and progression.
24. Policies are in place for all subjects and aspects, but many of them are out of date, and make very little reference to practical issues such as classroom organisation, or the systematic and progressive development of skills. Standards in the foundation subjects depend to a great extent on the knowledge and enthusiasm of individual teachers. For example, in physical education, games and dance are very strong, as is the performance aspect of music. The best planning in foundation subjects is in physical education, history and geography. The least satisfactory is the planning for balanced progression and continuity in design and technology, and to a lesser extent in art. Additionally, the appreciation of music and religious education needs more emphasis. There is also a lack of curricular guidance for the Foundation Stage, which leads to too narrow a curriculum in the six areas of learning for the Reception class.

25. The school caters very well for pupils with special educational needs, including the child with a statement. The co-ordinator for special educational needs, although only employed on a part-time basis, liaises closely with teaching staff, and leads a dedicated group of classroom assistants in providing very well for individual needs. The school is very aware of the principles of social inclusion, and when withdrawn for special support pupils, whenever possible, follow activities which relate to what is happening in the classroom. For those on the register of special educational needs, appropriate Individual Education Plans are drawn up, and regularly reviewed and adapted as necessary. Good use is made of government funding, for instance, the grant for Additional Literacy Skills is being very well used to give extra help to children who have underachieved in the national tests.
26. An area for development in special educational needs is the extent to which the pupils and their parents are actively involved in target setting and review. Some children are not at present fully aware of their individual targets. Not all parents sign the Individual Education Plan reviews and this should be addressed.
27. The development of literacy and numeracy skills is very good by the end of Key Stage 2. The teachers have been rigorous in applying the principles of the national strategies, and this has had a very positive effect on standards. Cross-curricular opportunities to promote literacy are exploited well, notably in history, geography and science, and aspects of numeracy feature very strongly in classroom displays. Plans are in hand to identify further opportunities in all areas of curriculum planning.
28. Another very strong aspect is the provision for extra-curricular activities. Clubs run on most days after school, enriching children's experience with activities including sport, music, nature and computer study. The 'Tea and Toast' club gives a good opportunity for the oldest pupils to practice for their end of key stage tests, and provides an enjoyable and confidence-building activity at the same time. Links with the local and wider community make a very positive difference to curricular quality in subjects such as history and geography. For example, work by the older children on investigating local rivers and the productive link with a school in Kenya.
29. Provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is generally good. The school succeeds in creating a positive atmosphere in which children learn successfully in a variety of groupings. These include distinguishing between right and wrong, developing good manners, and showing empathy and consideration for each other, teachers and visitors. The staff has sustained the best features of provision identified in the last report. The children are taught to be courteous, caring, honest and tolerant of social, cultural and economic diversity. These features are promoted through activities like raising money for charity, links with the Kenyan school, care for the environment, and the study of people's lives in the past, for example, working children in Victorian times. Aspects of personal, social and health education are dealt with sensitively, often through the medium of science topics. Sex and health education, including drug misuse, are taught in the context of family relationships and healthy living.
30. Children now need more opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility for their own learning, to collaborate and engage in dialogue about things which are important to them, and to develop their awareness and appreciation of art, design, music and religious belief.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Overall, the school takes satisfactory care of the safety, health and welfare of its pupils. It has maintained many of the good features of provision reported in 1996.
32. The Health and Safety Policy has recently been revised and effectively addresses many of the former key issues. However, further detail is required concerning responsibilities and the organisation that exists to implement this policy. One governor and one member of staff have assumed particular responsibility for health and safety. As a result regular risk assessments have been carried out. The classroom assistant, with designated responsibility for health and safety, has recently attended a first aid course and, consequently, a number of procedures have been reviewed and improved.
33. Accidents in school are properly recorded, and following any incidents the welfare of children is very well monitored. Where appropriate, parents are notified if staff have concerns following an injury or ill health. Fire prevention and control procedures are good. Regular drills are held, and children fully understand the action to be taken in the event of an emergency.
34. The school operates good security procedures. All visitors are required to sign the visitors' book and to wear an identity badge. Visitors are challenged when failing to display it by staff and pupils. Children's arrival and departure are properly supervised, as is morning play-time and lunch-time. Health, safety and welfare procedures have been established for school visits, and these meet statutory requirements.
35. The inspection team identified a number of potential safety hazards that require urgent attention. The gate providing access to the conservation area, and particularly the pond, needs to be made secure, to reduce the risk of entry by unsupervised younger children. Stacking of shelves in the infant activities' area poses the threat of falling objects, and procedures for the lifting of physical education equipment by Reception children require review. Dampness in the walls of Class 3, associated with a relatively low room temperature, provides an unsatisfactory and unhealthy working environment for pupils and adults alike.
36. The overview of child protection matters is satisfactory. A member of the teaching staff has designated responsibility for its co-ordination and the staff is vigilant and has a sound knowledge of the issues involved. There is, however, a lack of a policy and written procedures for child protection that are specific to the school and this needs to be rectified.
37. Procedures for promoting high attendance levels are very good. Pupil absence is rigorously followed up by phone calls to parents, and all absence is carefully monitored. Registers are generally accurate and completed to conform to statutory requirements.
38. Policies and procedures for bullying and harassment are in place and have recently been reviewed. They are effectively implemented, and any incidents of oppressive behaviour are immediately reported in the behaviour books completed by both teaching and non-teaching staff.
39. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are predominantly good. Information is effectively used to plan the curriculum of core subjects but is used less effectively in the curriculum planning of non-core subjects. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' progress in basic skills are good. The 'Tea and Toast' club is particularly effective in providing additional support to academic development. The monitoring and support for personal development is satisfactory. However, there are not enough opportunities for children to develop initiative and independence in their learning.

40. Very effective liaison exists with outside care and welfare agencies, and the school provides strong and sympathetic support to children who, in one way or another, may be disadvantaged. This ethos is shared by teaching staff, support workers and, not least, by the pupils themselves.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. Parents have a positive view of the school and they are very proud of its reputation for high achievement. They find staff approachable and helpful and believe that the school sets high expectations in terms of academic standards and work ethic. Also appreciated is the wide range of extra-curricular activities that supports formalised work in class. Children are perceived by their parents to enjoy school and the inspection team fully endorses this view.
42. However, a significant minority of parents has concerns with respect to standards of behaviour and discipline. In addition, a significant minority is dissatisfied with the quality of communication concerning their children's progress at school. The inspection team endorses the need for better information about progress but can reassure parents that poor discipline is not an issue. They do see a need for governors to ensure that parents are better informed of the approach to, and success of, the implementation of the behaviour, bullying and rewards policies.
43. The school has successfully forged effective links with the parent body, utilising to the full the potential for constructive informality that is possible in a relatively small rural school. The teaching staff is available for personal contact, both before and immediately after the school day. Parents make full use of this facility in order to discuss matters relating to their own children.
44. Parents are actively encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and they make a positive contribution to the quality of learning. This is achieved through parental support in the classroom, the school library and with outside visits. Recent excursions to the Millennium Dome and the Waterways Museum in Gloucester involved significant parental help. The success of these visits was in no small part due to the time and participation of parents. There is also an active Parent Teacher Association that positively contributes to good teacher/parent relationships through social and fund-raising events.
45. The quality of general information provided to parents through the twice-termly newsletter is good, with parents finding the information relevant and helpful. The annual governors' written report to parents is less satisfactory however, because of a number of significant omissions. Statutory information about the school's finances, for example, is not provided and there are shortcomings in the reporting of assessment information.
46. Written reports to parents provide a good summary of progress in core subjects, and identify specific difficulties where appropriate. The detailing of pupil progress in foundation subjects is less than satisfactory as the report forms at Key Stage 1 fail to provide a separate space for each subject in its own right. At both key stages there is no designated space for parents or children to make comments.
47. Parents' consultation meetings are held in the afternoon and well attended by mothers though most fathers find the timing difficult. Evening curriculum meetings, although not always well supported, have provided a good opportunity for parents to understand the content of the curriculum and how it is delivered in class.

48. Parents' contribution to children's learning is good. They regularly provide help with resources, for example providing old kitchen artefacts for the topic on the Victorians. Parents are equally supportive at home, providing good quality and regular support with reading and other homework activities. Many children also report positive parental help and encouragement with ICT.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. Since the last inspection the school has benefited from strong and stable leadership, and continuity of teaching. It has made good progress with most of the key issues such as to improve teaching at Key Stage 1, to provide more opportunities for pupils to practice basic skills and strengthen systems for monitoring teaching and learning. Delegation for the co-ordination of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the organisation of support for pupils with special educational needs has been particularly successful. Year 6 pupils now attain high academic standards by the time they leave for secondary school. Statutory assessment results are improving at a rate that exceeds the national average. Such success has earned the school a reputation for excellence and the roll has continued to grow.
50. It was from this secure base that the leadership of the school changed in the summer term 2000. The new headteacher has made a good start. She has carefully evaluated the current educational provision and has a clear picture of its many strengths but also an appropriate vision of what needs to be done to raise the quality of education further. For example, a personal induction programme and that for a newly qualified teacher, are important priorities for the year ahead. Her perceptive and consultative style of leadership and management is bringing staff and governors even closer together and they are forging a shared determination to move the school forward.
51. Governors have historically provided good support for the school and are generally effective in their partnership role. They have ensured careful financial administration, sound deployment of staff, and the effective targeting of resources to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. They take appropriate steps to provide for pupils' health and safety and highlight remedial work on the building that needs to be addressed by the Local Education Authority.
52. However, current members admit to having a limited knowledge of how to manage some of their many responsibilities. They do not know enough about statutory requirements related to publications for parents. For example, the financial information they include in the annual report to parents relates to the school's private fund rather than to funds delegated by the Local Education Authority and by national government grants. They do not yet have plans in place for determining the future staffing structure of the school; for managing the systematic review and evaluation of the success of many of the school's policies or for overseeing performance management. In the absence of a thorough audit governors cannot be sure of the sufficiency of resources for teaching and learning.
53. The governing body now has a new chair and vice-chair both of whom are highly committed to taking more of a proactive role than governors have previously done in shaping the future direction of the school. Already staff and governors have spent part of a training day working together to review the format and content of the School Improvement Plan. It has not been an easy document for them to understand and use. In this respect there has been inadequate progress since the time of the first inspection. Governors, like the headteacher, know they need to learn more about how to set out

their long-term vision. They need to identify more specific and achievable medium and short-term targets. Performance indicators will also help them manage change wisely and well.

54. Between them all the headteacher, staff and governors share a wide range of skills, qualities and aptitudes that should ensure a high chance of success with school improvement initiatives. The school already provides its community with good value for money and has strong potential to add even more value in the foreseeable future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to enhance the way it meets its educational aims the school should now :-
- i. Plan more explicitly to enable children to exercise initiative, gain confidence and skill in oral and practical work, and make consistently good progress in foundation subjects, particularly design and technology at Key Stage 2. (paragraph reference numbers: 8, 13, 21, 30, 76, 99, 101, 142)*
 - ii. Develop strategies to enable children to understand more clearly what they do well and what needs to be done to improve the pace and quality of their learning. (paragraph reference numbers: 22, 79, 90, 131)*
 - iii. Develop policy and guidance for all the areas of learning at the Foundation Stage to ensure consistently sound or better teaching and learning at Reception. (paragraph reference numbers: 9, 17, 68)*
 - iv. Systematically address the less effective aspects of school management to :-*
 - ensure that the professional development needs of newly appointed staff are effectively met; (paragraph reference numbers: 50, 119)*
 - ensure that governors and staff develop their knowledge and understanding of statutory responsibilities and capitalise on their wide range of skills and strong commitment to improve the school; (paragraph reference numbers: 45, 46, 52, 53, 111)*
 - ensure that there is a regular cycle of policy review, and evaluation of their impact on the quality of education and standards. (paragraph reference numbers: 24, 42, 107, 145)*

Minor issues

Governors may also wish to include in their action plan details of plans to improve aspects of provision identified in paragraph numbers 14, 26, 35 & 36.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	31	46	9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		118
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	95.80

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.20

National comparative data	94.40
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National comparative data	0.50
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Both tables give the percentage of days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2

Attainment data for boys at Key Stage 1, and for all pupils at Key Stage 2, in the form of numerical tables, is omitted from the report because the number of boys in Year 2 and pupils in Year 6 in 2000 was fewer than ten. This complies with DfEE Circulars 7/99 & 8/99.

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	9	11	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (92)	100 (92)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (85)	100 (100)	100 (92)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	95
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

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

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.60
Average class size	29.50

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	51

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
	£
Total income	222944
Total expenditure	220488
Expenditure per pupil	2004
Balance brought forward from previous year	9152
Balance carried forward to next year	11608

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	118
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	38	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	53	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	67	5	5	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	59	5	2	0
The teaching is good.	48	47	3	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	45	12	5	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	33	2	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	38	5	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	45	34	14	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	45	43	3	2	7

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

41	45	5	5	3
55	36	2	2	5

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

56. Samples of work by children just beginning Year 1 exemplify satisfactory attainment by the end of the Reception year. Results of assessment tests conducted in 1999-2000 show children's attainment on entry as close to typical norms. They scored within the average range in early reading, writing, number and social skills. Their performance by the end of the year was in-line with what was forecast for them based on starting levels. Children progress soundly but the school is not adding value at this stage.
57. The indicators at this early stage in the academic year are that the present 21 Reception children are on course to meet, but not exceed, the early learning goals published in the new Foundation Stage curriculum. They are making steady progress from their standards of attainment on entry in basic language and mathematical skills, and personal, emotional and social development. Children are also gradually developing the ability to observe and investigate, compare and contrast things around them, and discuss present and past experiences. In so doing they are laying the necessary foundations for National Curriculum subjects including science, ICT, art, history, geography, music, physical education and religious education.

Personal social and emotional development

58. The school's induction strategy is effective. Attendance at the part-time Rising Five group benefits children. They soon get to know the staff, become familiar with the way classroom activities are organised, and make friends with the children with whom they will be taught when admitted. These experiences help them to adjust to school expectations quickly and most settle happily. However, a small minority of parents reports that occasionally some children are upset by over-boisterous play.
59. Teachers and supporting adults share a sound understanding that areas of learning cannot be compartmentalised. They provide a range of activities in the daily programme of learning which encourage sharing, independence, listening and concentration. The children respond well when they are stimulated. A good example was when they went on a tour of the school to look at sources of light. They were quiet and co-operative as they moved around the school yet were eager to share what they knew of candle and electric light.
60. Some activities have a negative impact upon pupils' social and emotional development because they are inadequately matched to children's maturity and learning styles. Occasionally there is an over-expectation of these very young children to cope with quite formal tasks over too long a period. For example, children lost interest when trying to memorise words and phrases from an unfamiliar text. They manifested their frustration in various ways and one became very upset when chided.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Provision in this area is generally sound, with some strengths in the teaching of basic skill development but also significant weaknesses in the management of time for more creative and imaginative elements. Priority is given to National Curriculum objectives rather than to the stepping stones for four-year-olds described in the Foundation Stage goals for learning. In this respect the formal structure of the first part of literacy hour helps children to quickly get used to the language of books and to learn to recognise the

sounds of the alphabet. Children's progress in learning phonic skills and developing good powers of listening is quite good as a result.

62. Speaking and listening development is satisfactory yet could be more stimulating. It is managed mainly through whole-class exposition rather than through plenty of adult participation in less formal situations. Children are interested in communicating and use their powers of speech well when hearing and performing traditional rhymes or discussing the content of stories. For example, the humpty-dumpty nursery rhyme is popular and they recite it with enthusiasm. There are too few opportunities for well-planned role-play and as a result spontaneous and animated talk is not as central a part of children's learning as it should be.
63. Children practice pencil control regularly and are also encouraged to attempt to 'write' news and stories independently by making marks on a page. The teacher then transcribes into words for them and these sentences reflect children's individual ideas and experiences. This strategy works well. Already the higher achievers are independently writing their names, as well as attempting most letters, simple common words and phrases whilst lower achievers are copy-writing legibly. However, daily use of the 'Tractor' book practice pages for developing pencil control is not effective. In the absence of adult support children soon become bored with repetitive colouring-in and learn nothing new.

Mathematical development

64. Some good teaching was seen in this area of learning. Children were encouraged to join in mental and oral work during the opening session of numeracy hour and they participated with enthusiasm. They demonstrate a sound knowledge of counting, sorting and ordering numbers and objects for their age and time at school. Their use of mathematical language is developing well. For example, in lessons observed, they rose to the challenge to learn positional words. They enjoyed the practical experience of placing a toy bear under, over, between and next to a given object though they had tired by finishing time. During independent play on the computer a few boys sustained interest in moving and matching different shapes around the screen. In the time spent observing girls were not seen to use technology with as much regularity and this might be worth monitoring.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. There is good evidence of teachers providing practical activities in this area that children recall with enjoyment, and from which they use their senses to learn effectively. For example a listening walk, a quiz on sound, and experimenting with musical instruments, give children a variety of worthwhile experiences. They investigated different sounds in the environment and created their own sounds, distinguishing between plucking, blowing, shaking and beating. There is not as much evidence of children making independent choices with making and investigating activities, and free access to tools and materials is restricted to very short periods. Sand and water-play, for example, and experience with large constructional toys does not feature strongly in children's daily experience.

Physical development

66. Children enjoy gymnastic lessons in the hall and respond as well as they can to instructions or suggestions. They move at different speeds around the room making good use of space. The teacher soundly exploits opportunities to consolidate

mathematical language related to direction, speed, shape and size. However, sometimes instructions need explaining more clearly. Not all children understood sideways, for example, and this was not identified and clarified. The pace of lessons slows when children are setting out apparatus, some of which is too heavy for them to manage as yet. Learning objectives and assessment methods as described in lesson plans require more focus, and safety procedures in particular need further evaluation. Opportunities for outdoor play are provided at whole-school play-times, but are not planned into lesson objectives at this time of year.

Creative development

67. Of the lessons observed at this stage, a music session was the most successful for stimulation, pace, variety and clear learning intentions. All children were keen to participate and sustained their interest and concentration throughout. They gained confidence and skill in learning repetitive rhymes and keeping a beat. They worked well as a class and in small groups. Areas for improvement were more time for quiet reflection, more emphasis on children evaluating their own learning, and a more equitable balance of boys and girls being selected to demonstrate to the class. Overall standards achieved were good. Children have produced some colourful paintings as part of the work on humpty-dumpty, sound and light, and enjoy drawing and creating their own pictures from collage materials.

Other factors

68. Leadership of this key stage is sound. Parents' help is actively sought and support from home with reading is appropriately planned and productive. Classroom support assistants are also usually deployed well though sometimes are expected to sustain the same activity for too long. Management of the Foundation Stage is hindered by the lack of a written policy and guidance to shape long-term aims and objectives and explain how assessment should be organised and linked to lesson planning. Not enough consideration has been given by the school to ensuring that curricular opportunities are planned to be broad, balanced and relevant to the specific age group. Staff and governors now need to review provision using the criteria for successful learning set out in the new curricular guidance. Such action will identify the strengths that can be easily maintained and highlight aspects of learning that result in slower progress than children are capable of making.

ENGLISH

69. The school achieves good standards in English. They range from sound to very good, being predominantly satisfactory at Reception, good at Key Stage 1, and very good at Key Stage 2.
70. At Key Stage 2, in statutory tests, pupils' performance in 2000 far exceeded the national average and the average for similar schools. However, the Year 6 group was too small to attach too much significance to just one year's results. More reliable evidence of rising standards comes from the analysis of attainment over the period since the previous inspection. Standards are much higher now than in 1996, and all older pupils make very good progress in the junior stage. When compared to their prior performance at the end of Key Stage 1, the oldest pupils who were tested in both 1999 and 2000 achieved very highly in both reading and writing.
71. At Key Stage 1 this year girls and boys achieved highly in writing and well in reading compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools they were above average in writing and average in reading and these results reflect a pattern of

consistently satisfactory standards over a period of three to four years, and one where boys in particular have improved their performance.

72. Performance data, taken together with evidence from teachers' records and from samples of work, indicates how successful the school has been in identifying weaker aspects of attainment, setting improvement targets and implementing action to address them. A substantial majority of lower achievers progress very well to reach the expected standard at both key stages and at Key Stage 2 a high percentage of pupils continue to make rapid progress and achieve Level 5.
73. Overall, since 1996, strengths have been sustained and improvement in the areas identified as specific weaknesses has been good.
74. In the work seen during the inspection the best standards achieved were in the application of knowledge and skill in reading and writing in English and subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education. As they move through the school pupils develop their reading comprehension skills particularly effectively, as well as the ability to write for a range of different purposes. Many older infants are independent in their reading and writing. They are good at using their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to work out unknown words and to spell accurately. Their use of punctuation is sound. By the junior stage they read fiction with understanding and expression. They appreciate challenging texts including poetry and Shakespearean drama. In their writing they use a repertoire of interesting and imaginative vocabulary. They plan and develop ideas well, varying the structure of sentences and making good use of punctuation. When drafting, lower achievers spell less accurately than the higher achievers, but effective use of dictionaries and word processing skills result in good final efforts.
75. Handwriting is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Most pupils master letter formation in the lower infant class, and their script is legible and neat by Year 2. By the end of Key Stage 2 cursive writing is well established and this makes a positive difference to the volume and quality of the work produced in lessons and at home.
76. Listening skills are as good now as they were at the time of the first inspection. However, speaking skills are not as consistently demonstrated as previously reported. Causal factors are partly due to the increase in class size and also very much related to the differences in teaching methods deployed by different adults in English and in other subjects. Pupils need lots of prompting and stimulus in order to perform at their best. One very good example was when lower junior children came up with some imaginative suggestions for writing poetry after sharing an example together. Another was when older juniors discussed a video about Macbeth. At both key stages, children answer questions capably, are receptive to imagery in texts and are able to express a point of view when encouraged to do so using good vocabulary. However, they are not naturally curious or confident to ask questions of their own. They do not project their voices as well as they might and are not sufficiently experienced at organising for themselves the way they share and discuss ideas in groups.
77. Pupils behave very well in lessons, are attentive and co-operative, and their enthusiasm is predominantly good. They use time constructively and the vast majority concentrates well to cover a lot of ground during lessons. Children are also conscientious in completing homework tasks. They generally listen carefully to adults and are often animated and involved in dialogue with them. When given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups they collaborate effectively.
78. Overall, teaching is consistently good at both key stages and builds effectively on sound

practice in the Foundation Stage. Teachers plan lesson content well with appropriate reference to objectives from the National Literacy Strategy guidelines. Implicit attention to children's spiritual, social, and cultural development is good. However, teaching at Key Stage 2 stands out as being the most stimulating and effective. Teachers ensure children understand their high, but also realistic, expectations of what they can achieve at their own level. Pupils then work very hard, including those with speech and language related difficulties. Children with these difficulties are supported well by teachers and classroom assistants during specially devised tasks based on individual learning targets. All children, but particularly boys, respond positively to firm and sensitive management. They also show more confidence and communicate more effectively when working in pairs or small groups.

79. Pupils' work is marked regularly and most practice is thorough and comments helpful. Teachers also discuss errors with children, and one classteacher writes targets into the front of each child's exercise book as a constant reminder to work towards key goals. This works well. Strengths in linking assessment with planning outweigh weaknesses. Nonetheless teachers could improve the way in which they use time, especially at the end of lessons, to involve children more rigorously in evaluating what they have achieved and are ready to move on to next time. It would also ensure that all pupils practise their speaking skills in a meaningful context. This would enhance knowledge of their own learning as well as improve levels of motivation.
80. The quality and range of the curriculum is good and is especially broad after the lower infant stage. Much care is taken to plan work for pupils with special educational needs and to challenge the more able. The school fosters literacy skills in most subject areas and makes sound use of ICT. Nonetheless it could do even more to encourage pupils to make more extensive use of reference books and materials. Pupils could devise more independent research tasks and should also engage in more collaborative writing. Though there is sufficient fiction to match the needs of pupils non-fiction books are not as plentiful. This restricts the extent to which pupils manage their own learning when applying literacy skills in other subjects.
81. Leadership and management of English have both been of consistently high quality since the last inspection. Plans for the future reflect a commitment to striving for excellence. Success is assured if the school perseveres with its own objectives but also addresses the suggestions for improvement highlighted in this report.

MATHEMATICS

82. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in 1996, when standards at Key Stage 2 were broadly sound, while at Key Stage 1 they were unsatisfactory. The outcome of statutory assessment tests over the last four years show that attainment at Key Stage 1 has been consistently above the national average. There is a similar picture at Key Stage 2 where results have been consistently high when compared with national averages, and good when compared with similar schools. The number of children reaching the higher Level five is also very good.
83. Results of tests taken this year confirm this trend. The evidence suggests that children make good progress throughout the school, and very good progress in their last four years, culminating in the very good test results at the end of Key Stage 2. Number and algebra is particularly strong at Key Stage 1.
84. Overall, current standards at Year 2 and Year 6 exceed national expectations. The achievement of less able pupils is very good in relation to their prior attainment, and in

many lessons the majority of these children are achieving in-line with national expectations. More able children are also achieving well at both key stages. Pupils in their first term of Year 2 are able to count forwards and backwards in 2's 5's and 10's, up to and beyond 100. The more able are beginning to understand the process of division, and are confident in identifying the value of each digit in a number. In a lesson on imperial and metric measures, pupils in Year 6 were able to multiply and divide by hundreds and thousands, and convert centimetres to metres using their knowledge of decimals, for instance 375 centimetres to 3.75 metres. A group engaged on a practical activity to weigh objects, using thick and thin elastic bands, was able to independently devise a fair test, and then explain their findings to the rest of the class.

85. The scrutiny of children's work shows that they are developing good mathematical skills from an early age. By Year 2 they are setting work out neatly, and producing careful diagrams and charts. They are also starting to explain their thinking in simple ways, for example one child explained how he added five and ten in his head. Appropriate homework tasks are carried out with the help of parents, for example when identifying different coins by shape, size and colour.
86. By Year 6 the children are expected to correct mistakes for themselves, and explain in more detail how they solve problems. For instance, in work on percentages one lower achieving child explained, "I coloured 3 squares out of 100, which means I coloured 3% of the squares." By this stage the children usually set their work out very neatly, taking pride in well presented, clearly titled and dated pages.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is sound at Key Stage 1, and good or better at Key Stage 2. It reflects the teachers' very good subject knowledge and their expertise in teaching the basic skills. Teachers and assistants know children and their needs very well, and their procedures for marking work, assessing progress, and giving feedback, are very constructive and consistently implemented. Homework is set regularly and often involves parents in helping their children to complete the tasks. Where children with special educational needs have a problem with some aspect of mathematics, appropriate targets are set and followed up by the special educational needs co-ordinator or classroom assistants.
88. At Key Stage 1, a characteristic of the more successful lessons, is that classroom assistants and parent helpers are carefully briefed and given the resources to fulfil the required task. Where planning was rigorous in identifying objectives for different groups of children, learning was good and the children achieved well. Where the planning was less in evidence, particularly for the younger children, the pace of learning was sometimes too slow. For instance, a group of Year 1 children were confidently able to carry out a task to order three random numbers between 0 and 10, but with better time management they could have extended the exercise to 20, and therefore achieved more in the lesson.
89. At Key Stage 2, the planning for a lesson on measure enabled all ability groups to make good progress. During the lesson the more able Year 6 group worked independently on a practical task, the classroom assistant started a group of less able children on their activity and a Year 5 group carried out an investigation outside of the classroom. The teacher was able to circulate whilst this was happening to ensure that everyone understood what they were doing. At the end of the lesson each group reported back to the class, and was encouraged to use appropriate mathematical language when describing the activity. The majority of the class achieved very well at a level appropriate to their age and ability.

90. At both key stages children's attitude and behaviour are always positive and often very good. They listen without interrupting and value all contributions. They move around the classroom and handle apparatus sensibly and carefully. They are aware of class targets, but there is scope for improvement in their knowledge of their own individual targets, and the extent to which they are able to evaluate their own learning.
91. Management of the subject is sound, and very good in the way the National Numeracy Scheme has been successfully implemented, and learning has focused on the annual tests. The weekly homework club for Year 6 children, which concentrates on giving extra practice for the tests, is reinforcing this. The responsibility is shared and there is a need for the co-ordinator, in partnership with the headteacher, to analyse the results of tests and teacher assessments at both key stages. This will build on high standards and ensure relative weaknesses are jointly identified. The policy on mathematics is out of date and its lack of practical guidance does not help newly appointed teachers. It needs to be rewritten with due regard for such things as resources, and organisation to cater for the wide age and ability range in each class.
92. Overall, the school is adding considerable value in relation to standards of achievement on entry. It should continue with its efforts to identify relative weaknesses in provision, so that all parts of the curriculum, and all age groups, have a full share in the very good quality teaching and learning that takes place throughout the school.

SCIENCE

93. During the inspection lessons were observed at both key stages, books and display work were scrutinised and discussions were held with children and staff. The evidence collected suggests that the school has made good progress in science since the last inspection, when standards were sound at Key Stage 1, and good at Key Stage 2. The reported weakness in teaching at Key Stage 1 has been addressed.
94. Results of the national tests taken over the last four years show a steadily improving trend, with standards significantly above national averages. Teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 show that the children, including some with special educational needs, consistently reach the expected level. The percentage achieving Level 2 was excellent this year but the number reaching the higher Level 3 was low. The school needs to monitor how much this lack of higher scores is due to what appears to be very rigorous marking by the teacher or a failure to stretch pupils sufficiently.
95. At Key Stage 2 the results have been even better. Scores in the tests over the last four years show that the school is consistently well above national averages in the percentage of children reaching the expected Level 4, and in those reaching the higher Level 5.
96. Explanations for these good results can be found in the high expectations and good planning of the teaching staff. They are rigorous in ensuring the full coverage of all attainment targets. A continuous process of ongoing assessment, often through the use of regular assessment tests, enables the teachers to identify weaknesses and reinforce learning where necessary. Homework is used creatively to further reinforce and enhance learning. Resources and support staff are used well, particularly in catering for children with special educational needs. Marking is of a good standard, often encouraging the children to think more deeply about the task, and promoting very high standards of presentation in the workbooks.
97. The lessons seen, particularly at Key Stage 2, confirm that these strengths are carried

through into the classroom. In a lesson about teeth, good preparation and skilful use of resources, including a variety of animal skulls, ensured that almost all the children ended the lesson with a thorough understanding of the names of different kinds of teeth, and their different functions in humans and animals. Similarly, in a lesson where the older children learned about sound, the good organisation enabled all the class to be fully involved and focused on the objectives. By the end of the lesson they had made good progress in understanding that musical instruments make sounds in different ways, such as blowing, banging, shaking and scraping. Other good features of the lesson were the way in which a child with a statement of special educational needs was fully involved, and the effective use made of a computer program to identify the sounds of different musical instruments.

98. The school makes good use of opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy through science. The standard of written work in workbooks is high, and includes good examples of writing for a purpose, such as describing the outcomes of an experiment on evaporation. Graphs and charts are widely used to disseminate scientific data, such as those on the colour of children's eyes. However, more could be made of opportunities to develop children's speaking skills, by giving more scope for discussion and dialogue.
99. A weaker feature in the lessons observed, and in the children's exercise books, is the relative lack of stimulating extension tasks for the more able. Pupils need to be given more responsibility for their own learning, and to be encouraged to look for alternative ways of doing things which may extend their thinking. There is on occasions, an over-reliance on printed materials. For instance, in the lesson on teeth, the older children could have written their own sentences rather than simply filling in a prepared sheet.
100. Management of the subject is good, and has successfully promoted high standards throughout the school. The headteacher has responsibility for this subject at present, but intends to delegate to another member of staff as soon as possible. Since taking over as co-ordinator she has observed science in every class and given feedback to teachers on strengths and weaknesses. For instance she has identified a need for more rigour in the use of scientific language, and an over-emphasis on recording in the younger classes, at the expense of experimentation. Resources are generally well used. However, a full audit is now needed to identify gaps and make sure that all staff, especially those new to the school, are aware of what is available. The nature area gives strong support to scientific and environmental activities, and is regularly used by all classes. Visits to places of interest, for example museums, are used well to enhance the curriculum, and the school has combined with a school in Kenya, in an interesting study of habitats in the school grounds.

ART & DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. At the time of the last inspection in 1996, standards in art, and design and technology, were judged as being good, but with some specific areas of weakness. The school has not made satisfactory progress in these subjects since that time, particularly in design and technology where standards at Key Stage 2 have declined, or in the creative and imaginative aspect of art.
102. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection. No design and technology lesson was observed. However, taking into account work on display, discussions with staff and pupils and analysis of teachers' planning, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that standards overall are in-line with national expectations, except in design and technology at Key Stage 2, where standards are unsatisfactory.

103. At Key Stage 1 pupils are developing their creativity by learning about and applying a range of techniques. Sound standards are demonstrated by work on display, such as collages, painted self-portraits, observational drawings and leaf printing. Good links with literacy and numeracy are in evidence, for instance, the collage is used to illustrate numbers, and the portraits are accompanied by lively, word-processed descriptions. Pupils are beginning to grasp the basic skills of planning and designing, and understand the need to establish a purpose before beginning a new project. In their work last term on glove puppets, and in this term's work on musical instruments, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 show that they are able to generate ideas and plan what to do next, selecting materials suitable for the purpose. They use pictures and words to describe their designs, and make good use of tools to assemble and combine materials in a variety of ways. They are beginning to understand the need to evaluate, and sometimes to modify their designs.
104. At Key Stage 2, pupils are using a wider range of materials, tools and techniques effectively, including clay, pencils, pastels and paint, and a variety of collage, printing and needlework. They have a sound understanding of colour mixing, and of the range of tones and shades within colours, such as in their pattern work on shades of blue. They have made use of a computer program to design covers for a book, and are developing a portfolio of work in sketchbooks. There was some evidence of artists' work being used as a creative stimulus, but this area is underdeveloped, and Year 5 and Year 6 pupils were unable to name a famous artist, or to recall having tried to incorporate a particular style into their own work. They also have an unsatisfactory level of knowledge and understanding of the Programme of Study for design and technology. They can recall making some items such as a model car, but very little about the developing and planning stage, and nothing about any modifications, or evaluation of fitness for purpose.
105. In the lesson seen at Key Stage 2, the objective, to use a well known artist's style as a starting point for the children's own work, was appropriate. It also made good use of cross-curricular links with history by using William Morris, a Victorian artist, as the inspiration and it was well researched and planned by the teacher. There was however, no sign that the pupils were led to a real appreciation of the exceptional beauty of the artist's designs, and the lesson failed to inspire their imagination. Teachers' medium-term planning in both subjects is sound, but insufficient attention is paid to ongoing assessment, and then using that assessment to inform future planning. Planning is not rigorous enough, particularly at Key Stage 2, to ensure that there is a steady progression of skills and knowledge throughout the school. This is most marked in design and technology.
106. Many children enjoy the activities, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to the curriculum. Food technology is a relatively strong aspect of provision, and the pupils observed making biscuits under the care of a learning support assistant, were enjoying a well-supervised activity. There is some evidence of art being used to enhance the spiritual, social and cultural aspects of provision. For instance, a 'picture of the week' is on display outside the hall. This would be more effective if it was accompanied by some sort of written appreciation of the particular qualities that led to this picture being chosen.
107. The school needs to ensure that these curriculum areas are co-ordinated by designated staff with enthusiasm and expertise. Policies need rewriting to include a clear progression of skills and knowledge, and to ensure full coverage of all the Programmes of Study. Understandably, the emphasis over the last few years has been on the core

subjects, but the school now needs to take action to redress the balance and to make sure that sufficient attention is given to the creative and imaginative aspects of the curriculum.

GEOGRAPHY

108. No geography lessons were observed during the inspection but a discussion with junior children about their work was highly illuminating. It revealed their considerable enjoyment and knowledge of the subject. They were particularly appreciative of opportunities for individual and group investigation and enquiry, and chances to blend fieldwork and mapping skills with literacy, numeracy, and art skills. For example, their work on rivers and waterways is well organised and neatly presented and includes evidence of topical discussion and writing about the impact of recent floods on local communities. A range of evidence shows that, as at the time of the previous inspection, standards are good at both key stages. Children reach the level expected in all the prescribed aspects of geography. Their interest and commitment, fostered by effective teaching, enables them, especially those with special educational needs, to make good progress and achieve well.
109. The teaching of geography is carefully planned and organised notably in the way lesson time and resources are deployed to exploit links with literacy and numeracy and to foster spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, at Key Stage 1 younger infants are being appropriately introduced to investigating places. They have devised and answered questions about how much traffic uses the road outside the school. They surveyed passing vehicles and recorded their findings in a variety of ways including tally charts, pictorial graphs and diagrams of the road. They have related their findings to understanding the importance of observing road signs and ensuring road safety.
110. Junior pupils build on their enquiry and mapping skills through, for example, contrasting studies of their own environment with that of a school in Kenya. Direct links with this rural school, and the accounts of visits to it by one of the teachers, is very successful in stimulating pupils' interest. They have written well about its topography, climate and people's way of life. They gained much from a visit to Gloucester Docks in their study of waterways. They habitually make notes to draft key facts and opinions using reference materials such as books, newspaper articles and videos. Then they refine the findings to include them in their special topic books. They conduct more challenging surveys than the younger children. A very good example is when they collected waste from within and outside the school, to sort, classify and weigh it, and to investigate how waste can be recycled.
111. The subject is effectively led and managed. Pupils' progress is tracked and plans are monitored to ensure continuity. The policy has been revised to take account of changes to the National Curriculum. However, there are aspects of management that still need to be improved. There is an urgent need for an audit of resources and a review of the way reports to parents are written so that they provide a clear picture of children's annual progress and revised targets.

HISTORY

112. Strengths in provision and satisfactory standards have been sustained since the previous inspection and the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing recommendations for developing the subject.

113. Although no lessons were observed, sound samples of work were available from all classes showing appropriate coverage of the Programmes of Study. In addition there were relevant displays in classrooms that provided indicators of how the subject is organised and taught. Taken together there was sufficient evidence to show that pupils work at a good pace, and by the end of Key Stage 2 the volume of work produced is good. Pupils make effective use of literacy skills in their report writing, writing in biographical style, and when comparing and contrasting information. They are beginning to distinguish between fact and opinion. Their individual efforts are sound and all make steady and sound progress in relation to their differing levels of prior attainment.
114. At Key Stage 1 younger pupils' writing and creative work shows an early sense of chronology and awareness of changes in their own lives. Older infants have a deeper understanding of the passage of time. They know that it is divided into periods such as Saxon, Tudor and Victorian times. Their writing shows they have researched the life and times of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale. They have extended understanding of changes in lifestyles by hearing at first hand about the work of a nurse now. They produced work of a good standard when describing how care in hospitals has changed since the Crimean War.
115. At Key Stage 2 pupils extend their understanding of chronology, of the impact of past events in Britain and other parts of the world, and broaden the range of ways in which they record and organise findings and conclusions. They are more precise in the use of dates. In work on the Tudors, for example, they use terminology such as decade and century. They show empathy as well as sound understanding of evacuation and rationing on the lives of families during the Second World War.
116. Children are generally positive about the subject, particularly when presented with stimulating lines of enquiry. They value opportunities to handle and investigate artefacts from the past and especially appreciate visits or visitors when they can find answers to their own questions. They enjoy independent research using books, newspapers and ICT but feel they do not do this often enough.
117. Teachers plan topics and themes well and satisfactorily meet the needs of classes of mixed-age and ability. They try to provide children with interesting resources and involve families effectively in this respect. For example, in Class 1 children brought in photographs of themselves from birth onwards. These photographs helped to foster interest in the change seen as they develop. Junior children have obviously been introduced to ration books, read articles written during the war about The Blitz, and studied a poem about an evacuee. However, starting points for learning are generally the same for all children. They frequently use photocopies of pictures and pages from books selected by the teacher. There is little evidence of children devising their own lines of enquiry or continuing research at home if they have not had time to complete work in class. The oldest pupils in particular could be encouraged to analyse and interpret information in more depth such as to show their views about how entrenched prejudices can adversely effect people's lives. Junior pupils could easily take more responsibility for their own learning.
118. Teachers monitor pupils' performance by regular marking and retention of work. However, the way in which they record their assessment of pupils' progress and communicate their findings in end of year reports to parents is less than satisfactory. It is particularly poor at Key Stage 1 where comments are so general that they could be about any subject.
119. Most aspects of leadership and management are sound. Where there is a need for

improvement is in the range and quality of resources and in the way they are audited and catalogued. Teachers new to the school need to be able to locate what they need for lessons quickly and easily. More emphasis on monitoring the extent to which there are enough opportunities for open-ended enquiry would also make a qualitative difference to the standards pupils achieve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

120. The school has made satisfactory progress in ICT since it was last inspected in 1996. It has been developed throughout the school, and the shortcomings at Key Stage 1 have been addressed. The lack of control devices, highlighted in the last report, is still a weakness. The Key Stage 2 children are making regular use of the computer suite at the local secondary school and a computer club runs once a week, after school, for the older children. Although no lessons were seen, enough evidence was gathered from displays, books, observations around the school, teachers' planning and talking to children, to be able to say with confidence that standards overall are sound.
121. Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to the use of ICT. At Key Stage 1 children regularly use computers to enhance the learning in other lessons. For example, in mathematics a program was used to consolidate counting in twos, fives and tens. Pupils are able to create simple bar graphs on the different colours of cars, and label and classify geometric shapes. They can enter, store and retrieve text and know how to delete and amend as necessary. When writing descriptions of themselves they are able to use a variety of fonts of different colours and styles.
122. At Key Stage 2 the younger children are able to use ICT to organise and present their work in a variety of forms. For instance in their work on eye colour, they have produced bar charts, pie charts, frequency diagrams and pictograms. The older children are able to send messages using e-mail, and log on to the Internet to find information. They are developing confidence and independence in the use of technology in many different areas of their work. They can use a digital camera, and arrange text and pictures on a page in a way that shows their awareness of the need for quality in presentation.
123. A particular strength is the way in which computers are used to enhance the learning of children with special educational needs. Very good use is made of a variety of programs for language and mathematics. One child with a statement of special educational need has a laptop computer. It enables her to improve her keyboard skill and to successfully participate in similar tasks to her peers.
124. A relative weakness is the lack of provision for control technology. The school has no floor robot, and makes only limited use of other control programs such as 'Logo'. This means that achievement in this aspect of technology is below expectation throughout the school.
125. The staff, including non-teaching staff, has a fair level of expertise, but plans are in hand to enhance knowledge and understanding through extra training. Planning is sound with ICT being fully included in the medium and short-term planning. The policy has recently been updated, and the plans for future development are generally sound. They include an aim to set up a computer suite, to increase links with other local schools and to encourage more parental help with the after-school club. The headteacher has a temporary role as co-ordinator, and is aware of the need to give the full responsibility to a member of staff as soon as possible.

MUSIC

126. Overall standards are good. They meet and often exceed expectations at both key stages. The best features of teaching and learning have been maintained since the previous inspection. There has also been a marked improvement in the extent to which pupils perform and respond creatively to music and in the way the scheme of work ensures progression and a reasonable balance in the experiences offered.
127. There is evidence of good levels of achievement at Key Stage 1. Children sing with appropriate expression in a range of compositional styles including folk and music-hall. They sing well in unison and are able to keep to parts when performing simple rounds. Most listen carefully and can accurately mimic quite demanding rhythmic patterns clapped or rapped by the teacher. Children accompany themselves competently using tuned and untuned instruments, and make good use of subject terminology.
128. Though no lessons were observed at Key Stage 2, many children were seen involved in musical activities outside lessons. They are clearly adding to their already substantial knowledge and understanding of music and its contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural aspects of life. There are good links with other subjects especially dance in physical education. The choir is drawn from across the key stage. It practises skills such as phrasing and modifying the tone and texture of the voices regularly, and has a sense of togetherness. Junior pupils perform regularly at assembly and are confident to play tuned instruments such as recorders and a harp, before an audience. They read notation and write their own compositions. Pupils with special educational needs in linguistic or other aspects of learning are encouraged to develop their special aptitudes in music and this enhances self-image and pride in personal achievement.
129. Most children have very positive attitudes to the subject, and infants are wholeheartedly enthusiastic when joining in songs with a fast tempo and lots of body percussion. They rise to the challenge of some complicated rhythms. They show a reasonable degree of self-control but just occasionally their good spirits spill over into restlessness and they have to be cautioned to calm down and concentrate. The vast majority responds quickly and is soon engrossed in the next activity.
130. Subject expertise is a strong contributory factor in the good quality of experience provided. The teaching is characterised by a personal flair and commitment which children find infectious. Lessons proceed at a rapid pace, with lots of variety in the musical content and in the organisation of working groups. The help of support staff and volunteers is actively encouraged both in lessons and with extra-curricular activities. A very good example was when teacher and assistant each conducted rounds. Their co-operation enabled children to keep time and remember their lyrics. Visits are used very effectively. Teachers realise how important it is to provide children with high quality role-models. For example, a brass ensemble gave a concert and explained their special techniques for playing and managing their heavy wind instruments.
131. The quality and range of curricular experience provides very well for children of different aptitudes and ability. Leadership and management are good. Points for further development are the extent to which time is built into lessons for children to reflect on the quality of their learning. The spiritual dimension is not sufficiently exploited. Children could also be more involved, for example, in evaluating their breathing and phrasing, and the way they control or create sound. Most of all they need to share their feelings relating to the many different kinds of music they hear.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. At the time of the last inspection standards in physical education were good throughout the school. From the evidence gathered by observing lessons and clubs, looking at teachers' planning and talking to staff, children and parents, it is clear that those standards have been maintained, and in the case of games, enhanced.
133. At Key Stage 1 pupils understand the importance of warming-up, have good awareness of space, and are able to move around the hall in a variety of ways. They are able, with the teacher's help, to get out apparatus and place it in the correct position. They do this with care and skill, although some of the apparatus is rather heavy for the younger children. They are showing good awareness of their bodies, and are able to carry out a series of movements in gymnastics, with good control. They use the apparatus skilfully, and are learning to combine changes of direction with changes of speed when performing a sequence of movements. The more able are beginning to understand that some movements are better carried out using a sideways motion rather than backwards and forwards.
134. At Key Stage 2 children are showing a greater appreciation of the quality of movement, and the way it can be used to express events and feelings. They are able to evaluate their own and other children's sequences of movements, taking into account the purpose of the exercise. In dance lessons they are good at developing an idea, such as when devising movements for windy and stormy weather. They work independently in pairs or groups, are animated and enthusiastic and display very good co-ordination and technique. In an after-school football club, the older key stage children displayed high levels of skill. They showed good ball control in a dribbling exercise, and a high level of maturity in their understanding of positional roles. This also applied in their co-operation with team members when passing and running into position.
135. Almost all the children enjoy the activities planned for them, and can talk with enthusiasm about their experiences. All pupils, including boys and girls and those with special educational needs, are fully included in lessons and given equal access to opportunities inside and outside school time.
136. Teaching in the subject is at least sound and often good, with particular strengths in dance and games. Teachers display a good understanding of the National Curriculum requirements. Lessons are well planned to include warming-up exercises and skills practice and development, and the better lessons give opportunities for children to evaluate their own learning and progress. Teachers' expectations are high, and they are particularly good at encouraging and raising the self-esteem of pupils with special educational needs. They are often aware of the need to give special encouragement to particular groups of pupils, for instance, to boys in dance or to girls in games like football and rugby. The high level of skill and motivation demonstrated by the staff is matched by the willingness to give of their time to support a variety of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' special aptitudes are encouraged and celebrated at assembly.
137. The curriculum co-ordinator gives a very strong lead through her high level of expertise and enthusiasm. Where she teaches children at both key stages, for instance in games, she is able to monitor standards of teaching and learning effectively. Future improvements should include more opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in other aspects of the subject, particularly gymnastics, in order to ensure high standards are maintained. The policy needs updating and should include an audit of resources and a thorough risk assessment. The facilities at the school are adequate. The hall is spacious and has a reasonable range of equipment, but outdoor facilities are limited and the playing field rather small for events such as Sports Day. However, the school makes good use of outside facilities through such things as visits to other schools and

to the local swimming pool. Good use is also made of visitors for coaching football, rugby and cricket.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. During the course of the inspection just one religious education lesson was observed at the higher end of Key Stage 2. In addition, samples of work and reports on pupils' progress were evaluated. A discussion was held with a group of older juniors about their knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards the subject.
139. Overall there is adequate evidence to show that standards meet the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Teaching and learning is generally at least satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons to match the two new attainment targets 'Learning about religion' and 'Learning from religion' and many lessons are taught well with positive outcomes.
140. At Key Stage 1 pupils make sound progress in acquiring knowledge of Christian beliefs and customs, and in developing their understanding of special occasions. Much of the work is appropriately oral and pictorial though when given a written task, children achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Examples seen of their messages in a 'Congratulations' card for a new baby were carefully and thoughtfully produced. They reflected good quality discussion about how special a new addition to the family is. At the same time children also learnt more about the religious custom of christening.
141. At Key Stage 2 younger juniors have received some imaginative and stimulating teaching about world religions, based, for example, on a video about being a Christian, and pictures of a mosque and a synagogue. They have considered the significance of prayer in the context of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Pupils have composed their own examples, based on some they had read and shared with the teacher.
142. Over the key stage children hear many stories from the Bible and each of its testaments, and recount them in their own words. They have also compared and contrasted places of worship belonging to Christians, Jews and Muslims, and made their own labelled drawings of special artefacts and symbols revered by the different faiths. Pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of symbolism. However, at upper Key Stage 2 there is little to distinguish between the work of the higher or lower achievers other than the accuracy of the spelling and fluency with language. Judging from the work in their folders children receive sound instruction but the style of teaching is directed rather than based on providing opportunities for open-ended enquiry and the exploration of opinions about the significance of religion.
143. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject differ between the key stages. Younger children enjoy their work, especially the focus on special celebrations and family relationships. Older pupils are more ambivalent. They enjoy visits to places of worship when they are taken to the local church and they also enjoy Harvest Festival.
144. Pupils do not always enjoy lessons. This was the case in the lesson observed. It was meticulously planned in terms of its content about how God is perceived by major world religions. The teacher worked very hard, emphasising key vocabulary and projecting her voice very well. She provided a variety of worksheets matched to group reading levels. Despite this effort the way the lesson developed during the time it was observed was unsatisfactory. There was barely a minute for children to speak and the sheer volume of what they were expected to retain and understand was unrealistic. Children were quiet but the quality of their listening could not be assessed because they were unable to share ideas, place this lesson in the context of prior learning, or to ask questions. In

dialogue with pupils at the end of a long lesson they could share what they had written about the Muslim prophet Muhammad but lacked either confidence, interest, or enough experience to explain the purpose of religious education or what they gain from it. In this respect provision seems temporarily to have deteriorated since the last inspection due to the absence of the regular teacher.

145. The co-ordinator is currently on maternity leave but historically the subject has been soundly managed and led. In her absence the headteacher has a satisfactory overview of what is taught and the standards achieved. The action plan for the subject has well defined objectives. It has a clear focus on enabling staff to become familiar with the new Gloucestershire syllabus and on the review of current school policy and practice. There is detailed guidance to accompany the syllabus and it should provide staff with a useful framework from which to evaluate provision. It will be essential to monitor and improve the effectiveness of the subject's contribution at upper Key Stage 2 to pupils' spiritual and personal development.