

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St MICHAEL'S CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY  
SCHOOL**

Easthampstead

LEA area: Bracknell Forest

Unique reference number: 110010

Headteacher: Mr Steve Litson

Reporting inspector: Rajinder Harrison  
18059

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 224366

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Church of England Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	5-11years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Crowthorne Road Easthampstead Bracknell Berkshire
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Steve Wells
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> June 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Rajinder Harrison 18059	Registered inspector	Science English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Brian Rance 01305	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Monica Mullan 23026	Team inspector	English, Art and Design, Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Rod Braithwaite 4099	Team inspector	Mathematics, Geography, History	How good are curricular opportunities offered to pupils?
John Wilkinson 7069	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology, Design and Technology, Physical Education, Areas of Learning for Children in the Foundation Year, Special Educational Needs.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Michael's Primary School is of average size and provides full time education for 212 pupils, aged from 4 to 11 years. As a result of the school's affiliation to the Church of England, the pupils come from a wide geographical area, reflecting broadly average social circumstances. In January 2000 3% of pupils were eligible for free school meals but this figure has this term increased to over 8%, which is still below the national average. The school has very few pupils who have English as an additional language. There are forty-three pupils (20%) on the register for special educational needs (average), three (1.4%) of which have statements (about average). Few pupils leave or join the school other than at the start of reception, and generally the school enjoys a relatively stable situation with families eager to join the school. Most children have pre-school education and the overall attainment of children on entry to the reception class is broadly average. Because of the admission arrangements in the area, children's time in the reception class varies from one term half days only to three terms. The school has a significant minority of higher attaining pupils.

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

St Michael's is a school with a number of strengths and some weaknesses. Pupils make steady progress within a secure, caring atmosphere where good relationships engender a positive attitude to school. Teaching is sound overall with a number of good features. Parents make a significant contribution to the work of the school. By the time pupils leave St Michael's overall standards are broadly in line with similar schools. Standards are better than national averages in English and science. The headteacher, governors and staff have worked hard to improve the school environment and sustain pupils' overall attainment. They now need to focus more concertedly on raising standards throughout the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Standards in English are very good and in science good at the end of Key Stage 2; and standards in history and design and technology are good throughout the school.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they learn effectively.
- Relationships between all members of the school community are good, encouraging pupils' positive attitudes to school and learning.
- The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good overall, and pupils enjoy the social opportunities the school provides.
- The school maximises its financial resources to develop the school and meet set targets.

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

- The school does not focus sufficiently on the raising of standards; expectations are generally not high enough, especially of higher attaining pupils and pupils at Key Stage 1; procedures for monitoring standards are unsatisfactory.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are unsatisfactory in most subjects.
- Co-ordinators' roles are not yet fully effective in all subjects and insufficient time is given to the monitoring of teaching and learning.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its last inspection in June 1996.

All requirements of the National Curriculum are met and schemes are being updated to comply with Curriculum 2000. Results of national standard tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved. The literacy and numeracy strategies have had positive impact on standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design have improved. Progress throughout the school is generally satisfactory, but it is particularly good at the end of Key Stage 2 where teaching is often very good. Teaching has improved with no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. Provision for ICT is now good and evidence indicates the skills are being integrated across the curriculum.

Whole school planning is now in place and teaching is better organised to ensure pupils build on prior learning. However, the lack of emphasis on raising standards, with teachers not having consistently high expectations, is still evident in many lessons. Assessment procedures remain at an early stage of development and targets for improvement are not sufficiently challenging for many pupils, especially pupils at Key Stage 1 and higher attaining pupils throughout the school. While the school has successfully established satisfactory procedures for monitoring of English and mathematics, and all co-ordinators have opportunity to monitor planning in other subjects, there is still not enough rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning to identify and address weaknesses.

Energy and resources have been directed to improving the accommodation deficiencies identified in the previous inspection and accommodation is now of a satisfactory standard.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools*
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	C	A	C
mathematics	C	C	C	E
science	D	C	B	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

\* Similar schools with up to 8% of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

Baseline assessment data shows that attainment of children on entering the school is broadly average, although there is a significant minority of higher attaining pupils. Children make sound progress and standard of work seen is satisfactory overall.

From the results in 2000, at the end of Key Stage 2, the school has achieved standards that are well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics when compared with schools nationally. Standards are in line with similar schools in English and science, but are well below in mathematics. The concentration on work in English has been effective in raising standards and progress is satisfactory overall, and it is good at the end of the key stage.

The picture at Key Stage 1 is broadly average in English, below average in mathematics, and well below average in science. Progress at Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. However, there is evidence the standards in mathematics are improving as a result of the implementation of the numeracy strategy.

Standards are good in history and the good standards seen in design and technology in the previous inspection have been sustained. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects.

The overall trend in results, whilst showing considerable variation from year to year, is broadly in line with the national picture. While the school has met its targets at the end of Key Stage 2 this year, targets are not challenging enough, especially at Key Stage 1.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is generally good and they respond well to the guidance they receive from adults both in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and with all adults are good. Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and are caring towards each other
Attendance	Attendance levels are very good, and pupils are punctual in arriving at school

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons observed during inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. This is an improvement from the previous inspection where 16% of teaching was unsatisfactory. Forty-six per cent of the teaching seen was good or better, with 11% of this good teaching being very good.

The teaching for children in the reception class is generally good for literacy and numeracy and children make good progress in these skills. Whilst teaching seen during the inspection was good, teaching overall is satisfactory. Children's overall progress is satisfactory even though they do not have access to a balanced curriculum in the term they attend only part-time.

Teaching in English and science at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. Teaching in English at Key Stage 1 and mathematics at both key stages is satisfactory overall. Effective lessons, having a positive impact on pupils' learning, were observed in both key stages. Whilst lessons seen in science at Key Stage 1 were broadly satisfactory, overall evidence indicates the impact of teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils make unsatisfactory progress.

Where teaching is good or better, pupils are managed well, lessons are brisk and challenging, and led enthusiastically. Work in these lessons is generally well matched to pupils' needs and support staff are used to good effect in helping individual and groups of pupils make appropriate progress. In some lessons, teachers' planning is not precise enough, so the pace of learning is slow or work is not well matched to pupils' needs. In these lessons teachers' expectations are generally not high enough for all pupils to make appropriate progress. In many lessons there is not enough challenge for the significant minority of higher attaining pupils. Teaching is generally appropriate to help pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

Teaching in ICT and art and design has improved and is now satisfactory. Teaching in design and technology is good, resulting in achievement that exceeds average expectations at both key stages. Teaching in history is greatly enhanced by the range of 'hands on' experience pupils have, contributing to achievement of high standards.

Homework is not used consistently to support learning in all classes and this is a weakness.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school provides a broad and reasonably balanced curriculum for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum in the foundation stage is not well balanced in the term when children attend mornings only. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. Visits to places of interest and the range of visitors to the school contribute effectively in enriching the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. All pupils on the special educational needs register have individual education plans, and work is generally well matched to meet their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes satisfactory provision for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good, resulting in the good relationships that exist in the school. Provision for pupils' social development is good and provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. Day-to day routines are good and support a safe friendly environment. Relationships with parents and the community are good. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress, while broadly sound for English and mathematics, are unsatisfactory overall and the use of assessment to set individual targets for improvement is not effective. Attendance is monitored well.

Parents make a valuable contribution to the work of the school and support pupils' learning very effectively.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound overall. The school achieves many of its aims, particularly those related to providing a happy caring environment. Although the role of co-ordinators is well established in English and mathematics, there are weaknesses in the monitoring and development of several other subjects and there is insufficient focus on raising standards. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and has the capacity to improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides sound support to the school and carries out its legal responsibilities well. Governors play an important role in forming the school development plan and ensuring targets are met. Their role in monitoring of standards is unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is insufficient monitoring of teaching in order to identify weaknesses and ensure pupils achieve high standards.
The strategic use of resources	Administration of financial resources is good, and very good use is made of specific grants to support developments. The principles for obtaining 'best value' are generally followed through appropriately although criteria for measuring outcomes of spending are not always clearly established at the outset.

There are sufficient numbers of teachers and very good number of support staff to support learning. Resources for learning are adequate overall, and are good for ICT. The accommodation is satisfactory and much improved since the previous inspection, although space is at a premium in some rooms where class sizes are around thirty-four pupils. The school environment is very attractive, and well maintained, and the grounds provide very good facilities for outdoor play and environmental science.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The children like going to school and make good progress</li><li>• Behaviour in the school is good</li><li>• Teaching is good</li><li>• The school is easy to approach with questions and problems</li><li>• The school expects children to work hard</li><li>• The school is led and managed well</li><li>• The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A few parents feel there are insufficient extra-curricular activities.</li><li>• A few parents do not feel the school works closely with them</li><li>• A significant number of parents do not feel they are kept well informed about their children's progress.</li><li>• A significant number of parents are not satisfied with homework arrangements in the school.</li></ul>

The great majority of parents are pleased with most aspects of the school and inspectors' judgements broadly support parents' positive views. Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils make satisfactory progress. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Arrangements for homework are inconsistent, but when given it supports and extends pupils learning. The inspection team endorses parents' concerns.

From evidence gathered during the inspection, parents make a valuable, and much appreciated contribution to the work of the school. The inspection team feels the range of extra-curricular activities is very good, and the school has sound reasons for limiting provision at Key Stage 1. Arrangements for informing parents about children's progress are being reviewed, but the quality of the assessment information is currently unsatisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children enter the school in reception, in the term they are five years old, the majority are of generally average attainment. Their attendance in the first term is part-time. Those who spend three terms in the reception year achieve all the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Those who start in the summer term, prior to entering Key Stage 1 in the September, have limited time to experience the full range of the curriculum, but most generally achieve satisfactory standards in preparation for Key Stage 1 especially in the areas of literacy and communications, and mathematical development. There is a significant minority of higher attaining pupils who have well developed speaking and literacy skills and good numeracy skills. Pupils enjoy learning, settle in easily and adjust well to the rigours of school.
2. Despite recent fluctuations in end of key stage tests (SATS), standards have generally improved on those found at the previous inspection at Key Stage 2, but have declined at Key Stage 1. The decline can be partially attributable to the disruption caused to the younger pupils, by extensive building work and staffing difficulties experienced in the school in the past three years. Results at Key Stage 1 show a marked improvement on those in 1999, but they are still below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Results overall are well below average against similar schools. Teachers' expectations are not high enough at Key Stage 1 and although some monitoring of teaching and learning has been done, overall it remains insufficient to support the raising of standards. By the time pupils leave the school, at the end of Key Stage 2, the majority have achieved at least average standards in the core subjects, English, mathematics and science. Many attain well above average standards in English, above average standards in science and average standards in mathematics. Progress in Key Stage 2 is at least satisfactory, and often good especially at the end of the key stage. Standards are broadly average when compared to similar schools for English and science. Standards are well below average for mathematics, where some higher attaining pupils do not successfully reach the higher Level 5 and teachers' expectations are not high enough. Standards in the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), are generally sound, and where planning is specifically good, these skills are applied well across the curriculum.
3. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make generally good progress. Suitably challenging work is provided in most classes, although where lessons lack pace and rigour, these pupils like all others, sometimes do not make satisfactory progress. Where teachers' expectations are not high enough, the quality of pupils' written work is sometimes minimal and carelessly presented. Pupils are generally well supported in classrooms and receive plenty of individual help. This enables them to work on topics largely similar to the majority of the class and to remain fully integrated with their peers. When appropriate, individual support is provided, especially with literacy and numeracy skills and this also encourages good progress.
4. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards of work seen in English are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, and learning is particularly good at the end of the key stage. By the time pupils leave the school attainment is well above average. Standards in English have improved considerably since 1999, when they were well below national averages in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, and just average at Key Stage 2. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with similar schools. However, evidence also shows that there are pockets of underachievement throughout the school, particularly for some potentially higher attaining pupils in a number of classes.
5. At both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are good and pupils handle these aspects confidently. Standards in reading are satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy literature but are also keen to access non-fiction material for independent reading and research. Standards in writing improve from satisfactory at Key Stage 1 to at least good and sometimes very good by the end of Key Stage 2. Appropriate emphasis is placed on a wide range

of writing to convey meaning in different contexts. Higher attaining pupils show particular high ability and confidence when challenged appropriately.

6. In the 2000 national tests in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, standards are below average overall and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Test results have improved from those in 1999, when standards were well below average. Pupils achieving the expected Level 2 are now broadly in line with the national average. However, pupils achieving the higher Level 3 are below expectations. These results are well below those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Over the last four years pupils attainment overall has been in line with national expectation. Although attainment has been lower for boys than girls in the last two years, teachers have recognised the variation and are beginning to target attention appropriately. From work observed during the inspection, findings show that at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve broadly average standards. This is a decline on the findings of the previous inspection when attainment exceeded national expectations. Staffing difficulties, disruptions caused by extensive building works, and teacher not having sufficiently high expectations have contributed considerably to this decline.
7. At the end of Key Stage 2 in the 2000 national tests, pupils achieved standards in mathematics, which are only marginally above the national figure. The number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or better in 2000 was above the national average, but the number reaching the higher Level 5 is below the national average. This again demonstrates teachers not requiring consistently high expectations of all pupils by targeting work appropriately. Pupils' performance is well below that of similar schools. During the last four years pupils' attainment overall has been in line or slightly above national expectations. The attainment of boys and girls is broadly similar. Overall, standards are in line with the national average when pupils leave the school at age eleven, as found in the previous inspection. Evidence indicates that the numeracy strategy is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' skills in mental mathematics.
8. In the 2000 teacher assessments in science at Key Stage 1, standards are well below average compared with national expectations and very low when compared to similar schools. No pupils achieved level 3, and over a third of pupils achieved level 1. Teachers do not have consistently high enough expectations of pupils generally, and there is lack of challenge for a significant number of average and higher attaining pupils. Attainment is slightly better for girls than boys. Over the last four years attainment overall has remained broadly the same, although assessments fell to very low compared to similar schools in 1999 and have remained so this year. This picture is not as good as in the last inspection when standards were above average at Key Stage 1. Emphasis on investigation skills has not improved significantly since the previous inspection, and it is evident science has not been an area of focus in the recent past.
9. At the end of Key Stage 2 in this year's national tests, pupils achieved standards in science that are above the national average. Standards are broadly average when compared with similar schools. Pupils achieving the higher Level 5 are above the national average. Pupils' overall progress in Key Stage 2 is good, and it is very good at the end of the key stage where teaching is very good. The sustained improvement on test results since the previous inspection can be partially attributed to teachers' planning more effectively to help pupils acquire knowledge and skills systematically. In some classes teachers' expectations are still not high enough. In these situations, some pupils only give of their best when teaching is challenging and teachers demand high standards. During the last four years pupils' attainment has been broadly in line with national expectations, and this year has seen an improvement.
10. By the end of both key stages, the majority of pupils of all abilities just attain average standards in art and design. They make overall satisfactory progress in the acquisition of skills. This is a generally improving picture since the previous inspection when progress was judged to be limited and standards unsatisfactory.
11. In design and technology the majority of pupils generally make good progress in both elements of designing and making at both key stages. The interest and enthusiasm for this subject from both teachers and pupils encourages the good standards achieved. Good standards seen in the previous inspection have been maintained.

12. In geography, at the end of both key stages, the majority of pupils attain standards consistent with those expected for their ages and make satisfactory progress throughout the school, as was the case in the previous inspection. Residential visits make a useful contribution in engaging pupils' interest in the subject and sustaining standards.
13. Pupils' learning in history is good at both key stages and they attain standards higher than those expected for pupils of a similar age. The clear enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject is highlighted by the range and quality of curriculum support offered through visits and from visiting speakers in the school. Teachers' expectations are generally challenging especially of the higher attaining pupils, and time given to individual topic work, at Key Stage 2, supports pupils' good progress. Standards have improved since the previous inspection.
14. At the time of the previous inspection overall standards of attainment in information technology were judged to be below average and pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. Improvement since then has been good and now standards are in line with national expectations at both key stages. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress and good features include pupils' development of research skills using internet and CD-rom material.
15. The attainment of pupils of all abilities in music is in line with the average standards expected nationally by the end of both key stages. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Standards of performance by some ensembles, for example the choir, are good.
16. Standards in physical education have been maintained since the previous inspection, and are in line with expectations at both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress in a few lessons is slow and unsatisfactory because teaching lacks appropriate pace and rigour. In these lessons, pupils become inattentive, and time is lost to maintaining satisfactory behaviour. Extra-curricular sporting activities make a significant contribution to the overall standards achieved by the good numbers of pupils who participate.

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

17. The attitudes, values and personal development of pupils at both key stages are good. This represents a similar situation to that found at the previous inspection. Parents also endorse these positive views and are justifiably impressed by the way pupils care for each other.
18. Pupils generally show good attitudes to learning and to many aspects of school life. This provides a notable strength in the school's achievements. Pupils respond well in lessons, particularly where good efforts have been made to grasp their attention. They use their well-developed listening skills to sit quietly when they are required to do so and usually give proper attention to the task in hand. They enjoy school and show a desire to achieve and be successful in their work. They are very willing to answer questions and usually try hard to complete assignments.
19. Behaviour around the school is good. The continuing good levels of behaviour help make teachers' efforts more effective. A favourable working atmosphere is generally observed in most classes. However, in a few classes, behaviour is only satisfactory, as not all teachers demand the same high standards from their pupils. Nevertheless, most pupils follow instructions and treat others with friendly courtesy. When approached they speak in a polite and open manner. They play well together outside and no incidence of aggressive behaviour or racial harassment was observed.
20. Pupils' personal development is good. There are good relationships between pupils and the adults who teach and care for them. They are usually very co-operative and mix easily. Pupils share work and materials with each other well and know how to take turns fairly. They show a suitable respect for property and are generally good at helping to clear up after lessons. A growing sense of the importance of considering the feelings of others is developing appropriately. Opportunities to undertake small responsibilities are readily undertaken by pupils, and in these ways they are seen to grow in confidence. Some pupils benefit greatly from the extra-curricular activities in which they are involved, and where gains in personal development are marked.

21. Pupils' attendance at school is very good as it was at the time of the last inspection. Unauthorised absences are rare and the only ones recorded are due to pupils being taken on family holidays during term time for periods in excess of ten days. The level of authorised absence is very low, being in the best 10 per cent of primary schools nationally. The great majority of pupils arrive at school punctually so that the day gets off to a prompt start.

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

22. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and is often good or very good in individual lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is an improvement from the previous inspection where 16 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Forty-six per cent of lessons seen were good or better, with 11 per cent of this good teaching being very good. The teaching for children in the reception class is generally good. However, whilst progress is good when children are in school, for their first term they attend only half days. Opportunities to the full foundation curriculum are restricted, mainly to literacy and numeracy work in the autumn term, and pupils make overall satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall in both key stages, with very good teaching consistently seen in Year 6. Good teaching was seen throughout the school and across many subjects. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' response to learning and the progress they make in lessons. Teaching in English at Key Stage 2 is generally good. Teaching in information and communication technology and art has improved, and is now satisfactory. In history, the broadly satisfactory teaching is greatly enhanced by the range of 'hands on' experiences pupils are given access to and this is a good feature. Teaching in design and technology is good, resulting in achievement that exceeds average expectations.
23. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was good in the lessons seen. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. The current time-table arrangements for the children who attend mornings only in the autumn term restricts much of their learning to the areas related to the literacy and numeracy curriculum followed by the Year 1 pupils. However, the teacher plans this time well and is sensitive to the needs of the reception children. Following whole class teaching, she organises relevant activities to meet the needs of the younger children. Positive interactions within the whole class encourage all children to contribute, and the younger higher attaining children benefit from working with Year 1 pupils. Support staff manage children's learning in small groups well, and help them to make good progress. From last year's planning it is clear, over the course of a year children have appropriate opportunities to experience all the learning areas in the Foundation Curriculum.
24. Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory, but expectations in many lessons, do not consistently challenge all pupils enough. This is especially evident at Key Stage 1 where overall standards are below average expectations. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in many classes, but when teaching is very good and expectations are high these pupils make good progress. The pace in a number of lessons is not urgent, resulting in some pupils making slow progress. Planning for the use of ICT has improved since the previous inspection but is still inconsistent across the school. In addition, whilst teachers generally carry out informal assessment as lessons proceed, planned opportunities for formal assessments are limited in the main to English and mathematics. Some teachers do use end of topic tests in science to assess pupils' learning, but this is not standard practice. In the majority of lessons observed, few examples of assessment opportunities were identified in teachers' planning. Teachers rely on their informal on-going assessment to ascertain what pupils have learnt. Recording pupils' progress is inconsistently managed although, in those lessons where plenary sessions are effective, useful information emerges to inform future planning. A number of parents expressed concern that they received insufficient information about their children's progress. The inconsistency with which progress is recorded is a significant weakness across the school. In addition, teachers' inconsistent use of homework to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.
25. Literacy and numeracy are generally taught well and teachers use appropriate strategies to plan lessons where pupils learn effectively, especially at the end of Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1 and in some classes in Key Stage 2, work is sometimes not planned in sufficient detail or with appropriate rigour and challenge to match the learning needs of all pupils. The starts of the lessons are generally managed well, and teachers involve pupils effectively through a range of

participation activities including recitations, games and quizzes and demonstrations to others in the class. Where the pace is too slow or the work too difficult or too easy, some pupils become disinterested and occasionally this results in restless behaviour, as was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 3. Literacy skills are developed well in other subjects. For example, pupils' evaluations of newspaper articles on World War 2 history in Year 6, sparked off some interesting and articulate discussions where pupils gave voice to their opinions and reflected on the feelings of people enduring the horrors at the time. Pupils' skills in numeracy are effectively applied to data handling in science and geography, and pupils use careful measuring processes to fine tune their design work in technology.

26. Where teaching is good or better, pupils are managed well, lessons are brisk and challenging, and led enthusiastically. Work in these lessons is generally well matched to pupils' needs and support staff are used to good effect in helping individual and groups of pupils make appropriate progress. For example, the very good science lesson seen in Year 6 enabled the pupils to explore the tasks set and challenge themselves into finding solutions. Through this approach they were encouraged to apply prior learning, work effectively in groups, and evaluate their success against the challenges identified in the activity. In a good Year 1 numeracy lesson, the teacher applied very skilful questioning strategies to help pupils recall prior learning and link this to new work on number sequences and estimating measurements. These good lessons are typified by teachers sharing with pupils clear learning objectives, work being planned to suit the different ability levels appropriately and time given to summarise the learning. In these lessons teachers had reasonably high expectations, as seen for example, in the Year 4 design and technology lesson where the teacher encouraged skills of independence, patience and persistence when handling tools correctly in order to produce the best results. In this lesson the teacher's own interest and enthusiasm for the subject sparked pupils' enjoyment but also enabled them to achieve good results. Where teachers' knowledge of the subject is sound and they are confident in their application of appropriate teaching strategies, lessons are effective. Where this confidence is lacking, for example in investigation work in Key Stage 1 science, pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. The good or very good teaching seen consistently at the end of Key Stage 2 urges all pupils to try their best, produce good quality work and evaluate their learning. These high expectations enable the majority of pupils to make good progress, and higher attaining pupils are persistently challenged to extend their learning independently.
27. In some lessons where teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, teachers' planning is not precise enough to engage all age and ability levels appropriately. In some lessons, the pace of learning is slow or work is not well matched to all pupils' needs, especially in challenging the significant minority of higher attaining pupils. In these lessons teachers' expectations are generally not high enough for pupils to make good progress. For example, a Year 5 literacy lesson lacked urgency and high expectations and the work pupils produced was not of a high enough standard. This lesson was over long and did not to sustain everyone's attention. A few lower attaining pupils made little progress and became very inattentive when the lesson failed to engage their interest. In a science lesson in Year 2, this same lack of urgency prevailed as pupils considered safety issues regarding medicines, knowledge many were at ease with already. In this lesson behaviour remained good, but progress in learning was slow. A weakness highlighted in the previous inspection, although less evident this time, relates to over reliance of worksheets in some lessons. For example, in a Key Stage 2 history lesson the same worksheet was issued to all pupils and a few were unable to read all the language presented to them.
28. Teaching is generally appropriate to help pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The effective use of individual education plans and effective deployment of classroom assistants ensure pupils receive consistent support which is reviewed regularly. The monitoring role of support assistants ensures these pupils make at least satisfactory but more often good progress. Although too little reference is made to the learning objectives of pupils with special educational needs in teachers' weekly planning, teachers ensure pupils' learning needs are addressed appropriately. Not only are assistants used effectively to support teaching and learning, but they also make a considerable contribution to the overall management of classes where pupil numbers exceed thirty.

29. An additional valuable resource teachers make maximum use of is the number of parents who help in the school. They are especially useful in supporting practical activities, producing resources, and giving pupils opportunities to read aloud and be listened to effectively. The wide range of provision of 'hands on' experience provided by visitors to the school or pupils' visits to places of interest, enriches considerably pupils' learning, for example in history and English.
30. Pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are generally good throughout the school. Where the best teaching occurs, and where particularly good relationships have been built, as in Year 6, pupils demonstrate real security in presenting their tentative ideas and answer without any fear. As a result, their powers to express emerging thoughts improve as they gain confidence. Through such teaching approaches, pupils identify what they have learned and why. Teachers value their contributions and effectively encourage them to extend their knowledge and skills and become confident learners. Teachers' ability to inspire such confidence is good and, when combined with consistently high expectations of both the quality and quantity of work pupils produce, progress is good. In some classes teachers do not set high enough standards for pupils always to do their best. The quality of pupils' writing and presentation is sometimes inaccurate and careless, and occasionally this goes without written remark.

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

31. The quality and range of opportunities for learning provided for children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall; they are good for those pupils who spend longer than one term in the reception class. The curriculum is broadly satisfactory for pupils at Key Stage 1 and 2. All subjects are allocated adequate time in the school curriculum, but there is a lack of sharpness in the time-tabling of some subjects, with some overlong literacy and numeracy lessons. Consequently valuable time is lost which could be used to provide more balance in time given to other subjects. Since the previous inspection ICT has improved and is now satisfactory, and all other aspects have been maintained. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and specific support is generally well targeted.
32. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented successfully and are helping the school to improve its standards. There has been a significant impact on learning especially in English at Key Stage 2. Evidence of pupils' work indicates that the decline in standards in mathematics in recent years has been arrested and a clear improvement has been made, especially in pupils' skills with mental calculation. The school has developed satisfactory policies and schemes of work, mainly using nationally developed guidelines. The improvement in provision and standards in ICT is having a positive impact on some other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and history. The overall planning of the curriculum now ensures pupils' learn new skills in the context of prior learning. Continuity and progression are considered appropriately in long and medium term planning. In a few classes teachers plan relevant extension work for the more able, gifted and talented pupils. However, this practice is not consistent throughout the school.
33. The school provides a very good range of extra curricular activities, organised enthusiastically by staff and parents. Earlier in the year the school won the national 'Under 11s' team table tennis competition, and the local Bracknell Schools' Football League. Other extra-curricular provision includes musical and craft activities, mostly for pupils in Key Stage 2. However, the school provides a good range of other educational experiences for all its pupils. These include visits to a range of museums, places of worship, the Millennium Dome, and residential visits to the Isle of Wight and Ufton Court. The school choir has also sung at the Royal Albert Hall. In addition the school arranges for numerous visitors to talk to pupils, for example, 'A Roman Soldier', an evacuee from the war, and other local agencies. Extra curricular provision is a strength of the school and all pupils are encouraged to participate.
34. The community's contribution to the life of the school and to pupils' learning is good. There is a close relationship, not just with St Michael's Church, but also all the other Anglican churches in the Bracknell area, and pupils share in all the major festivals, carol concerts and nativity play.



35. The planned programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), including sex education and attention to drug misuse is satisfactory, although there is no formal drugs' awareness policy. The school has recognised the need to develop PSHE and is incorporating it into a number of curricular areas such as science, for example, care with medicines. A newly introduced school council has the potential to make a contribution to pupils' self-confidence and personal development.
36. The overall satisfactory provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in the school is broadly similar to that found at the last inspection.
37. Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and developed mainly through school and class assemblies. For example, after a candle was lit in assembly, pupils' were invited to reflect on how other people help them, especially in providing their food. Infant pupils also showed some amazement when listening to the story of Jesus feeding the multitude. However, reflection on values and beliefs is not usually planned into the everyday curriculum and examples were not evident during the inspection.
38. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. They usually behave well and know right from wrong. However, an appreciation of moral values is not always promoted within the school, and a number of teachers allow pupils to interrupt or chat during their verbal input to lessons. Additionally when pupils finish tasks, they are sometimes inattentive and easily distracted. Pupils generally co-operate and share with each other, and are making useful suggestions through their school council, such as the provision of playground mediators and 'special friends' for children in the reception class.
39. Provision for pupils' social development is good, as it was in the previous inspection. Pupils are encouraged to work with each other and take on responsibilities in and around the school. They prepare the hall for assemblies, operate the overhead projector, and look after computers in the new computer suite. They also help to look after younger pupils during wet playtimes. The school provides a range of social functions, including residential and other visits, fund-raising events, charity events, and coffee mornings to encourage pupils' social development.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Curricular areas including geography and music promote the study of cultures in the West Indies, India and Africa, while in history pupils have studied Ancient cultures in Greece and Egypt. Pupils also benefit from studies of other religions such as Judaism and Hinduism in addition to Christianity. There are missed opportunities in the planning of other subjects, for example, art, English and science, to reflect on the richness and diversity of our multi-cultural society. Attainment in art, which is now satisfactory, has made a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

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

41. The steps taken by the school to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are good and continue to be a strength of the school. Appropriate child protection procedures are now in place. Procedures for dealing with first aid, medicines and accidents, including notifying parents, are well established. Health and safety risks are reviewed regularly by staff and governors. Checks on potentially dangerous equipment and practice evacuations of the premises take place regularly. The school provides a caring environment, where the teachers and all the support staff know the pupils very well in an extended family atmosphere.
42. The procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good. The great majority of pupils arrive at school on time and settle quickly to work. Parents co-operate fully with the school by notifying reasons for pupils' absences, and in the rare cases where a pupil is unexpectedly absent in the morning the school calls home to check.
43. The procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. The school has a behaviour policy which reinforces the schools' aims and ethos, however its implementation varies from class to class with respect to rewards and sanctions. Nevertheless, pupils know the standards that the school expects and they are generally well

behaved. A small number of parents mentioned instances of bullying the school had not dealt with effectively. The school has appropriate procedures to deal with harassment and bullying and follows these through when necessary.

44. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are generally unsatisfactory. Procedures are sound for pupils with special educational needs and support staff contribute effectively in keeping records to inform teachers of an individual pupil's progress. Although the school gains information on pupil attainment through annual statutory testing, it does not use this with sufficient rigour in order to identify the individual needs of all pupils. Teachers' record keeping is not standardised. The school has no clear policy and guidelines on assessment and recording of information and this is a significant weakness.
45. Information, provided by baseline assessment when children enter the school, is not analysed in sufficient detail to set individual targets and measure subsequent progress of each child. As pupils move through the school the identification of pupils' progress and consequently the individual 's areas of improvement remain imprecise and teachers' planning does not always match pupils' learning needs. Assessment procedures for most subjects other than English and mathematics are informal and rely extensively upon teachers knowing their pupils well. This cannot always be possible in the school when there are staff changes and lengthy staff absence. The lack of effective co-ordination in all subjects across the school has also prevented the development of effective assessment procedures. Marking of pupils' work is generally conscientious, although there is little evidence of comments on how to improve, or encouragement of pupils' self-assessment and evaluation of standards of their work. The school is aware of the weakness in its monitoring of academic performance, and is starting to take steps to remedy this.

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

46. Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is very good. Pupils and their parents support the individual home/school agreements. Support from parents, the church and the local community for the fundraising and social events organised by the Friends of St Michael's is similarly very good. The Parents' Association raises substantial funds and items purchased include the adventure play apparatus. A good number of parents assist in a variety of ways in classrooms and with extra-curricular activities, for example table tennis, for which the school has gained a national reputation. Their efforts are well managed and appreciated by staff. This level of commitment makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
47. General information provided for parents includes newsletters, information about forthcoming events, including the curriculum topics to be covered during the next term. Both the quality and range of this material is good. The Governors' Annual Report is particularly noteworthy containing interesting insights into the life of the school as well as meeting most of the statutory requirements. Although written to conform to regulations, the annual reports on individual pupils are unsatisfactory – a view shared by a significant number of parents. These reports contain a commentary on what has been covered in each subject and how well the pupil has done, but there is limited discussion on what has not been done so well and requires attention in the future. Although a section is provided for targets for the next year, with the exception of one or two classes, these targets are not sufficiently explicit.
48. The inspection confirms parents' concern about teachers' inconsistent approach to the homework. Parents' concerns about some teachers not being readily accessible is not substantiated as the school is happy to make arrangements to see parents at appropriate times that do not impinge on teachers' work in classrooms.

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

49. The leadership and management by the headteacher are satisfactory. He has a clear vision of what sort of school this should be and works hard to provide a quality of education that is broadly

satisfactory and improving. In conjunction with all the staff, he has continued to sustain a caring, supportive environment that ensures St Michael's retains its identity as a happy place where effective learning and pupils' personal development are nurtured. This enables pupils to feel valued, confident and important members of the community, a strong feature in the school's aims. The management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Documentation is well kept, and links with parents and outside agencies are well established and efficiently managed. There is a commitment in the very detailed school development plan to improve aspects of the school and its work. A number of issues highlighted in the previous inspection have been appropriately addressed. However, the school development plan fails to emphasise the promotion of high standards consistently throughout the school and this has had a negative impact in curriculum development at Key Stage 1.

50. The establishment of the roles of co-ordinators was a key issue in the last inspection. This has resulted in all subjects now having clear policies and schemes of work which support the overall effective teaching seen. However, some management responsibilities have not been delegated effectively. The school has not yet developed good processes to review strengths and weaknesses in order to identify appropriate strategies for continuous improvement. Co-ordinators are not sufficiently engaged in determining priorities for development in their subjects.
51. The headteacher's own monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is proving helpful in identifying some areas for improvement. In addition some teachers with management responsibilities monitor planning, and sometimes observe teaching and assess samples of pupils' work. However, in subjects other than English, mathematics and ICT, there have been insufficient opportunities to lead curriculum development and raise the status of subjects in order to improve pupils' performance. Monitoring by co-ordinators does not happen consistently throughout the school. Where such interactions have taken place, for example in English through work on the literacy strategy, the improvements identified have had an impact on standards. Professional relationships have some way to go in developing mutual trust especially in the effective monitoring of standards of teaching and learning. Good practice is not being spread effectively with teachers learning from each other. There is no rigorous analysis of results, and insufficient whole school monitoring of pupils' progress to enable the staff and governors to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. Consequently, the means by which attainment can be raised have yet to be identified. A concerted commitment to the raising of standards is not currently evident.
52. The governing body provides sound support and is fully informed about the work of the school through its active involvement in well-organised committees. Governors fulfil most of their statutory duties, have begun discussions regarding Performance Management, and are regular visitors in the school. They play a key role in forming the school aims, reviewing policies, and constructing the school development plan. The decision to increase classroom support assistants has been helpful in raising the standards in teaching and learning. Co-ordinators have been allocated some time to manage their curriculum areas and this has enabled effective schemes of work to be established. However, governors' role in holding the school to account with respect to monitoring and raising of standards is not as effective as it should be. Targets set by the local authority have been met well. But these targets are not sufficiently challenging to raise overall attainment in all subjects to match that of similar schools.
53. The school makes good use of its financial and other resources. It sets its budget with appropriate regard to educational priorities and to ensuring the environment in which the school operates is of a satisfactory standard. The school has identified class size and admission number as an issue. Whilst arrangements are currently operating where additional support staff work in all classrooms, this arrangement is to be reviewed in the next year. Governors have successfully allocated resources for the improvement of the school buildings, and the good provision seen for ICT is helping to improve standards which were judged unsatisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Financial administration is very good and specific grants are put to very good effect in their designated purposes.
54. The school is adequately staffed with appropriately qualified teachers and suitably experienced support staff. Resources are adequate to deliver the needs of the curriculum. Resources for ICT

have been greatly enhanced with the new computer suite and standards have improved since the previous inspection. There has been major building and re-furbishing of classrooms, and the inadequate accommodation highlighted in the previous inspection is now satisfactory. The school environment is very attractive, and well maintained, and the grounds provide very good facilities for outdoor play and environmental science.

55. The school has made a satisfactory start on applying the principles of best value and is increasingly involved in consultations with parents and the local authority. Most pupils enter the school with knowledge and understanding which is broadly in line with that expected for their age. The school promotes good behaviour and relationships. Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils make generally satisfactory progress. Standards in the core subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since the previous inspection. Capacity for improvement is sound. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

56. In order to improve further the quality of education provided, the school should focus on:
- Raising standards by:
    - having higher expectations of all pupils throughout the school, especially pupils at Key Stage 1 where standards are below national average overall.
    - ensuring teachers' planning matches the needs of all pupils, especially the higher attaining pupils
    - setting more challenging targets in English and mathematics
    - involving governors in the monitoring of standards.  
(paragraphs: 2,9,16,24,27,32,49,52,63,68,70,73,75,76,79,80,87,100,115).
  - Effective assessment procedures that
    - make better use of baseline assessments to set individual pupil targets
    - track individual pupils by analysing and using results of all tests more systematically
    - inform parents more helpfully of their child's progress  
(paragraphs: 23, 24, 44, 47, 50, 57, 72, 78, 88, 97, 102, 107, 111).
  - The continued development of co-ordinators so that there is:
    - increased emphasis given to identifying targets for subject development.
    - time given to monitoring standards of teaching and learning.
    - effective sharing of best practice and expertise.  
(paragraphs: 45, 50, 51, 81, 84).

### **Other weaknesses:**

- ensure homework is used consistently to support learning in all classes.  
(paragraphs: 24, 48, 70, 81, 100)
- review the timetable arrangements so time is used more effectively especially in the long morning sessions. (paragraphs: 27, 31)
- review the balance of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage in the term when children attend part-time. (paragraphs: 23, 31, 58, 63)
- provide more opportunities for investigation work in science at Key Stage 1. (paragraphs: 8, 80)
- ensure worksheets, when used, support learning appropriately. (paragraphs: 27, 76).
- establish a drug's awareness policy. (paragraph 35)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	35	54	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y1 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	212
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y1 – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	43

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3%
National comparative data	5.4% (1999)

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.01%
National comparative data	0.5% (1999)

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1*

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	18	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	13	13
	Girls	18	18	17
	Total	30	31	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (60)	89 (64)	86 (64)
	National	83 (79)	88 (83)	90 (86)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	9
	Girls	18	17	16
	Total	31	30	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (58)	86 (67)	72 (48)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	17	18	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	10	11
	Girls	19	17	20
	Total	31	27	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (66)	77 (71)	89 (78)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	79 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	12
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	27	28	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (74)	80 (74)	89 (78)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	201
Any other minority ethnic group	4

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

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	30.3

**Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	185

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	407977
Total expenditure	432307
Expenditure per pupil	1922
Balance brought forward from previous year	27368
Balance carried forward to next year	3038

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	230
Number of questionnaires returned	114

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	50	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	52	7	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	55	8	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	40	24	4	4
The teaching is good.	39	54	5	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	45	20	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	34	7	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46	44	6	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	30	53	12	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	46	40	5	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	54	6	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	32	15	1	7

### Other issues raised by parents

A few parents raised concerns about the effective handling of incidents of bullying when it occurs. The school has appropriate procedures which are followed through effectively.

A few parents also felt some teachers are not easily accessible to discuss specific issues. The inspection team is confident teachers are happy to talk with parents providing it does not impinge on their work in the classrooms.



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

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

57. Standards of attainment of the majority of children on entry are broadly in line with the national average with a significant minority above. In the reception class, children make satisfactory progress overall and most attain the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Baseline assessments are carried out appropriately on entry, although the information is not used as effectively as possible to inform future planning. Day to day assessment is suitably used, and support staff are appropriately deployed to promote children's learning. Most children make satisfactory progress overall and standards are in line with expectations at the start of Key Stage 1.
58. Children are admitted to school on a part time basis in the term in which they are five. They attend full-time in their second term. Children who start in the summer term, consequently only have one term, part time, in the reception class before entering Key Stage 1. This means that these children do not have as full a range of experiences as those who started in the autumn term of the school year. In addition, the school's current timetable arrangements generally focus on literacy and numeracy teaching in the mornings. In the autumn term, children in the reception class work alongside Year 1 pupils, and therefore do not have access to the full foundation curriculum until the second term. Overall, these arrangements restrict children's access to a well-balanced curriculum at all times in their foundation year.
59. At the time of the inspection there were eleven children in the reception class attending mornings only for this term. They are taught together with the Year 1 pupils who had been in reception on a part time basis last summer term. The teacher plans effectively ensuring the foundation curriculum and Key Stage 1 curriculum are addressed appropriately for literacy and numeracy. Work to match the needs of the different stages is planned well. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teacher engages the class in oral work effectively, encouraging younger members of the class by asking supportive questions, whilst effectively challenging the higher attaining and Year 1 children. Her management of time and children is very good, and she recognises when the younger children are ready to move into small group work. The teacher is aware of each child's attention span. She moves them on to well-organised activities led by classroom assistants as necessary, but certainly before children become inattentive and disturb effective learning for others. Support staff are invaluable and effectively manage and guide children in their learning in groups. They provide opportunities to work away from the more formal literacy and numeracy lessons, paying good attention to listening to each child and involving them in age appropriate tasks related to the main lesson. The time created for social interactions and building good relationships helps children settle in quickly, enjoy school and make satisfactory progress in all they are given to learn. Parents receive helpful information from the school and support children's learning by ensuring homework, such as letter recognition, is practised.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

60. The large majority of children enter the school with generally appropriately developed personal, social and emotional skills and are in line to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1. After a few weeks in school the children have already settled well into daily routines and benefit from mixing with the older pupils. The class teacher and support staff provide good role models and the children appear sufficiently confident in engaging visitors in conversation. In one lesson seen using role-play, the children co-operated well with each other, taking turns in sharing dressing up clothes. Support staff interjected helpfully to encourage children's speaking and listening skills.

#### **Communications, language and literacy**

61. Evidence from hearing readers supports the baseline assessment that the majority of children enter school with broadly average reading skills with a small number who are above average. They benefit from lessons related to the literacy strategy and recognise and trace over individual letters. They know that print conveys ideas not only in books but also for instance on the computer "keyboard". After a few weeks in school they are familiar with some nursery rhymes.

They listen with enjoyment to stories read to them as well as following text appropriately on tape. In one lesson, through the teacher's skilful use of questioning, they replaced new words for more familiar rhyming words.

### **Mathematical development**

62. The majority of children are able to count to ten with a few higher attaining children counting to twenty. Most match objects to numbers fairly accurately, and higher attaining children are encouraged to identify their own mistakes when questioned. They understand order of size and indicate who is 'smallest and tallest', although a few do not retain new learning easily at first. In practical activities they model play-dough to a variety of simple shapes and recognise circles and squares. By the end of the Foundation Stage the majority of children have attained the early learning goals and the higher attaining children are working towards level 1 in the National Curriculum.
63. During the inspection, as the children were in school for such a limited time, it was not possible to observe lessons covering all areas of learning. From a range of other sources, including talking to children, scrutiny of previous work and teachers' planning, children's knowledge and understanding of the world, their physical development and creative development are all satisfactory and progress is sound. It is clear such opportunities are provided later in the year when children attend full time, but this arrangement is unsatisfactory for those children who only have one term part-time in the summer before they enter Key Stage 1. These opportunities include investigating properties of materials, as well as introduction to the use of everyday technology, including computers. For example, an introduction to other areas of learning is provided through a range of activities based on "Humpty Dumpty", building walls in sand, and finding letters in the water tray to spell out his name.

### **ENGLISH**

64. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English are broadly in line with national averages and progress is satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress, and learning is particularly good at the end of the key stage. By the time pupils leave the school attainment is well above average. However, evidence also shows that there are pockets of underachievement in some classes throughout the school, particularly for potentially higher attaining pupils. Despite recent fluctuations in end of key stage tests (SATS), standards have improved on those found at the previous inspection. Pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs make good progress. Suitably challenging work is provided. They are well supported in the classroom and receive plenty of individual help. This enables them to work on topics largely similar to the majority of the class.
65. At both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are good. Pupils are taught to listen carefully from an early age and this has beneficial results on their general behaviour and learning. At Key Stage 1, the specific development of listening skills is built into other areas of the curriculum, for example in music, where pupils powers of listening are successfully sharpened. Most pupils are articulate and speak with confidence. At Key Stage 2 pupils use a good range of vocabulary and express themselves with relative ease. Where the best teaching occurs, and where particularly good relationships have been built, as in Year 6, pupils demonstrate a real security in presenting their tentative ideas and answer without any fear. As a result, their powers of expressing emerging thoughts improve.
66. By the end of Key Stage 1, the great majority of pupils reach the average standard in reading and a satisfactory number achieve beyond this. Emphasis is placed on providing a solid grounding for the development of reading skills and this brings benefits to many other curriculum areas. Pupils of average ability are able to make clear sense of the text with which they are dealing and can relate accurately the features of the story. Higher attaining pupils read confidently with good expression and understanding. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their skills in dealing with the printed word and standards are good, with many strengths. A good proportion of pupils read well, and the best read with great fluency and feeling. They discuss sensibly, features of a classical story and can predict likely outcomes. Lower attaining pupils enjoy books and are

clearly developing positive attitudes towards the pleasures of reading. All pupils make good use of non-fiction books and are generally able to locate information required quite efficiently.

67. In writing, pupils at Key Stage 1 make an early start in copying letters and simple words accurately. They gradually begin to construct their own sentences and are able to express something of their own ideas. By the end of the key stage standards are satisfactory and pupils tackle a reasonable range of different types of writing including, poems, book reviews and shopping lists. Higher attaining pupils organise and write stories confidently applying their knowledge on structures and effective use of vocabulary. They make good use of relevant vocabulary and show some purposeful use of elementary grammar.
68. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards in writing are good with some strengths, but progress throughout the key stage is not consistent. The work produced at the lower half of the key stage is frequently of limited range and quality. Pupils do not build well on the sound foundations laid in preceding classes. The work provided is often uninspiring and unchallenging to pupils of all the levels of ability in a class. The necessary quantity and breadth of writing assignments is lacking. As a result pupils do not make the best progress and achieve the best standards they could. By the end of Year 6, pupils have broadened and extended their skills noticeably. Higher attaining pupils cope well with, for example, the demands of writing dialogue. They learn how to write reports well, and use word processing skills appropriately to organise and produce a newspaper. However, at present there is insufficient redrafting of the work organised in any class. In consequence, pupils do not have enough regular opportunities to analyse their own shortcomings and take their work forward to an even higher standard.
69. Although the development of handwriting skills is formally introduced at Key Stage 1, standards throughout the school are only just satisfactory. Many pupils regularly write neatly and well, but a significant minority do not. General standards of presentation vary too much between classes and reflect the low expectations of some teachers.
70. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, and sometimes it is good or very good. At Key Stage 2 the quality is always satisfactory or better, and but more often good or very good. Most teachers in the school manage their classes well and this ensures that pupils settle willingly to the tasks in hand. In less effectively organised lessons, mildly disruptive behaviour is allowed to disturb the flow of the teaching and an undercurrent of talking remains unchecked. Teachers generally plan their work competently and are secure in what they know they have to teach. The best teaching observed shows very good understanding of where learning should be going, and employs very effective questioning to lead pupils rapidly along in this. Satisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2 is often prevented from being better by too few demands being made on pupils. In these classes there is a lack of sufficient ambition as to what the pupils could achieve. Strong teaching of English at Key Stage 1 is characterised by very good organisation, lively interaction between pupils, and the ensuring of all ability groups working equally well. At Key Stage 2 very good teaching is demonstrated when pupils' minds and emotions are comprehensively engaged in the challenges of the topic in hand. In this way their learning is richly extended. Throughout the key stage, the limitations set by teachers in the redrafting of written work, means that pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to prepare and present a "best copy". This contributes to the measurable lack of achievement in levels of good handwriting and presentation of work. Teachers generally issue homework that supports pupils' learning in class, and pupils regularly take reading books and spelling tasks home. However, some teachers are more consistent in this practice than others.
71. Pupil's attitudes are generally good and, to some extent, mirror the quality of the teaching they experience. They mostly settle well to work and complete the assignments they are set. They work well with each other and help each other when necessary. Where less effective teaching occurs, pupils are observed to indulge in inappropriate chattering or show signs of boredom. This results in too little work being achieved.
72. Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' progress in the subject are just satisfactory. Although regular formal testing, particularly in reading, is carried out, results of pupils' progress in other aspects of English are not always effectively monitored. The general management of the subject

is sound with the literacy strategy having been implemented successfully. The subject is suitably resourced, and also includes an appropriate range of good quality books of all types.

## MATHEMATICS

73. In the previous inspection pupils made good progress in Key Stage 1 and their attainment exceeded national expectations. There has been a decline, and this inspection finds pupils' attainment to be just in line with national expectations and they are making satisfactory progress. The results from the tests in 2000 indicate standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2 from current inspection evidence and this year's tests, pupils' attainment is marginally above national expectation and progress is generally satisfactory but good at the end of the key stage. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Over a period of four years at Key Stage 1, pupil performance has been generally similar to national expectation with the exception of 1999, when it fell well below average. There has been a clear improvement in the last year, not least because of the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy. At Key Stage 2, over the last four years, attainment has been broadly in line with the national average. However, attainment of more able pupils during this time, at both key stages, has been below that expected, and in many classes expectations of all pupils are generally not high enough. The school has been successful however, in ensuring good learning for pupils with special educational needs, and a very small number of exceptionally able pupils.
74. Teaching is always satisfactory, sometimes good and on one occasion during the inspection, very good teaching was observed at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' learning is most pronounced when they are consistently challenged in lessons where teachers have high expectations of all abilities and set clear targets. For example, pupils in Year 6 showed a lively interest in the mental mathematics activity, the pace of which really urged pupils to speed up in their thinking and urged them to have a go even when they lacked confidence in their calculations. This same challenge and pace was evident in a lesson in Year 1 where the teacher focused more on the process pupils followed to estimate the measurement rather than just accuracy. Pupils' agility in calculating tasks in their heads has become an activity teachers work hard at and it has made that part of numeracy lessons effective in developing pupils' number skills. Particularly good is the way pupils are encouraged to check out whether their answer is right by explaining how they made the calculations. Clear learning objectives, good subject knowledge and positive engagement with pupils, especially during introductions and conclusions, ensure that pupils of all abilities learn at appropriate levels. Where plenary sessions are well managed as in the lesson in Year 2 on 3D shapes, teachers identify pupils who need further support in their learning. Support staff follow lessons with pupils, particularly pupils with special educational needs, and use time effectively to pick up on areas some pupils might need help with in order to make satisfactory progress. There is satisfactory emphasis on developing pupils' confidence with using appropriate vocabulary. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 explain their work, for example on fractions using the terms 'numerator and denominator', and pupils in Year 1 are confident in the language related to making comparisons, for example, 'taller or shorter than'.
75. Teachers develop pupils' investigation skills appropriately through practical tasks. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on solid shapes pupils 'played' a describing game where they talked about numbers of flat and curved faces, corners and sides of objects, in order to test their peers' abilities to guess the shape. While the activity helped pupils to learn, and use correct language appropriately, it also engaged pupils in a fun way, so that they enjoyed learning. This practical approach is extended to work at Key Stage 2 where pupils apply their knowledge to investigate how high balls bounce when dropped from different heights, making sure they consider all the variables and record their findings appropriately. While investigation activities are planned for, some pupils are not challenged to extend their skills with sufficient rigour.
76. Although overall teaching was judged to be satisfactory, some lessons lack pace, are overlong and teachers rely heavily on worksheets. In some instances, as in the example of a Year 2 lesson, the language in the worksheet was not easily accessible to all pupils and no extension work was available to those who finished the task quickly. Some higher attaining pupils had clearly demonstrated their competence in the topic in the oral activity. The follow up written task did not

help them make satisfactory progress. Pupils were observed on several occasions occupied by tasks which were too easy and progress as a consequence was slower than a number of pupils were capable of. In some classes, especially in Key Stage 1, this lack of pace and challenge does not support the effective raising of standards. In some instances pupils' good behaviour is not maintained as they become inattentive and restless. Homework that supports and extends pupils' learning is given regularly in some classes, but this does not happen consistently across the school and was an issue raised by a number of parents.

77. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory overall, but varies between unsatisfactory (as observed in one lesson) to very good (in two of the lessons seen). The variation is explained by the quality of set tasks and teachers' expectations of pupils. Generally pupils are enthusiastic and especially keen on their mental arithmetic sessions. In group activities most share and co-operate with each other. Pupils occasionally become fidgety and restless when insufficient demand is made upon them, in both their thinking and in the overall presentation of their work, which is sometimes careless and untidy. Their independent learning is broadly satisfactory, although it is good in Year 6.
78. The knowledgeable and confident co-ordinator is a lead teacher for the local authority. However, he has not used his knowledge to monitor teaching and learning within his own school. Although there has been some monitoring, and the numeracy strategy has supported the raising of attainment by the time pupils leave the school, standards at Key Stage 1 are below the national average. With standards overall being well below similar schools, a more consistent approach to assessment, target setting and evaluation of pupil performance would undoubtedly support the raising of standards throughout the school.

## SCIENCE

79. At the end of Key Stage 1, the standards of attainment for the majority of pupils is well below the national average and very low when compared with schools with similar social circumstances. Evidence from the inspection supports the results from end of Key Stage 1, and standards have declined substantially since the last inspection, where they were above average. Progress is unsatisfactory and whilst the lessons observed were broadly satisfactory, the teaching overall in Key Stage 1 lacks pace and rigour and does not support effective learning for the majority of pupils.
80. By the end of the key stage pupils show an appropriate knowledge of topics such as the properties of some materials, how plants grow and the life cycle of common animals. Pupils in Year 1 carry out investigations designed by teachers to look at how our senses work. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough, and learning is slow. For example, in the same Year 1 lesson pupils were not given guidance as to how they might record findings from their investigations, nor modify experiment design. The pace of the lesson was slow and the higher attaining pupils did not make appropriate progress. Learning was much better in a Year 2 lesson where the teacher skilfully incorporated literacy and ICT for pupils to explore work on medicines and healthy growth. The parallel class doing the same work did not receive similar extension work to challenge and extend learning. In discussion with pupils in Year 3 about previous work, few could confidently explain why carrying out 'fair tests' is necessary, and many, when asked to consider how they might measure temperature accurately, had no recall of having used or seen thermometers in science. A few more able pupils did know that thermometers measure the 'hotness' of things including people when they are ill.
81. The quality and range of work seen in Key Stage 1 was limited and planning, whilst reflecting the scheme of work being used in the school, indicates a lack of rigour in its delivery. There is insufficient attention given to assessing what pupils know and understand, although some effective question and answers sessions were seen at the start of lessons to link learning to previous experiences. Pupils show a lively interest in the subject and carry out practical work sensibly. However, the subject has not enjoyed a high profile in terms of development in the recent past when attention has particularly focused on English and mathematics. The co-

ordinator acknowledges that there has been insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1.

82. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in test results show a marked improvement from those seen in Key Stage 1 and are above national averages. Results are in line with those found in similar schools. This is an improved picture from the previous inspection. Numbers of pupils achieving level 5 is high. Progress at the end of Key Stage 2 is very good and it is good overall through this phase. Very few lessons were observed but standards of work seen indicates attainment to be in line with national averages, and the higher attaining pupils achieve above average standards.
83. Teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 challenges pupils to think ideas through, and to use opportunities through practical work to try theories out for themselves. This is a strength. With skilful guidance, enthusiastic questioning strategies, and very good use of praise and encouragement, the teacher leads pupils into exploring and learning by discovery. Some work carried out by last year's cohort showed some very good learning emerging from use of the school's woodland area to investigate plant life in relation to soil composition and light factors. This level of high expectation enables the higher attaining pupils to work at an appropriate level and achieve high standards. The very effective deployment of support staff and the very good relationships the teacher has with pupils enables all pupils to make good progress. Project work, whilst led by the teacher, is largely an opportunity for pupils to work independently and apply prior knowledge and skills in new situations. Pupils identify, through such teaching approaches, what they have learned and why. They are confident learners and all contributions they make to discussions are valued. This level of maturity is very good. Teachers' use of homework to support pupils' learning and opportunities they provide for pupils' to work independently are limited.
84. Monitoring of the subject is limited to termly reviews of planning and sometimes moderation of pupils' work. There is no systematic approach to assessing standards of teaching and learning. The subject has not received a great deal of attention in terms of in-service training, development of specific aspects, for example investigations, or the sharing of good practice across the school. The co-ordinator is well qualified to develop the subject, support teaching throughout the school, and raise standards further.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

85. By the end of both key stages, pupils of all abilities just attain average standards in art. This is a generally improving picture since the previous inspection when progress was judged to be limited and standards unsatisfactory.
86. At Key Stage 1, pupils use and apply paint correctly in a variety of differing ways, including some simple printing. They are able to produce individually painted pictures and portraits, though there is little evidence of much colour mixing. They can draw satisfactorily with pencil and crayons to illustrate their work in other subjects. Effective use of collage techniques is demonstrated when, for example, a good illustration of "The Great Fire of London" is produced. Otherwise, the range of work covered is too narrow at present to raise standards further.
87. At Key Stage 2, the artistic experiences offered to pupils broadens a little, and pupils develop a wider range of skills. For example, in Year 4, they use a diversity of textiles to produce interesting work with texture. They also work effectively when extending colour tones in imaginative pictures. Although sketchbooks are kept throughout the key stage, less use is made of them as they move up through the school. Some of the better artwork seen involves close observation and careful pencil drawing of still life arrangements. This is also clearly demonstrated when pupils in Year 5 undertake successful exploration of the light and shade possibilities when drawing assorted harvest fruit and vegetables. Only a limited amount of three-dimensional work is produced and as a result pupils skills are only moderately well developed in this area.

88. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some examples of good practice. Lessons observed are suitably planned to meet the learning needs of the differing age groups. Pupils' interest is well harnessed to enable them to try hard and achieve. The encouraging manner adopted in lessons is generally successful in maintaining pupils' interest and their will to succeed. A strength in some classes is the way in which teachers take account of pupils' enthusiasm in other subjects and link the work undertaken productively to these. However, insufficient artwork is undertaken in some classes and this contributes to a certain unevenness in the development of pupils' skills throughout the school. Not all teachers provide adequately for better progress in pupils' artistic development, and there is little evidence of pupils having targets for improvement.
89. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the few lessons observed are good. They are able to work quietly and diligently when required and concentrate well on the tasks in hand. They share materials and objects appropriately and show proper regard for others in the class. They are also notably helpful in clearing up afterwards.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

90. Pupils generally make good progress in both elements of designing and making at both key stages and the good standards from the previous inspection have been maintained. During the inspection only one lesson was observed but suitable evidence was obtained from scrutiny of pupils' work, photographic evidence and discussions with staff including their overall planning. The development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is good overall. In the lesson observed, for instance, pupils appeared confident in their basic designing skills and were gaining experience in the use of a wide range of materials and equipment.
91. Across both key stages, pupils' experience and understanding of the complete designing, making and evaluating process is being developed. Pupils in Year 2, for example, are able to understand clearly the use of levers in construction of pairs of scissors and moving pictures. This is further developed in Year 3 when pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own attempts at designing and making photograph frames using a range of materials including pipe cleaners and paper rolls. Year 4 pupils design and construct a wooden frame for a Jack in the Box. The majority of pupils also develop their manipulative skills sawing and joining ply-wood independently, though the lower attaining pupils still require support. Throughout the key stage there is evidence of cross-curricular links as, for example, in the Tudor homes related to Year 4's history topic. The overall development of a range of skills and techniques throughout the school culminates in some examples of very good work in Year 6. Pupils are able to design and make a film set about Dracula. They use cranks and pulleys, pneumatics, axles and electric circuits all within a balsa framework of their own making to produce a variety of effects including opening coffin lids. Although to some extent these activities are undertaken as prescribed tasks at the beginning, pupils are encouraged to make their own designs and identify and evaluate problems as they proceed.
92. At both key stages the quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are well planned and tasks are generally matched to the level of the pupils. They build steadily on their knowledge and understanding of the overall process involved in this subject. Pupils are eager to be involved and they clearly enjoy being engaged in practical activities. They listen attentively and most are able to follow instructions carefully. Behaviour is generally good and pupils' share equipment sensibly and safely. It is evident from the scrutiny of work that the use of appropriate classroom strategies has led pupils to take a pride in their finished work.
93. The subject is enthusiastically led by the co-ordinator. The planned curriculum is broad and balanced. Staff understand the recent guidelines and most are confident in delivering all required aspects of the subject. Resources are good and the overall range is constantly being reviewed to include more materials to support specific areas. Though some form of informal monitoring of pupils' work does occur there are no formal assessment procedures established for the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

94. At the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards consistent with those expected for their ages and make satisfactory progress throughout the school, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress. Although no lessons were observed during the inspection, sufficient evidence was available to make this judgement. This included scrutiny of pupils' work, displays in the school, a portfolio of past activities, scrutiny of teacher planning and discussions with pupils.
95. At Key Stage 1, pupils explore their local area, and teachers encourage them to think about the best routes to follow, for example, to reach school and other places they visit. By giving them opportunities to consider options and evaluate their preferred routes pupils begin to develop analytical thinking. Teachers help them to explain their likes and dislikes regarding the environment and put forward views on how things could be improved. For example pupils suggest more waste-bins might help reduce litter. In an interesting idea in Key Stage 1 pupils enthusiastically follow the journeys of the four bears pupils took on holiday around Britain and other countries in the world (USA, Norway, Egypt). This enabled them to look at contrasting scenery and climate and learn new vocabulary appropriate to the subject.
96. At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their knowledge of contrasting locations, for example between St Lucia and Bracknell, and an Indian village with their own local area. Teachers effectively help them relate issues such as climate and terrain to people's everyday lives. Following a residential visit to Rhos y Gwaliau in Wales, pupils talk confidently of their explorations of that area in terms of landscape and employment, explaining confidently how they read maps to find appropriate routes to take them from place to place.
97. The demands of curriculum 2000 in geography have already been included in teachers' planning which is adapting the newly introduced national guidance. Discussion with pupils indicates their enthusiasm for the subject, which has been significantly enhanced by their visits and examination of other parts of the country. Their work, as a result, indicates a good response to the subject. The school has not put into place any formal procedures to assess pupils' learning.

## **HISTORY**

98. Pupils' learning in history is good at both key stages and they attain standards higher than those expected for pupils of a similar age. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. This is due to a well-planned curriculum, consistent, knowledgeable teaching and enrichment through visits to many places of historical interest, as well as visitors to the school, with appropriate historical focus. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and their progress is generally good, being encouraged at all times to contribute to whole class discussions.
99. At Key Stage 1 teachers enable pupils to appreciate a sense of the past through their work on generations in families, and key figures from the past who have shaped events, for example, Guy Fawkes and Samuel Pepys. A visit to the Tower of London and its surrounding areas brought to life the magnitude of the Great Fire of London and the long-term repercussions of such major events. A painting of the 'Great Fire' was used effectively to stimulate debate around how people might have felt and coped in the midst of such disaster. Teachers engage pupils' interest by asking very detailed questions and encouraging them to reflect on what it might have been like to be an eye-witness. They introduce pupils to using sources and artefacts in order to develop skills of inference, and organise opportunities, for example, a visit to Blakes Lock Museum to learn about Victorian life. Expectations are generally high, and pupils respond with enthusiasm. Pupils particularly recalled with animation the drudgery of a Victorian washday, because the hands on experience had made a dramatic impact on their learning.
100. At Key Stage 2 pupils show an increasing factual knowledge of British history, for example through their studies of the Tudors, again helped by an outside visit to the Elizabethan experience at Ufton Court. The use of research methods using books and computers is encouraged through



topic work. In some classes teachers set pupils lively challenges, and pupils respond with enthusiasm. One boy during the inspection demonstrated encyclopaedic knowledge of significant dates in British history. Year 6 pupils have considerable knowledge of the cause and effects of the Second World War, and describe vividly, through letters, their imagined lives as evacuees. Likewise in Year 5's Victorian studies, their letters to Lord Shaftesbury indicate a good knowledge of the social deprivations of the time for many children. In lessons where challenge and pace are less rigorous, pupils do not work as effectively, and at times become restless and inattentive. This was the case in a Year 5 lesson where some lower attaining pupils could not read all the worksheet and so progress was slow. In the same class higher attaining pupils had the same task, found it easy and did not work to best effect.

101. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory overall. However, the very considerable provision of 'hands on' experience, visits and visitors is a significant contribution by teachers to the learning of the pupils. This generates strong enthusiasm for the subject by the pupils, whose response is indicated positively both verbally and in the quality of their written work. They have wide accurate recall of their many historical studies and experiences and enjoy history. Expectations are not always sufficiently high and the quality of pupils' writing and presentation is sometimes untidy and careless. Teachers' use of homework and topic work to support pupils' learning is inconsistent from class to class.
102. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has provided a number of resources as well as using a museum loan service. There is, however, no formal monitoring or assessment of the teaching and learning of history throughout the school, with the consequence that some pupils, especially more able, do not always produce work of a standard reflecting their abilities. The work undertaken in history makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural, personal and social development.

## **INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

103. At the time of the previous inspection overall standards of attainment were judged to be below average, and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. A key issue was to raise standards in information technology throughout the school. Improvement since then has been good and now standards are in line with national expectations at both key stages. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall and provision now meets statutory requirements. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the benefits of good access to software which provides them with support materials to practice their literacy and numeracy skills. Their progress is generally satisfactory, but it is good when work is well matched to their needs.
104. At Key Stage 1 teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to use computers from the early years. They learn very quickly the basics of entering information and using the mouse or key-board to control actions such as scrolling and dragging on the screen. Skills are further developed as pupils in Year 1 use the space bar and cursor competently to move text around the screen to form simple sentences and re-draft their work. Independent work is encouraged as teachers set tasks where pupils follow instructions through headphones. They appraise their own improvements with respect to speed and accuracy, for example, when carrying out numerical tasks. Pupils in Year 2 apply word processing skills to write and edit texts and teachers expect them to apply the correct rules of grammar and punctuation.
105. At Key Stage 2, pupils use the "Compose" programme to create tunes and save their work appropriately on file to later record on tape. Pupils have applied their ICT skills to develop questionnaires and worksheets for their work in other subjects including visits or surveys. Through these applications pupils appreciate the value of computers as tools to help them produce good quality printed material, which can be improved or modified with relative ease. Teachers also encourage the use of ICT for pupils to search for information to support project work. For example, older pupils incorporated text and graphics to illustrate their topic work on Egyptians using information stored on a CD-Rom. In another lesson a good number of pupils working on their 'Evacuees' topic found relevant information from resources including the internet. By applying appropriate skills of cutting and pasting, they incorporated the edited material into some effectively detailed perceptions of what it had been like for evacuees in the

war. With some helpful teacher assistance they were able to transfer digital pictures and enhance the quality of their work. However, evidence of modelling, investigating and interpreting findings is still limited and this is recognised by the school as an area for further development.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers generally have appropriate expectations for the majority of pupils, and where planning is good work is well matched to pupils' abilities. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. At the end of Key Stage 2, teaching is good with an effective mixture of instruction and questioning to promote pupils' learning. Lessons are planned with particular attention to the teaching and development of skills. In the effective lessons teachers explain clearly what pupils are expected to do which gives pupils confidence to attempt new tasks. They encourage pupils to ask questions and this directs the pupils to remain on task. In the computer suite most pupils appear familiar with basic procedures and have positive attitudes to learning, displaying a genuine interest in the subject. They are beginning to use hardware and software with confidence and are developing independence in using a variety of programmes. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are familiar with handling data and communicating information and talk knowledgeably about their work. Many are familiar with the positive attributes of the internet, for example for home shopping, and use of e-mail to increase speed of communications. In classrooms there is less evidence of computers being used regularly, although planning shows teachers do plan well for ICT to support literacy and numeracy topics.
107. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection, and the school is well set to improve further. There is a clear policy and a comprehensive scheme of work based on the nationally recommended guidelines with appropriate programmes of work for all year groups. Teachers' planning includes a range of suitable software to meet the set targets but at present there is no formal assessment of pupils' attainment in the key skills being developed. Resources are good, though it is recognised that as some require regular maintenance, a technician is required. The curriculum co-ordinator is capable and well qualified to develop the subject further throughout the school. She acknowledges more provision is required to extend modelling at both key stages.

## MUSIC

108. The attainment of pupils of all abilities is in line with the average standards expected nationally by the end of both key stages. Satisfactory standards have been maintained.
109. At Key Stage 1 pupils have a basic repertoire of hymns and songs and generally sing satisfactorily. They frequently accompany their singing with clapping and demonstrate a reliable knowledge of rhythm. They follow hand signals and control their own performances accordingly. Pupils are suitably sensitive to differing sounds and discriminate between uncomplicated rhythmic patterns appropriately. Memory, and identification of varying sounds, is developing adequately and pupils demonstrate their own interpretations of such things as a dripping tap or ticking clock.
110. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their singing abilities and standards in that aspect remain satisfactory. They extend their range and experience of music and sing a suitably diverse selection of music. In Year 6 they perform quite demanding part and round singing with some skill. They constructed, for example, a sequence of musical ideas appropriately based on a current World War II evacuee topic. They interpreted the mood of the music effectively. When presenting their efforts they expressed pertinent emotions as well as supply relevant voices.
111. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Classes are always well controlled, so pupils have good opportunity to use their voices and show enthusiasm without losing concentration. Teachers employ effective strategies to encourage pupils to listen well and this has a positive effect on what they hear and learn. In the best teaching a good atmosphere is generated and this serves to stimulate pupils' interest as well as elicit their co-operation. In some classes, insufficient use is made of simple percussion to enrich pupils' learning and to

demonstrate more clearly the effects of differing sounds. There is little evidence of assessment being used to inform targets for improvement.

112. Most pupils enjoy music lessons and good attitudes towards the subject are evident. In assemblies, however, effort and standards are sometimes disappointing as only satisfactory enthusiasm for singing is shown. Pupils respond well to the taped music they listen attentively to in classes. Their appreciation of the emotional messages of music is developed appropriately.
113. The subject is suitably supported in the school by the well-established range of extra-curricular musical opportunities provided including a good range of peripatetic instrument tuition. All pupils are encouraged to participate and enjoy such activities. For example, the choir sings well and benefits from the good opportunities provided to perform at public occasions regularly.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. At the end of both key stages standards in physical education are in line with expectations and overall pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and they make satisfactory progress. This is similar to the judgement made in the previous inspection.
115. Pupils' interest in the subject is stimulated appropriately through the range of activities they experience at both key stages. Teachers' planning ensures all aspects of the subject are addressed and through this systematic approach skills are developed appropriately. Pupils enjoy their lessons; they are interested and, whether working individually or in groups or teams, they are encouraged to work hard. With teachers building in opportunities for demonstrating skills and techniques, pupils follow good examples, and are supported effectively in how to improve. Teachers have secure understanding of the curriculum content and apply appropriate strategies to encourage skills of control, for example in bouncing and travelling with a ball in a lesson in Key Stage 1, and interpreting music in order to move in sequences appropriate to the rhythm. In a good example in Key Stage 2, pupils listened carefully to 'Production Line' music and translated this with some degree of imagination when putting together their dance sequences. A sense of control and self-discipline emerges successfully from these activities. Pupils in Key Stage 1 become appropriately aware of space and their movements within it, and older pupils in Key Stage 2 extend this by managing small delicate movements in conjunction with larger more dramatic actions to good effect. A good feature of some teaching is the time teachers give for pupils to evaluate their own and each others' achievements. In these instances pupils learn from each other and draw on the positive elements to improve their skills. However, where teachers spend too much time on giving presentations or explanations, or they stop and start the flow of lessons too frequently to illustrate points, pupils become inattentive, lose interest and contribute to the overall lack of pace and vigour. In these lessons, learning for a significant number of pupils, who become passive listeners, is unsatisfactory and their general good behaviour is not maintained.
116. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Most lessons are suitably planned and include all the resources appropriate to the activity. This level of organisation has a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Most pupils respond well and clearly enjoy the subject. Pupils take responsibility for setting up apparatus as required in a sensible and orderly manner being well aware of health and safety issues. Planning covers all areas of activity appropriately with sufficient provision for out-door and adventure activities. The school benefits from having its own playing fields, and outdoor pursuits are extended through the range of residential visits the school organises. Pupils' education is enhanced by the very good provision of many suitable extra-curricular sporting activities and this is a strength of the school. The successes the school has enjoyed, for example, in table tennis and football have inspired a good number of pupils to attend the school clubs for these activities.