

# INSPECTION REPORT

## SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Reading

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123038

Headteacher: Mr Philip Marples

Reporting inspector: Michael Renouf - 1638

Dates of inspection: 16th – 20th October 2000

Inspection number: 224629

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grove Road, Sonning Common, Oxfordshire
Postcode:	RG4 9RJ
Telephone number:	0118 9722105
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Simon Clements
Date of previous inspection:	7th October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Michael Renouf	Registered inspector	Art and design; Design and technology; Religious education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Elizabeth Fraser	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Nicholas Hardy	Team inspector	Science; Information and communication technology; Physical education.	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Thomas Prosser	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography; History; Equal opportunities; Special educational needs.	
Gay Wilkinson	Team inspector	English; Music; The Foundation Stage.	How well are pupils taught?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sonning Common Primary School provides for pupils aged from four to eleven. It is bigger than most other primary schools. There were 306 pupils on roll at the start of the school year taught in eleven classes.

Pupils come mainly from the local area, which is to the north of Reading within the county of Oxfordshire. Parents of 6.5 per cent of pupils, below average for the type of school, claim for free meals. The school has identified 19 per cent of pupils, a broadly average figure, as having special educational needs, and three pupils have statements of special educational need. There are no pupils with English as an additional language, and one pupil from a minority ethnic group. Children begin school at the start of the term in which they have their fifth birthday, attending part-time for the first term. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and show a full range of attainments on entry to the school, which overall are above average.

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

Much of the teaching is good and pupils' attainments by the time they leave school are at least in line with national expectations, and have been higher in recent years. Pupils' attitudes to school, their personal development, and the behaviour of most of them are good. Aspects of leadership are good and have contributed to the development of the strengths in the school. Despite some areas needing improvement, the school is generally effective, and provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides good leadership in having established and in maintaining an open ethos and an effective partnership with parents, the community and other schools.
- Standards in music are good across the school; standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving, and are now good in Key Stage 1.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- There is a very good programme for pupils' personal and social development, which promotes initiative, responsibility and good relationships.
- The curriculum is extended well by a good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Relationships with other schools and playgroups, and links with the community are strengths of the school. Links with the special school on the same site and the integration programme are good in helping to develop pupils' understanding of, and respect for, others.
- Procedures for managing and improving behaviour are good, and the school works closely with parents and pupils to plan them and to make them effective.
- Parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is a strength, particularly in Key Stage 1.

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

- Curriculum development needs to be planned more clearly and systematically, and be based on a rigorous analysis of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' learning in Key Stage 1 is uneven, and overall they should achieve more.
- Day-to-day assessment of how well pupils are doing is underdeveloped and, as a result, the information is not contributing enough to the planning of future learning.
- Pupils are withdrawn too often from lessons for a wide range of different activities, and this disrupts their learning and class progress.

- Homework contributes to pupils' learning, but its use is inconsistent in Key Stage 2.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Test results have improved overall in the period since the last inspection, although there has been a fall recently, but they show recovery at Key Stage 2. There has been a substantial improvement in the proportion of good teaching across the school, especially in Key Stage 2. Standards in ICT and music have risen in Key Stage 1. The school has responded satisfactorily to the weaknesses identified at the last inspection in October 1996. Provision for religious education and pupils' attainment in the subject are now appropriate. There are now schemes of work for all subjects, although some need further development. Sound procedures have been established for assessing and recording pupils' attainment over time, but day-to-day assessment is still underdeveloped. Procedures for monitoring the progress and success of the school development plan have been put in place. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is now good; previously some aspects had been unsatisfactory. Overall, improvement has been what would be expected and the school has maintained its cost-effectiveness.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			*similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	C	C	E
Mathematics	B	B	C	E
Science	A	B	C	D

**Key**

well above average above      A

average                                B

average                                C

below average                        D

well below average                 E

\*The method for identifying similar schools is the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Results in 1999 appear to be low due to a cohort with an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. However, the performance of higher attainers remained above average in English and mathematics. The free school meals indicator may not adequately reflect the circumstances of the school. In comparison with schools that had a similar intake from Key Stage 1 in 1995, the results at Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that pupils' progress in all three subjects was well above average.

Trends in pupils' attainment at Year 6 have broadly followed the national upward trend, with school results overall above national averages, but they moved towards average in 1999. Test results in 2000 at Key Stage 2 show improvement in all three subjects, in line with the national rising trend, including a significant percentage of pupils attaining a higher level in English and mathematics. Information on their comparison with similar schools is not yet available.

Attainments of the children early on in the Foundation Stage reflect the wide and overall above average profile of attainment on entry. At the end of Key Stage 1, although test results fell in 1999, the overall performance of pupils at Year 2 was in line with the national average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessment of science showed standards well above the national average. Test results fell again in 2000 and were significantly below average in reading and writing, and close to average in mathematics. Results in science were below the national average.

The findings of the inspection show average standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science at both key stages. Attainment in speaking and listening often exceeds national expectations across the school. In all other subjects, including religious education, standards are at least appropriate for the ages of the pupils across the school, and in ICT at Key Stage 1, and in music at both key stages, standards are above national expectations.

The school set appropriate targets for 2000. Pupils' achievements by the time they leave school are satisfactory. However, at Key Stage 1, although some pupils attain at an above average level, the proportion in recent cohorts has seldom been above the national average, and sometimes it has been below. In relation to the overall and steady pattern of above average attainment on entry, standards should be higher by the end of Year 2.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school; they are interested and involved in activities and enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well in classrooms, but in some lessons the poor behaviour of some pupils adversely affects learning. Behaviour around the school is generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, and often show maturity and sensitivity. Relationships amongst pupils and with adults are good.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average, and the school day starts promptly.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, with some examples of good teaching, but a small number of lessons were unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good in English, and in mathematics, half of all the teaching was good and the rest was satisfactory. The use of the national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are helping these skills to be taught well.

Strengths in teaching across the curriculum include teachers' good subject knowledge and understanding, the use of effective teaching methods and good management of pupils. There are occasions when teachers' expectations of pupils are not high enough, particularly in Key Stage 1. In these lessons work does not match the needs and attainments of all pupils, often because of unclear objectives for lessons and for groups of pupils. However, in most lessons, the needs of all pupils are reasonably met.

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 92 per cent of lessons across the school. In 5 per cent it was very good. Good teaching, seen in nearly half of all lessons, take place in both key stages but more so in Key Stage 2, where the very good teaching was seen. Eight per cent of all lessons were unsatisfactory, mainly in Key Stage 1. The quality of pupils' learning was closely related to that of teaching in all the lessons seen, and as a result, in most cases pupils made satisfactory or, as often, good progress in their work.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Sound, and extended by the provision of French and a good range of extra-curricular activities at Key Stage 2. Meets statutory requirements. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. When pupils leave lessons for other activities this affects some curriculum provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Good individual education plans are reviewed regularly.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The programme for pupils' personal and social development is very good. Provision for pupils' moral development is good, and for their spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a caring ethos in the school, and pupils feel valued, safe and secure. Pupils' personal development is well supported. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic performance and personal development are satisfactory.

The very good links with parents and the local community are significant factors in the school's success.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership in promoting an open ethos in the school and effective partnerships. The leadership of developments by the senior staff is insufficiently clear, nor based on a rigorous enough analysis of needs.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities, and are playing an increasingly effective part in monitoring the development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The year-on-year performance of pupils is now being monitored satisfactorily. There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning and this leads to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Better procedures for monitoring the development plan have been introduced.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources and support staff are used well. The school is generally applying the principles of best value appropriately in its use of resources.

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is never less than satisfactory. The level of support staff is good, and learning resources for pupils with special educational needs and for music, design and technology and ICT are good.

## 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 teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and to achieve their best.</li> <li>• They feel their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them and they are consulted on most matters.</li> <li>• An interesting range of extra-curricular activities is provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents do not feel sufficiently well informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• Some parents are not satisfied that behaviour in the school is good.</li> <li>• Some parents are not happy with the amount of work their children are given to do at home, and feel it is not given regularly.</li> </ul>

Several parents made positive comments about the work of the headteacher and the staff, and about the good ethos of the school. Some parents expressed concern about the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Inspectors' findings support parents' positive views. However, although pupils often make good progress there is room for improvement, particularly in Key Stage 1. Inspectors judge that the information available to parents is good. Most parents find the school approachable should they want any additional information.

Parents are right to be concerned about behaviour. There are weaknesses in some pupils' work habits and general behaviour in lessons, but the school is working positively to address this. However, some management of pupils in lessons is unsatisfactory on occasions.

The provision of homework is guided by a generally stated policy that has been shared with parents. Its lack of precision contributes to inconsistency in the amount and regularity of homework in Key Stage 2.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs is judged to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The first group of children to enter the Foundation Stage, which runs to the end of the reception year, had just started school in the term of the inspection. In all aspects of the curriculum for the Foundation Stage their attainments were in line with those expected for their ages. Children settle well in the class, listen attentively, and develop their early reading and writing skills appropriately. They learn to count, and to recognise and write numerals. Children investigate materials, grow plants, talk about the past, and use tools, construction kits, art materials and computers purposefully.

2. In the tests taken by pupils in Year 2 at the end of Key Stage 1, standards generally rose from 1996 to 1998 but fell in 1999. Nevertheless, in 1999, the percentage of pupils who achieved the national expectation in reading was in line with the national average, in writing standards were well above average and in mathematics they were very high. In writing, the percentage reaching the higher level, level 3, was above average. The overall performance of the pupils in these subjects, when compared with all schools, was average in reading, well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' performance was well below average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. However, test results fell again in 2000 and are significantly below average in reading and writing, and close to average in mathematics. Teacher assessment of science shows that the percentage of pupils attaining the national expectation was well above average in 1999. Results in science have fallen to below the national percentage in 2000.

3. In the tests taken by pupils in Year 6 at the end of Key Stage 2 standards have improved overall since the last inspection. Despite some dips in standards in 1998 and 1999, they have remained above their 1996 levels. In addition, there has been a recovery in English in 1999, and this has continued in 2000, along with improvements in mathematics and science, all in line with improvements nationally. In 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level, level 5, was above average in English and mathematics, and this percentage rose again in 2000 in English and science. The overall performance of the pupils in these subjects in 1999, when compared with all schools, was average in all three subjects. When compared with similar schools, however, pupils' performance was well below average in English and mathematics, and below average in science. Information on the performance of pupils in 2000 in comparison with similar schools is not yet available.

4. Trends show that the attainment of the oldest pupils from 1996 to 1999 in English, mathematics and science has followed the national upward trend, with school results above national averages, but moving towards average in 1999. At Key Stage 1, although a proportion of pupils attain at an above average level, this is seldom above the national percentage. In relation to the overall and steady pattern of above average attainment on entry, standards should be higher. While standards at Key Stage 2 remain average overall, they are improving, and include a higher percentage of pupils than Key Stage 1 attaining at an above average level, often above the national percentages.

5. The method for identifying similar schools is the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. In comparison with schools that had a similar intake from Key Stage 1 in 1995, the results at Key Stage 2 in 1999 show that pupils' progress in all three subjects was well above average. Results in comparison with similar schools in 1999 appear to be low due to a small cohort with an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The performance of higher attainers remained above average in English and mathematics.
6. The performance of boys and girls is broadly similar to the national pattern, but at Key Stage 2, boys in this school are doing better than boys nationally.
7. The school uses tests each year to help set targets for year groups. Pupils' progress is checked each term and targets are reviewed annually. The school anticipated below average performance at Year 6 in 1999 in English and mathematics, but the targets were exceeded. The school set appropriate targets for 2000, revising them upwards from a lower figure to be more challenging. In English it was exceeded. The target for mathematics was not achieved by a small margin.
8. Standards seen in the inspection in English at both key stages are in line with the expected levels set by the National Curriculum. This broadly matches test results at Key Stage 2, but test results at Key Stage 1 have been more varied in the last two years. Attainment in speaking and listening often exceeds national expectations across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils are eager to take part in discussions, and express themselves clearly and confidently. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand formal language structures and express themselves confidently using a wide vocabulary and take good account of what other pupils say.
9. In both key stages reading standards match national averages overall. At Key Stage 1, the sample of readers heard broadly reflects the range of attainment expected. By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils read a variety of texts, and make mature, personal responses to the ideas expressed. They have well-developed study skills and scan texts for information accurately. The proportion of attainment at a higher level reflects the national improvement.
10. The content and quality of pupils' writing match national expectations at the end of both key stages. The imaginative writing of the more able pupils is particularly good. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils use an appropriate quality of cursive writing consistently. However, there is a significant proportion of pupils whose spelling is inconsistent, including key words. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can plan their writing suitably and write extensively, using complex sentences and paragraphs in an appropriate style. They present their work well, using fluent handwriting, accurate spelling and correct punctuation.
11. In both key stages there are good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, they carefully record what they have learned in science and write fictional narratives in history. Speaking and listening skills, and vocabulary, are developed in discussion activities related to all areas of the curriculum.
12. In mathematics, standards in the work seen are broadly in line with the national averages at the end of both key stages. In Key Stage 1, pupils' numeracy skills are developing satisfactorily overall, but higher attaining pupils are not consistently challenged at an appropriate level. At the end of Key Stage 2, a significant number of pupils are achieving standards that are higher than expected

for their age. Standards in numeracy reflect the overall pattern of pupils' attainments. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in science when recording data, drawing up tally charts and creating graphs, for example, of temperatures. Some work in design and technology shows the careful use of measurement and shape.

13. In science, standards in the work seen broadly match national averages at the end of both key stages. There is a clear, good focus on investigative work across the school. However, more able pupils do not always make the progress they should, especially when more challenging tasks are not provided to enable them to work at a greater pace and at a higher level.

14. The findings of the inspection show standards overall in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages in design and technology, history, geography, art and design, physical education and religious education. Some of the attainment seen in religious education in Key Stage 2 was good, particularly the quality of discussion by pupils in Year 6. Standards in ICT are above national expectations at Key Stage 1, and in line with them at Key Stage 2. Standards in music are above expectations at both key stages.

15. There is no evident variation in the performance of pupils from different backgrounds. Those with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainments and the targets set for them. This is a result of the good specialist support they receive and the carefully structured work. More able pupils generally do well by the time they leave school. Attainments at the higher level in tests are often above national averages at Key Stage 2, although this is seldom the case at Key Stage 1.

16. The proportion of good teaching across the school has improved. As a result, the quality of learning and achievement seen across all lessons are often good in both key stages. This has the potential to lead towards higher levels of performance at the end of the key stages.

17. The attainment of children on entry to the reception class is overall above average. In Key Stage 1, the level of demand placed on pupils in lessons is not always satisfactory. There were occasions when opportunities to promote higher achievement were not developed. This is reflected in test results where, although an average percentage of pupils has generally achieved the higher level in tests, a greater proportion of higher attainment could be expected. Achievement by pupils in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. While overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are average, there is a significant proportion of higher attainment, indicating that pupils are making sound progress. The well above average grade for the progress made by the 1999 cohort of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in comparison with similar schools partly reflects this. Many parents rightly comment that their children are expected to work hard and to achieve their best. They feel their children are making good progress, and in nearly half of all lessons learning is good.

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

18. Pupil's positive attitudes to learning, and their interest and involvement in lessons and other activities make a significant contribution to their academic progress and to their personal development. Parents value their children's enjoyment of school and the strong community spirit.

19. Pupils' attitudes to their work are generally good. Generally, pupils show a lively interest in all the activities they are involved in. Most pupils listen attentively in class and are confident and willing to take an active role in discussions. Pupils generally work well

together in groups and share opinions in a friendly and positive way. They work with interest and concentration. Most pupils take a pride in their work, and show increasing confidence in tackling the work they are given without undue adult support. However, some pupils, particularly some boys in Key Stage 1, find it difficult to maintain attention and settle to work.

20. The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well. Pupils know and value the school and class rules, and are pleased that they were involved in drawing up the rules and also the behaviour management policy. Pupils are polite and enjoy talking to visitors about their work. They show respect for school and each other's property, use equipment and resources sensibly and take responsibility for putting things away. However, the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils can have a disproportionate effect on the rest of the class when this is not managed effectively. In some physical education lessons, for example, poor behaviour had an adverse effect on the whole lesson so that little was achieved. On occasions, some pupils lack self-discipline and call out rather than wait their turn, while high noise levels in one class can distract pupils in another class. There has been one exclusion, for a fixed-period, in the past year.

21. Pupils' personal development is good. They relate well to adults and to each other. Pupils support each other, and respect each other's views and feelings in a caring manner. They generally collaborate well within lessons and work well within groups when required, and are able to express views and opinions. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 3, pupils worked very well in pairs drawing symbols to represent God. In Year 6, pupils were able to develop a discussion on the value of working together into thinking about strategies for drawing more solitary individuals into a group. Pupils show a high level of empathy for pupils with special educational needs, and they are considerate for their well-being in lessons as part of the school's inclusion programme, and in the playground and on visits out of school.

22. In personal and social education lessons in both key stages, pupils took part in a mature and sensitive way in discussions on team working, the school theme of the week. They identified the strengths of teamwork as well as strategies for overcoming difficulties in working together. Pupils very readily accept the responsibilities they are given. For example, Year 2 pupils look after the new arrivals in the reception class, and Year 4 pupils have taken part in a friendship programme with pupils from the special school on the same site. They also developed sensory books in literacy hour for the most profoundly disabled pupils. During the inspection, older pupils were observed helping younger ones to find somewhere to sit for assembly without any adult prompting, and clearing leaves from the sculpture outside the main entrance.

23. During the inspection, the regular session of the school council was chaired ably by a pupil, who listened courteously to everyone's views and invited full participation in debate. All the members carefully considered realistic and practical ways to improve the school environment, and planned future charitable fund-raising activities. Pupils demonstrated a mature level of realism, and an awareness of both time and financial constraints. The school council discussed very sensitively and with a high degree of awareness the preparation of a summary of child rights, taken from the United Nation's charter on children's rights, which they plan to present to the whole school at a forthcoming assembly.

24. Attendance is good, with above average attendance and below average unexplained or unauthorised absences. Punctuality has improved since the last inspection. Registration periods form an efficient and positive start to the school day.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

25. Just over half of all teaching is at least good, and some in Key Stage 2 is very good. Eight per cent of all lessons were unsatisfactory, mainly in Key Stage 1. Since the last inspection, the proportion of good teaching has risen in both key stages, more so in Key Stage 2. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has almost halved, but the instances of it are now mainly in Key Stage 1 rather than in Key Stage 2, as previously. The quality of pupils' learning across the school was closely related to the quality of teaching in all the lessons seen, and as a result, learning is mainly satisfactory or good.

26. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is never less than satisfactory and sometimes good. Classroom activities for literacy and numeracy activities are well planned, with clear learning objectives and adult-led activities that promote progress. Weekly and daily planning in some other areas of learning also identify learning objectives. However, there are no recorded learning objectives for children's free play that would help ensure progress. Sound use is made of the initial assessment of children's attainment soon after entry into school to plan appropriate work, particularly for those who have special educational needs. The systematic ongoing observation of all children, particularly with regard to learning through play, is not in place. An important contributory factor to children's learning and achievement in the reception class is the good work of the learning support assistants.

27. At Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this means that they plan and teach with confidence. In the best teaching, lessons are delivered with good pace and are well managed and organised with a range of appropriate and interesting activities. Questioning is used skilfully to help pupils to both recall previous learning and understand new ideas, for example in whole class work in literacy lessons, and appropriate emphasis is given to the correct use of technical language across the curriculum. In the most successful lessons teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and provide activities that match their needs and promote good learning. On the few occasions when teaching is unsatisfactory, some pupils' disruptive behaviour is not well managed and this disturbs the work ethos of the classroom, the productivity of the lesson and pupils' learning. There are also occasions when teachers' expectations of what pupils might achieve are insufficiently high for some pupils.

28. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good overall. High expectations, along with very good classroom management and organisation, are strong features of much of the teaching, and promote good learning. Good subject knowledge that enables the skilful use of questions to prompt pupils' thinking is also characteristic of the good teaching. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher successfully helped pupils to develop their understanding of how music can be used to express emotion and mood.

29. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, with some instances of good teaching. There was a small number of unsatisfactory lessons in these subjects. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good in English, and in mathematics all teaching was at least satisfactory and half was good. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are used appropriately and contribute well to the overall standards of teaching in English and mathematics.

30. There are aspects of successful teaching common to both key stages. The good relationships between teachers and pupils in most instances are a positive feature of the school. In all classes teachers know their pupils well. In literacy and numeracy lessons, teachers target their questions during whole class or group discussion in such a way that ensures all pupils can participate. Teachers value what pupils have to say during discussions, regardless of whether it is inaccurate or appropriate, and this successfully fosters pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.

31. The planning of lessons is conscientious, and teachers make good use of the policies and schemes of work. However, the planning for lessons does not include consistently clear learning objectives or focuses for assessment. As a result, the quality of such assessment is variable and does not contribute effectively to the planning of future learning. This was a weakness identified at the last inspection that has not been fully dealt with. Some lessons provided insufficient challenge and learning opportunities to meet the needs of all the pupils, particularly in Key Stage 1 where, for example, more able pupils in a numeracy lesson finished their assignment very quickly and then had to wait for it to be marked. For them, there was insufficient demand, and an insufficiently purposeful and independent work rate. Marking of pupils' work is usually thorough, but there are inconsistencies amongst teachers with regard to the use of written comments that help pupils to improve their work,

32. Homework is set in both key stages and generally contributes to pupils' learning. Pupils across the school take home books and spellings to learn. In addition, in Key Stage 2, pupils are also given other tasks, such as research or the preparation of talks, to do at home, but this was not consistent or regular enough to support learning well and to prepare them for the next phase in their schooling.

33. Good provision is made in both key stages for pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, and pupils learn well and make good progress. There is a high awareness of the needs of pupils with special educational needs amongst all the teaching and support staff. Work is well planned to match the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans. Learning support assistants play a significant part in pupils' progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with the class teachers, and provides effective support. Class teachers, however, are not always able to reinforce the extra help given to these pupils, as some is provided in isolation to the ongoing class work. Individual sessions focus mainly on improving reading and language. Mathematics help is mainly provided within the classroom through group and individual work. Class teachers are generally effective in meeting the needs of more able pupils increasingly as they progress through Key Stage 2, and this leads to the significant proportion of higher attainment at Year 6.

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

34. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage covers all the relevant areas of learning. Currently, because of building work, outdoor play activities are limited. The school works suitably from the new national guidance but has not yet established its own scheme of work to deliver the curriculum in a co-ordinated and prepared way.

35. The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory across the school. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been introduced satisfactorily. Appropriate time is allowed for the teaching of mathematics, and additional time is being given to the teaching of literacy skills in Key Stage 1. All other subjects have a suitable allocation of time. In addition to the statutory curriculum, French is taught to broaden the pupils' experience and to prepare them for secondary education, but withdrawal for this subject does not always dovetail smoothly with class activities. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. The provision for religious education was unsatisfactory at the last inspection and its improvement was a key issue. This weakness has been dealt with successfully, through the provision of a good scheme of work and the monitoring of planning and of regular assessments.

36. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and this is an improvement on the last inspection where the lack of such guidance was a key issue for improvement. In addition to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the school has adopted guidance from local and national sources, and also commercial materials. Where well-structured schemes of work are in place, standards are improving, although there is still a need to modify curriculum documents in order to meet more closely the needs of the pupils and the school. Some schemes of work, such as that for art, do not have enough detail to be a sufficient guide to teachers. One of the school's aims is to educate the whole child, and its programme of personal, social and health education is very good in helping it to realise this aim. Sex education and the attention given to drug misuse are appropriate. Links with other primary and secondary schools in the area are good, and links with feeder playgroups and the attached special school are particularly good.

37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that are reviewed regularly. The targets set out in these plans relate to small, measurable steps and are shared with parents

38. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2, which enhances and enriches the curriculum for them. Sporting activities such as football, netball and chess cater for the needs of both girls and boys who play in mixed teams. Pupils take part in team matches against other schools, and enjoy a good measure of success. Regular residential visits for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 increase pupils' opportunities to learn about aspects of life beyond the classroom. Links with other schools, such as playing in a combined orchestra, and visitors, such as artists and musicians, contribute well to the quality and range of pupils' learning experiences.

39. The provision made for the personal development of pupils, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good overall. Both religious education and circle time provide pupils with time for reflection on their lives and their relationships with others. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is promoted through school assemblies and through many informal and planned opportunities in lessons. Pupils are able to reflect on the deeper meanings of

their lives, and learn through some assemblies and through religious education lessons that prayer is a way of communicating with God. However, while assemblies are often inspirational and reflective, they do not consistently give sufficient recognition of a deity to meet the statutory requirements for collective worship. Religious education lessons enable pupils to understand what Christianity means to some people and what people of other faiths believe.

40. Moral understanding is promoted well through assemblies but is also evident throughout the school. Values of honesty, fairness and sense of what is right and wrong are promoted effectively. The school's behaviour policy is a helpful guide for teachers and pupils to learn to put their thoughts and ideas into action by creating their own rules. These are reflected in the quality of behaviour around the school and respect that most pupils have for each other.

41. Provision for pupils' social development is very good, both in the structured Human Values teaching programme and through the range of other opportunities provided for them. Pupils are able to take part in residential educational visits from Year 4 to Year 6 and this helps to extend their social skills well. They develop negotiating skills through the school council, and pupils take their roles and responsibilities very seriously. Relationships through the provision of good role models provided by staff encourage the development respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. A clear link to this is the fund-raising for charities initiated by pupils. Pupils are also involved, together with a dedicated band of parent helpers, to improve the environment of the school mostly through projects in the school grounds. Close links with the special school on the same site provide very effective opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the abilities and needs of others.

42. Cultural development is satisfactory. The school welcomes visitors from other faiths into school but as yet makes no visits to their places of worship. Through studies in history and geography, pupils develop a satisfactory view of their own heritage and that of others around the world. They take part in musical festivals and experience the music of other cultures such as African, Australian aboriginal and South American through recorded music in assemblies and, during the inspection, a musician playing the didgeridoo. African art forms have been studied. Although elements of pupils' cultural development are appropriately covered, there is scope for developing wider cultural and multicultural links.

43. The methods used at the school generally provide equality of access for all pupils and there is no evidence found to indicate that any groups or individuals are advantaged or disadvantaged within the classrooms. The school has procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school also attempts to identify higher attaining pupils and there is a policy indicating how their needs can be met. Higher attainers generally do well in tests at Year 6, but their needs are not consistently met across the school.

44. Equality of opportunity is compromised when pupils are withdrawn for activities that are not well planned in relation to class lessons. On some occasions, pupils miss part of the class lesson, but the progress of the class lesson is also affected as the teaching is repeated when these pupils return. Pupils regularly leave lessons, and assembly on one occasion, in small or large groups for French, swimming, instrumental tuition, help from learning support assistants, special needs teaching and reading to volunteer helpers. These disruptions affect pupils' learning and the working atmosphere of classrooms. The quality of curriculum provision is also eroded on such occasions. For example, in a physical education lesson, a continuous stream of pupils left and returned to the lesson after changing reading books. On their return, pupils were unsure what to do and this lowered the quality of the learning opportunity.

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

45. The school takes good care of its pupils, and this aspect of the school's work has been maintained since the last inspection. The monitoring of pupils' performance has improved. Parents value the high level of care and concern shown for their children, and appreciate how well teachers and assistants know their children. Members of staff are very responsive to pupils' needs. Pupils appreciate that staff help them to do their best in lessons, and they feel safe in school. Parents are confident that teachers are approachable and will deal with concerns effectively. They value the positive ethos and community spirit. Parents are particularly positive about the induction programme, and are pleased with how well the youngest children settle into school. The school shows a high level of sensitivity in the support and encouragement given to pupils with physical disabilities, and the success of their inclusion is a strength of the school. The school has appropriate arrangements for child protection and liaises closely with other agencies where there are concerns.

46. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Since the last inspection, there has been an emphasis on developing strategies for promoting positive attitudes and behaviour, and their personal development. A significant minority of parents have some concerns about the adverse effect of the poor behaviour of some pupils on the rest of the class, but they also recognise that the school is working effectively to support pupils with behaviour problems and to minimise disruption. They appreciate the involvement of pupils, governors and parents in developing the new behaviour management policy, which has been implemented this term. Teachers generally deal with inappropriate behaviour quickly, and issues are discussed fully with pupils. Teachers help pupils well to set targets for improving skills or behaviour as well as for academic improvement, and pupils enjoy earning team points for both academic and personal success and achievement. The school successfully promotes an awareness of care and concern for others, and there is a very effective anti-bullying climate. The recently introduced human values element of the personal and social education programme is most effective in encouraging pupils to explore ideas and values, and supports pupils' awareness of their responsibilities as members of the school community.

47. The school promotes good attendance by following up unexplained absences and reminding parents of their responsibilities and the attendance procedures. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good.

48. Pupils are well supervised at work, at play and on visits out of school. The committed team of midday supervisory assistants works together very effectively to ensure break-time is as safe as well as pleasurable time. However, there are some areas of the playground that are difficult to supervise effectively. The storage of equipment and furniture surplus to current requirements in various covered outside areas is potentially hazardous, particularly in areas near where pupils are playing.

49. The year-on-year performance of pupils is now being monitored satisfactorily. The school has recently introduced a new assessment policy. It provides guidance on the assessment of lessons and units of work, and for the longer term tracking of the progress of pupils. Arrangements for the latter have been put in place. The information from nationally provided annual tests in Key Stage 2, and other termly assessments in English, mathematics, science, and religious education contribute to a useful view on how pupils and year groups are progressing. The information is used effectively to identify appropriate targets at Year 6, and has also been used appropriately to inform decisions about teaching arrangements for particular year groups. Individual targets are agreed with pupils in Key Stage 2, and these are shared with parents at the start of the school year.

50. The overall approaches of the school in these areas contribute well to the attitudes and achievements of pupils.

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

51. The relationship between the school and its parents is a particular strength of the school, and has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents and carers are supportive of the school and the values it promotes, and their involvement in their children's learning at school, especially in Key Stage 1, and at home contributes to the strong community ethos. Parents appreciate that they are actively encouraged to be involved in the life and the work of the school. They find the headteacher and staff approachable.

52. Parents are kept well informed about all areas of school life through well-written documentation, such as the school prospectus, regular newsletters from the headteacher and from governors, displays and notices around the school. Parents are positive about the well-structured induction programme.

53. The annual pupil reports provide a good summary of the work undertaken by pupils, enlivened by some perceptive comments on pupils' strengths and areas for development. The reports give a good picture of the pupils as individuals, and test results give a clear indication of how well pupils are doing against national expectations. Pupils are involved in setting targets for improvement in areas such as literacy and numeracy and personal development, and these are discussed with parents at the consultation meetings. Parents can also discuss reports with teachers at the end of the summer term. There is one formal consultation session a year for parents, but in addition they can also discuss progress at the curriculum meeting held at the beginning of the year in each class. Curriculum meetings and workshops are very well attended and parents' views are sought at the regular open meetings with the headteacher.

54. The school provides a very good range of informal and formal opportunities for parents to be involved with their children's learning and the life and work of the school. Parents are generally well consulted about changes and developments, such as the proposals for the new community school library due to be opened later in the year.

55. The school makes very good use of the personal and professional skills of parents and other friends of the school to support a wide range of work and activities. The commitment and contribution of parents and friends of the school to many aspects of school life are much appreciated and valued by teachers. Parents support pupils' learning through homework, although some parents do have valid concerns that the frequency of homework varies. Parents make very perceptive comments in the home reading diaries, and have useful dialogues with teachers that support their children's progress. A committed group of parents and other friends of the school provides regular help during the literacy hour. Parents and friends also help with art, swimming, extra-curricular activities and off-site visits.

56. The active and hard working parents' association organises a very full and varied programme of social events and activities. As a result of their work and the high level of support given by the parent body, significant and generous funds are raised to extend the school curriculum and school environment.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher provides good leadership in promoting an open and participative ethos in the school and effective partnerships with parents, the community and other schools. This is a strong feature of the school that is recognised and appreciated by the majority of parents. The ethos of a caring school has been maintained since the last inspection, and this contributes well to the good personal and social development of the pupils. The headteacher has also maintained a ready availability and is responsive to calls on his time. A participative approach enables all members of staff to contribute ideas and try things out.

58. However, the headteacher, deputy head and other senior staff do not exercise a sufficiently clear strategic role in the school's real and shared commitment to improvement, and this is unsatisfactory. The school management team meets only approximately once each half term and does not have a vigorous enough role in planning developments. As a result of this, for example, a wide range of curriculum activities has been provided that does not dovetail with class lessons and assemblies. A reading initiative in Key Stage 1, which came from the class teachers and was then referred to the co-ordinator, is being implemented differently in different classes because of the availability of helpers. Its introduction was not based on a detailed analysis of needs.

59. Co-ordinators draw up development plans for their subject areas but these are seldom based on any direct observation of teaching and learning in their subjects. Some plans have identified well some needs in the subject areas, but others tend to be a list of activities to be undertaken rather than agendas for improvement, and there are no action plans to take the work forward. There has been some monitoring of the teaching of literacy and numeracy to support the introduction of the national strategies. However, senior staff members are not routinely monitoring teaching and learning to identify strengths and weaknesses, or to investigate the varying performance of pupils. The headteacher is aware of some of the strengths amongst the teachers, but these are not used sufficiently to influence the rest.

60. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well by the special educational needs co-ordinator. A governor has a link role for special educational needs, and keeps well informed through visits to the school and the observation of teaching for these pupils.

61. The school has dealt satisfactorily with the weaknesses identified at the last inspection and has also improved in several other areas. The school development plan has improved since the last inspection. It now includes clear priorities, with action plans and arrangements for monitoring the progress and success of the plan. This was a key issue. The priorities have been identified by the headteacher and discussed with the staff and governors. The priorities are appropriate whole-school issues; the tracking of pupils' progress, behaviour management and new procedures for teachers' performance management, and action on them is scheduled for the current school year. However, there is not an adequate or rigorous enough system for identifying any aspects of teaching and learning that might or should come forward as a school priority.

62. The governing body keeps itself informed appropriately on the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including through the work of its committees. Alternate meetings are held at the end of the school day, and governors visit classrooms during the afternoon session beforehand. This helps them to keep in touch with the work of the school. Governors receive regular reports from the headteacher, and individual governors linked to areas of the school's work, such as literacy,

numeracy and special educational needs, have observed lessons and reported to the full governing body. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities, including addressing some minor omissions in its annual report to parents, and plans to be in an increasingly good position to account for the performance of the school by making the school development plan a regular agenda item at their meetings. Governors keep parents well informed through a regular newsletter and a detailed annual report, although it has lacked the specifically required information on the provision for disabled pupils, and rates of authorised absence.

63. All resources, including funds for staff development, are used satisfactorily. Resources for special educational needs are good, and there is room for groups to work without interruption. Computers are used well across the school. The school is generally applying the principles of best value appropriately in its use of resources. Governors question carefully the use of the funds available to them. They consider carefully the use of the budget to support the priorities in the school development plan, and other priorities, such as the good level of support staff, that have been identified. Learning resources for all subjects are at least satisfactory, and for music, design and technology and ICT they are good. No weaknesses in resources affecting the quality of education and the standards achieved were identified. The school will soon have access to a new community library built on the school site, which will also be the school's main reference library. This is a promising venture that reflects the school's strong links with the community.

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

To improve further the achievements of pupils and the standards they attain, the following steps should be taken:

### **The headteacher should ensure a clear direction for the school by:**

- ensuring a more active role for the school management team in steering the work of the school;
- establishing a planned programme of classroom observation to identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning;
- ensuring that classroom observations by senior staff and subject co-ordinators are based on clear criteria discussed with teachers;
- agreeing with the staff and the governing body the priorities for the development of teaching and the curriculum to inform the planning and funding of improvements;
- ensuring that the headteacher and senior staff have well-focused roles in relation to the identified priorities.

(paras. 59, 60, 62, 96, 104, 114, 124, 130, 149)

### **Improve pupils' learning and overall achievement in Key Stage 1 by:**

- setting high expectations consistently in all lessons by identifying more precise and challenging learning objectives, including for pupils of different prior attainments;
- identifying and sharing the strengths in the best teaching.

(paras. 16, 27, 31, 83, 94, 102, 103, 129 )

### **Improve day-to-day assessment across the school by:**

- planning more consistently precise learning objectives and assessment intentions for lessons, to inform the planning of subsequent lessons.

(paras. 31, 84, 96, 103, 115, 119, 137)

### **Remove the disruption to individual's' learning and to the class lessons when pupils are withdrawn for other activities by:**

- reviewing the timetables for out-of-class activities;
- seeking to ensure that the work pupils do when withdrawn is complementary to the work underway in class;
- evaluating the costs and benefits of the wide range of activities pupils leave class for.

(parags. 44, 59)

### **Plan a more consistent approach to the provision of homework in Key Stage 2. (paragraph 32)**

### **Other issues which should be considered by the school**

- Ensure that all acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. (para. 39)

- Ensure that the governors' annual report gives parents all the required information. (para. 63)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	48	39	8	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	306
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	20

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

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

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

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

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.5%
National comparative data	5.4%

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.2%
National comparative data	0.5%

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Numbered of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	19	17	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	19
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	31	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (77)	94 (87)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	18
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	35	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (87)	97 (100)	97 (96)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Numbered of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	15
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (88)	71 (87)	83 (96)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	13
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	71 (64)	74 (66)	77 (74)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	290
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.3
Average class size	27.8

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

Total number of education support staff	14.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	176

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	547654
Total expenditure	538732
Expenditure per pupil	1761
Balance brought forward from previous year	3706
Balance carried forward to next year	12628

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	306
Number of questionnaires returned	107

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

(Totals do not always equal 100 due to rounding)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	51	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	57	9	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	10	58	21	10	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	50	20	7	3
The teaching is good.	36	58	5	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	47	25	7	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	37	5	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	53	10	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	49	15	3	1
The school is well led and managed.	35	50	10	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	57	2	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	40	11	2	6

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

Several parents made positive comments about the work of the headteacher and the staff, and about the good ethos of the school. Some parents expressed concern about the quality of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

### **THE FOUNDATION CURRICULUM FOR RECEPTION PUPILS**

64. Children are admitted at the beginning of the term in which they become five into the reception class, which also provides for pupils in Year 1. All children attend part-time during their first term and attend full-time at the beginning of their second term in school. At the time of the inspection there were 14 Foundation Stage children in the reception class. Baseline assessments are carried out during the first half of the term following admission. Children come from a wide range of backgrounds and show a full range of attainments on entry to the school, which overall are above average.

65. The quality of teaching across all areas of learning is never less than satisfactory and sometimes it is good. The quality of children's learning matches this, and children are on course to generally achieve the expectations for the end of the Foundation Stage, which is at the end of the reception year. Some are on course to exceed them, matching the overall above average range of attainment on entry. It is not possible to compare this with standards at the last inspection, as they were not reported.

66. The reception class gives priority to children's personal, social and emotional development and they make good progress in this aspect of their development. Teaching is good and children settle well and show a sound understanding of daily routines. They sit quietly and are well behaved during registration and when adults are talking, sometimes for extended periods of time. They listen carefully to others, answer questions, and take part well in group and class activities. Children persist at teacher directed tasks and self-chosen play activities readily, and tidy up sensibly at the end of sessions. They are able to listen to one another and in their play take turns and share. Before and after physical activities they mostly dress and undress themselves independently. The well-established rules for behaviour in the reception class make a positive contribution to the behaviour of all the children, which is good. These oldest children in the year group are on course to attain or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

67. In developing their communication, language and literacy skills, children make satisfactory progress towards attaining or exceeding the early learning goals. Children listened very attentively to stories and rhymes, and recalled events in the right order from stories such as 'The Great Big Enormous Turnip'. They could predict possible outcomes in new stories. They joined in with repetitive refrains such as that found in 'The Gingerbread Man' with obvious pleasure. However they were not seen to select books to read for themselves during free choice activities. Children learn the shape and sound of individual letters. When directed to write, the more able children were able to copy a simple sentence with help. Others were beginning to try to write on their own with a mixture of recognisable letters and play writing, and showed some indication that they are becoming aware of the conventions of written language, for example, by leaving spaces between words. Most of the children are able to write their own names legibly and correctly. Teaching is good, and planned and structured role-play is used well to provide a stimulus for language and literacy.

68. In their mathematical development, children's attainment is appropriate in relation to their overall attainment on entry. The satisfactorily planned and taught activities have clear learning objectives. The use of mathematical language and appropriately challenging questions by all adults provide good opportunities for learning. Children learn to count

forwards and backwards to ten through the regular use of well-selected number rhymes and other counting opportunities. They begin to recognise numbers to ten, to write numerals to five, to identify flat shapes and to make simple mathematical patterns. Through structured play in the 'café' they learn to recognise money. Children develop an understanding of capacity and volume through play with sand and water.

69. Classroom activities for language and literacy and mathematics are planned well, with clear learning objectives and structure, including appropriate adult-focused activities to promote learning. Early reading skills are developed through planned literacy activities that have clear learning objectives. The teacher's good use of well-focused questions during whole class discussions contributes to children's progress, and she makes positive use of activities to introduce and teach new vocabulary. These approaches contribute to the sound learning and progress that children make.

70. Knowledge and understanding of the world are taught satisfactorily and children learn at appropriate levels. They investigate the properties of materials such as sand and water. They are able to talk about themselves, their families and events in their lives, and begin to make comparisons between then and now. Computers support their learning and children learn to use these confidently and with enjoyment. They construct models using found materials, and make paintings and drawings that show imagination and good skills of observation. By growing their own seedlings from apple pips, they develop a good understanding of the conditions needed to help plants grow successfully. Children enjoy cooking; for example, making gingerbread men and discussing the process with an adult. They use tools and equipment purposefully and safely. Children are on course to at least meet the early learning goals.

71. Children's physical development matches expectations for their ages, and some are on course to exceed the expectations at the end of the Foundation Stage. They enjoy opportunities for vigorous physical activity in the hall and work hard in these lessons. The teaching seen was good and helps children to learn about their bodies, to use space well and how to control and refine their movements. They are aware of the effects of both their own and others' actions in controlling themselves successfully. In response to music, children combine movements with imagination. They handle a variety of tools, such as pencils, crayons, glue spreaders and scissors, and learn how to use these with satisfactory control. Children's dexterity is further developed through the use of construction materials and commercial toys and games as well as through various art and craft activities.

72. Children have many opportunities for their creative development, and they are on course to attain the early learning goals. They express their own ideas and feelings using a variety of media including paint, collage materials, pencils, crayon and modelling clay to make pictures and patterns. Good links are made with other curriculum areas to extend children's understanding; for example, making gingerbread men finger puppets out of felt. Children use tools such as pencils, brushes and scissors with satisfactory control. They enjoy joining in with simple rhymes and singing, and sing tunefully. Their creative skills are further developed through imaginative role-play where they act out different characters and events. No direct teaching in this area was seen but the evidence of the learning opportunities provided indicates satisfactory provision.

73. Detailed termly planning, which is based on national guidance for the Foundation Stage and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, is firmly in place. Weekly planning is in diary form, and the relationship between this and the early learning goals is not always clear. Whilst some lessons are described in detail with clear learning objectives this is not the case for all the activities planned. Before each session the teacher discusses the day's plans with the learning support

assistant, who provides valuable support in the classroom. However, there are no recorded learning objectives for play activities that would support and help ensure children's learning, and no indication of what adults will be doing. As a result, support for planned activities is general, with no focused support for children's free play.

74. The management of children is good. Baseline assessment provides early identification of pupils with special educational needs that enables teachers to provide appropriate support for them. Assessment procedures are sound and children's progress is regularly checked, particularly in literacy and numeracy, and this informs planning. The systematic ongoing observation of all pupils that would further inform planning, particularly with regard to pupils' learning through play, is not in place.

75. The co-ordinator is in the process of developing a policy for the Foundation Stage as a basis for future curriculum development. Resources are satisfactory overall, although more large play equipment, such as construction materials, would enhance collaborative play. Parental involvement is encouraged, and several parents regularly provide valuable additional support in the classroom. They are relaxed and confident when approaching and talking to all members of staff, and are used to help individuals, groups of children and those with special educational needs. The relationships between teaching and support staff are good and make a significant contribution to the well-being of all the children. The school has developed sound induction procedures to support children and their parents on children's entry to the reception class. Liaison with the adjacent playgroups, which the majority of the children attend, is good. These factors contribute to the smooth start pupils make in school.

## **ENGLISH**

76. At Key Stage 1, in the tests taken by pupils in Year 2 in 1999, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, level 2, was close to the national average but well below average compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, level 3, in reading was below average. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in writing was well above average, and the overall performance of all pupils in writing was well above average compared to all schools and to similar schools. These standards show an improvement since the last inspection. Trends over the period 1996-1999 show generally above average standards in reading and writing. However, in 1999, although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in reading rose broadly in line with the national trend, the overall performance of pupils at all levels in reading, taken together, fell, and in 2000, test results in reading and writing indicate that standards have fallen below the national average.

77. At Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, level 4, was just above the national average. The percentage of these pupils who attained at the higher level was above the national average. When compared to all schools, the overall attainment of the year group was average, but well below average compared to similar schools. Results in 1999 reflect those at the previous inspection but there has been a general improvement in the intervening period, and results in 2000 indicate that standards have continued to improve in line with the national upward trend.

78. The findings of the inspection show that attainment in English overall is average at the end of both key stages. However, standards in speaking and listening are above expectations across the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils listen attentively to teachers, other adults and each other and make appropriate responses. They are eager to participate in discussions, and

express themselves clearly and confidently. Pupils ask relevant questions, and show sensitivity to others when making responses. At the end of Key Stage 2, speaking and listening continue to be good. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of formal language structures and can take account of different contexts and audiences when making informed comments or asking questions. They express themselves confidently using a wide vocabulary, and take good account of the contributions made by other pupils.

79. In both key stages reading standards are average overall. In Key Stage 1, pupils listen to a variety of stories, poetry and non-fiction books attentively and respond appropriately to questions about plot, events, characters and vocabulary. They make personal responses to the ideas expressed. By the end of the key stage most pupils enjoy reading, and read with appropriate fluency, using sound strategies to read unfamiliar words. Higher attainers read with good expression, taking account of punctuation and features of print. Pupils use dictionaries appropriately. The school is aware of the current trend in reading at Key Stage 1 and is trying a group-reading programme, outside of the literacy hour, in order to raise standards. Learning support assistants and parents ably support this. By the end of the Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils read a variety of texts fluently with enjoyment and understanding. They can identify the central meaning, giving textual evidence to support their judgements, and make mature, personal responses to ideas expressed. When discussing texts, pupils use appropriate terms with understanding, and demonstrate a sound understanding of grammar. They scan texts for information accurately and select information appropriately in order to make judgements. Pupils have a good understanding of dictionaries and thesauri and use these to support their work.

80. In both key stages pupils write for a good variety of purposes and audiences, including imaginative fiction, personal writing, poetry, play scripts, reports, factual accounts, instructions, letters, lists, note taking and labelling. The content and quality of their imaginative writing are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, there is a significant proportion of pupils whose spelling is inconsistent, including that of key words. The school has identified this as an issue and has introduced a new spelling programme in Key Stage 1. All pupils take spellings home to learn and are tested regularly on these. Pupils are beginning to reflect on what they write and undertake some revision and editing to improve their work. Most have a good understanding of basic punctuation. In Year 2 they begin to learn to write cursively and by the end of the key stage most pupils use cursive writing consistently. They also have appropriate skills to use dictionaries and thesauri to support their writing. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils can plan their writing and write extensively, using complex sentences and paragraphs in an appropriate style. They use a range of appropriate punctuation and spell accurately. They have regular opportunities to draft, revise and edit their work. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can produce fluent, cursive handwriting when required and many are beginning to develop a personal style. Pupils can write carefully and present their work well when it is closely monitored and teacher expectations are made explicit.

81. In both key stages there are good opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum. For example, they carefully record what they have learned in science and write fictional narratives in history. Speaking and listening skills, and vocabulary, are developed in discussion activities related to all areas of the curriculum. Computers are used well to support learning. For example, following research on the Internet in the ICT suite, Year 6 pupils were able to draft good open questions that they would ask an Olympic gold medallist. This work linked well with the journalistic writing they were studying in literacy hour activities.

82. The quality of teaching in English is good overall. In Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory overall with some instances of good teaching. There was a small number of unsatisfactory lessons. The unsatisfactory teaching leads to unsatisfactory learning. Expectations of what pupils might or should achieve are inconsistent, and are sometimes low. On such occasions, pupils do not work purposefully enough and some have poor work habits. Although a proportion of pupils attain at an above average level, this has been no more than the national average, and sometimes less than average. In relation to the overall and steady pattern of above average attainment on entry, the overall achievement of pupils in the key stage is not high enough. At Key Stage 2 teaching is good. Where teaching is good in both key stages, teachers make effective links between previous work and new learning, match the tasks to meet individual needs, set clear time targets for what pupils are expected to achieve during the lesson, maintain a brisk pace and have high expectations for all aspects of pupils' behaviour. As a result, lessons are purposeful and productive, and learning is good. All teachers have a sound understanding of the subject, and plan lessons with clear learning objectives in line with the well-established Literacy Framework. Phonic skills and spelling are systematically taught throughout both key stages. Pupils are heard to read regularly. Pupils in both key stages take books home, and home-school reading diaries provide an effective means of communication between parents and teachers.

83. Teachers use information from standardised tests each year to help decide initial pupil groupings. However, there is no consistent system in place for day-to-day assessment and the use of such information to inform daily planning. Teachers' sound knowledge of their attainment often ensures that pupils are usually appropriately challenged with well-matched activities, but the lack of a consistent approach leads to variations in the quality of this aspect of teaching. However, good records are kept of pupils' reading development. Pupils' work is regularly marked, in some cases with added comments to help pupils to make progress. The work of classroom assistants in providing additional support during literacy activities makes a valuable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress, and teachers plan appropriately for this support. Spelling and reading homework is given regularly and monitored.

84. In both key stages, the provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they make good progress. Teaching linked to individual education plans, the setting of precise targets and well-matched learning materials contribute to their success. The phonics-training programme makes an important contribution to the progress made by these and other lower attaining pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the needs of these pupils.

85. Overall, pupils' attitudes to learning are good across the school, and contribute to the quality of learning in lessons. Their response in the lessons observed was usually positive and lively, and they usually co-operate well in discussing aspects of their work. Pupils are mainly well behaved and apply themselves with interest to the tasks they are set, although there were a few instances of unsatisfactory behaviour and response in some lessons in Key Stage 1 that disrupted learning.

86. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable subject co-ordinator provides good support and advice for colleagues. The co-ordinator has had time to monitor teaching, which has contributed well to the implementation of the literacy hour. Planning is checked regularly to ensure that work is consistent with requirements, but as yet there is no regular sampling of pupils' work. Standardised tests results are evaluated, and the co-ordinator has a good understanding of the issues that need to be addressed to raise standards. There is a portfolio of moderated written work and all teachers are suitably involved in an annual moderation process. Resources, such as sets of books, texts displayed on overhead projectors or on chart stands, and computers are used well and make a positive contribution to the

quality of pupils' learning. There is a weekly bookshop run by the school that also makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. In the 1999 tests at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was very high in the percentage reaching the nationally expected level, and the percentage attaining the higher level, level 3, was average. Pupils' overall performance compared to all schools was above average, but compared to similar schools was average. Over time, the results have been rising faster than the national trend but fell in 1999. Test results in 2000 show a further fall to around an average level, but precise comparative data is not yet available.

88. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, pupils' attainment in tests was average in the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected level. However, the proportion of pupils who attained at a higher level was above average. Pupils' overall performance was average compared to all schools, and well below average compared to similar schools. Results over time have been rising above the national trend. They dipped towards average in 1999, but results in 2000 indicate that they are rising again in line with the rising national trend.

89. Attainment seen in school at the last inspection was average, and this has been maintained. Test results at that time were below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. In the intervening period standards improved at both key stages, but now are average again, with some strengths at Key Stage 2. Previous above average attainment by pupils at Year 2, and the generally above average attainment of children on entry to the school, suggest that higher levels of attainment should be expected at Key Stage 1.

90. Standards in the work seen at the time of inspection are broadly in line with national averages at the end of both key stages, reflecting recent test results. In Key Stage 1, the majority of the pupils are making satisfactory progress in their basic numeracy skills, and sometimes higher attaining pupils are provided with number work which is more challenging and successfully extends their knowledge and understanding of number patterns, operations and mental arithmetic. In Year 1, pupils read and match accurately figures and numeral names up to twenty, add units, and correctly identify two- and three-dimensional shapes. In Year 2, pupils are familiar with the position of numbers on the hundred square, and they can mentally double numbers to twenty and beyond. They add tens and units successfully and use language such as double, half, more and less with confidence and understanding. Pupils can often continue patterns of 5, 10 and 20 from a given number to one hundred.

91. In Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, with some good progress evident in Year 6. The level of attainment in Year 6 is good for a significant number of pupils who are achieving standards that are higher than expected for their age. For example, some were working at a good level in finding missing numbers and working with negative numbers, calculating their answers before checking them well with calculators. This reflects the percentages of higher level attainment in tests in the last two years, which have been above the national percentages. In Year 3, pupils have a good knowledge of number bonds, and higher attaining pupils begin to explain pattern in number in detail and how they arrive at an answer. In Year 4, pupils demonstrate a sound knowledge of appropriate times tables, and are developing good techniques for the quick recall of some more complex number facts. They identify the properties of common three-dimensional shapes, and recognise which two-dimensional shapes make the faces of the solid shapes. In Years 5 and 6 the work becomes much more challenging and demanding. In Year 5, for example, pupils define and discuss the mode and range of a given group of statistics with understanding, and carry out assignments of increasing

challenge with confidence. In Year 6, pupils use multiplication and division with a range of numbers, including fractions, percentages and decimal fractions.

92. Pupils use their numeracy skills in other aspects of their work. They use them appropriately in science when recording data, drawing up tally charts and creating graphs, for example, of temperatures. Some work in design and technology shows the careful use of measurement and shape.

93. The quality of teaching overall throughout the school is satisfactory overall, with examples of good teaching in both key stages, and particularly in Year 6. There was some unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1, the teachers mainly introduce the daily numeracy lessons very well, and these build on previous lessons. The planning is effective in enabling the teachers to monitor the development of a series of topics so that teaching covers all areas of the mathematics curriculum. However, in the majority of the lessons the work is usually aimed at the average level of attainment for the class, and does not sufficiently meet the needs of the more able pupils. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is the result of unsatisfactory classroom management. The pace of the lesson seen was too slow, and the work was unchallenging for a significant number of pupils. This leads to unsatisfactory learning by many pupils, and widespread inattention.

94. The teaching in half of all lessons seen in Key Stage 2 was good. In Year 6, the work is particularly challenging and high expectations are set for all pupils. The tasks set are usually matched to the abilities of the pupils and they have a clear understanding of the targets that they have to meet. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are provided with tasks that match their needs and in most classes are well supported in their learning by the classroom assistants. The withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs for additional literacy work during the numeracy lessons, and for other activities such as music, results in teachers having to repeat the introduction of some of the work to these pupils, and also interrupted pupils' concentration on their mathematical tasks.

95. The mathematics curriculum is well planned and resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning. All teachers prepare termly and weekly plans in accordance with the National Numeracy Framework. Assessments of pupils' progress are recorded and samples of pupils' work are retained. The use of assessment data is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that the school sets accurate targets for individual pupils, nor is there a clear system for using assessment information to inform future planning. This is left largely to individual teachers and some keep more useful records than others. This contributes to variations in the quality of teaching. At the present time, mathematics is supported within the school by two co-ordinators who carry responsibility for a key stage each. Both co-ordinators have temporary appointments and are effective in supporting the on-going work. However the perception of both co-ordinators differs in relation to how the curriculum can be further developed and there is a need for the school to re-evaluate the leadership of the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

96. Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 shows that the majority of pupils attain levels which are well above the national average overall, with particular strengths in their study of materials and their properties and physical processes. The number of pupils reaching the higher level was also well above those expected nationally. When measured against results from similar schools the number attaining the expected level and above is broadly in line with the average, while those reaching higher levels is well above the average. Evidence from observations of lessons and the examination of pupils' previous work, and assessment results in 2000, indicate that results currently are much closer to those expected nationally. Standards achieved by pupils are in line with those reported in the last inspection, which indicated standards similar to those seen in most schools.

97. Results from the 1999 tests of the end of Key Stage 2 show that the number of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average, as was the number reaching the higher level. The overall performance of all pupils was average compared to all schools, and below average compared to similar schools. A comparison of data for the previous four years shows that science results have been above average and have followed a slow upward trend overall, although the improving national results have now caught up on the school results. Results from the tests in 2000 indicate that results at Key Stage 2 have improved, and the percentage of pupils achieving at least the expected level has increased.

98. The use of literacy and mathematics skills in science is satisfactory. The pupils record their observations when conducting experiments in a variety of ways, including the labelling of diagrams and the making of lists. Extension of English skills is appropriate in the recording of experiments, but in many lessons work is copied and little regard is given to the needs of the pupils or the challenge provided. Pupils use mathematics in recording data, drawing up tally charts and creating graphs on temperature. There was no evidence of pupils using information and communication technology in science.

99. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are able to identify foods that are healthy or unhealthy in a diet, and know that exercise and sleep are important factors in maintaining healthy bodies. They begin to appreciate that life is cyclical, and the teacher used photographs well to illustrate similarities and differences to illustrate changes. Pupils examine natural and man-made materials and conducted a good quality experiment on the quality and strength of bags made from different materials. Other topics covered have included electrical circuits, sound and how it is produced and heard, and, linked with their exploration of the wider world, work on mini-beasts. The level of recorded science in some classes in Key Stage 1 is often limited, although teachers' planning indicates that a satisfactory range of science topics is covered.

100. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to make predictions before conducting experiments; for example, when looking at friction and how different materials have varying properties. They draw sensible conclusions when looking at reversible and irreversible change, and understand why this is so. Appropriate technical vocabulary is developed, and pupils understand the meaning of words such as evaporation and precipitation and are able to apply them properly. In Year 5, pupils examine forces and show that they understand terms such as pull, push and thrust. Experiments are devised to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the application of scientific knowledge. One example of this appeared in a good experiment on the differing quality of insulation materials. In Year 4, pupils find out how to separate gravel, soil, sand and water from each other, and write successfully about what they have done, drawing appropriate conclusions. Throughout Key Stage 2, the quality of work produced when carrying out experiments is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. However, there are occasions when work is left incomplete. At other times, the work set for pupils of a range of abilities is identical. This results in an inappropriate challenge and levels of attainment that are below what may be achieved. Coverage of the science curriculum in Key Stage 2 is broadly appropriate across the whole key stage, but in some year groups a limited range of material has been covered.

101. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory across the school. In one lesson in Key Stage 2 teaching was notably good. That lesson was characterised by clear objectives for the lesson and effective questioning to challenge and extend pupils' thinking. Weaknesses in otherwise overall satisfactory lessons included introductions that were too long, limited time for investigation, and work not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs and previous attainments. The movement of pupils to

other activities in the curriculum also disrupts learning. For example, pupils leave lessons for swimming, additional special needs support and musical tuition. Pupils sometimes miss important elements of lessons as a result.

102. The overall satisfactory teaching promotes satisfactory learning and progress over both key stages. Pupils' attitudes towards science are good. Most enjoy science, usually follow instructions and demonstrate the ability to work in pairs and small groups. This contributes to the progress they make. Pupils develop an appropriate vocabulary, and most use it accurately in discussion and in their written work. The development of pupils' investigational skills is a stronger aspect. During both key stages, more able pupils do not always make the progress they should, especially when more challenging tasks to enable them to work at a greater pace and at a higher level are not provided. Lower attaining pupils receive good help in classrooms, but their work is not always set at a level that assures understanding. There are too many occasions where identical work is provided without reference to pupils' needs. Detailed guidance is now provided on what is to be taught and this is an improvement from the last inspection. Assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding are completed regularly but information from this does not sufficiently influence teachers' planning.

103. The co-ordination of the subject has improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator now reviews teachers' plans and examines the breadth and balance of the curriculum. Some assessment and analysis of pupils' achievement are carried out, but the examination of pupils' work is not sufficient to evaluate standards. Monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator is planned to begin in the next three months.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Across the school, the pupils' attainments, overall, are in line with the national expectations for the development of their knowledge, skills and understanding in the subject. These standards reflect the findings in the previous inspection. The quality of some work, such as observational drawing in Key Stage 1, and work with pastels in Key Stage 2, is above the expected standards.

105. In Key Stage 1, pupils looked at a painting by Van Gogh and took pride in working from their own observations of flowers to represent them using paint. They were responsive to the ideas presented to them. In Year 2, pupils used a variety of media in groups to explore and experiment with the characteristics of Aboriginal art. Previous work includes much drawing from observation. Representations of objects such as fruit, leaves and conkers show some good early attempts at composition and thoughtful ways of representing what they see. The use of paint or crayon to draw maps of islands demonstrates some particularly careful application of colour. Pupils have used computers appropriately to draw and paint, for example, pictures of fish. Reference to the work of well-known artists is frequent, and has included collages based on the work of Matisse.

106. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop their skills of representation, such as in pastel pictures of crabs and shells seen on a field-study visit, and in copies of a painting by Hockney. In the former, there was often good application of the medium, but less exploration of the effects of light and shadow, with outlines often drawn in rather than represented by the meeting of shades and colours. In the latter, the emphasis was on reproducing the original, and there was less evident work on using the techniques and ideas in the original painting to inform their own work. Pupils investigate the art of other cultures, exploring, for example, Celtic art, Roman mosaics, Greek vases and British optical art of the 1960s. In the last activity, Year 6 pupils worked carefully to arrange the elements to good effect, and some did this particularly well as a result of the good introduction to the genre by the teacher. Other examples of previous work by the oldest pupils in the school, such as rainforest

abstracts in pastels, and patterns based on ethnic African art, show an appreciation of methods and approaches, and some careful and good representation.

107. The teaching seen was at least satisfactory across the school, but good in Key Stage 1. In the good lessons in both key stages, teachers stimulated pupils with interesting introductions and explanations. Teachers' learning intentions are usually clear and, where they are challenging, pupils are inspired to work with care, know what they are doing and strive to achieve. In the best lessons, learning is good as a result. While pupils make good progress in some lessons, overall progress across the school is satisfactory.

108. There is a programme of activities to ensure that pupils have access to an appropriate range and sequence of experiences. However, there is no list of skills to be acquired progressively and this inhibits the accurate assessment of pupils' attainments and the best challenge for individual pupils. This is not preventing pupils from attaining well on occasions, but greater challenge would have the potential for taking standards higher for more pupils. An expectation of the National Curriculum is that pupils in Key Stage 2 will use sketchbooks to help them collect information and develop their own ideas, but these have not been provided. This hinders individual learning. Their introduction is planned for, but is linked to the development of drawing techniques. There is a need to ensure that sketchbooks are not used just as drawing books for the execution of ideas presented by teachers, but are used by pupils to compile information to help with the development of their ideas, as intended in the programme of study.

109. Teaching is supported by a knowledgeable coordinator, who monitors the subject as far as possible through seeing teachers' planning and pupils' work. A development plan for the subject has been drawn up, but it is essentially a list of activities rather than a programme for further developing teaching and learning in the subject. It is not based on any observation of work underway in lessons.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Only one lesson, in Key Stage 1, could be observed in the inspection. Judgements about attainment are based on the one lesson seen, an examination of pupils' previous work, including photographs, the scrutiny of the scheme of work and teachers' planning, and discussion with the coordinator for the subject. These show that the standards meet the national expectations, and have been maintained since the previous inspection.

111. Year 1 pupils were seen using a range of construction kits to make models to a brief given to them by the teacher. Following previous work, they were attempting to make models of machines that featured a lever and a bucket or scoop, such as a digger. Pupils worked at an appropriate level, using the materials effectively, sometimes with assistance, and putting their ideas into practice. Some were able to include a working or representative lever in their designs. Many were able to talk about their work and some would have been able to go further and offer comments on the others' work, or suggest improvements to their own designs, but this was not pursued. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have also designed food containers, made jointed human figures out of card and made gingerbread men. A recently created pebble garden in the school has also drawn on and helped to develop pupils' design skills.

112. In Key Stage 2, pupils have made marble runs, designed some well-laid out posters, and produced designs and models for a school for the new millennium. The last shows the appropriate generation of ideas, the preparation of plans and the use of a variety of tools to produce scale models.

113. In the lesson seen, the teacher motivated the pupils well with a clear explanation of the challenge. Correct technical and descriptive vocabulary was used. The teacher and other adults then worked with groups to help them make progress. This made a positive contribution to pupils' learning, which was good. Pupils worked well in groups, and some referred to the 'teamwork' theme of the week. No other teaching was seen, but teachers' planning, and the samples of work show that provision and expectations are satisfactory across the school. The progress pupils make across the school is satisfactory.

114. The co-ordinator has a clear sense of direction, and the necessary expertise, for the subject. She has taken on the responsibility in the last year, and has drawn up a suitable revised list of activity headings to match the revised National Curriculum programmes of study for the subject. Planning by teachers for the subject is combined with planning for art and design. While there are links between the two subjects, there is a need to ensure that there is sufficient time for design and technology, and the teaching of the specific subject skills. This is recognised by the co-ordinator, who has drawn up a sound development plan for the subject, which recognises weaknesses and includes training needs. No action plan to take this forward has been agreed. Needs for the subject have been reasonably well identified, although the co-ordinator has not had time to monitor and evaluate work in classrooms.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

115. Pupils achieve standards in information and communication technology that are generally above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and broadly in line with those at the end of Key Stage 2. There have been clear improvements since the last inspection. There is still scope for further improvement at Key Stage 2, as pupils' skills in using computers for control and monitoring of events, such as changes in temperature over time are not yet sufficiently developed. This is recognised by the school and there are plans to address these aspects.

116. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 can successfully log on to programs, and are able to follow instructions so that they can successfully navigate their way around to find information. They demonstrate good control using the mouse and move the cursor accurately. Pupils used these skills well to discover more information about autumn, a good link with an ongoing study in the classroom. Pupils in Year 2 continue to develop control skills and have good levels of dragging and clicking skills. At the end of the lesson, pupils know how to exit a programme, and carefully log off and shut down their computers independently.

117. By Year 6 pupils have appropriate skills in word processing. They choose fonts, change their appearance for different purposes, incorporate pictures and format their work effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how computers are used to store, retrieve, sort and search for information, and understand terms such as file, retrieve and record. They can make effective use of large collections of information on disks, searching for and printing out the information they need. Standards in these aspects have improved substantially largely due to the provision of the new computer suite, together with the opportunities provided for skills to be practised on classroom machines. A good example of their developing skills was the production of a newspaper page on the Olympics, supported by a visit from an Olympic silver medallist. Pupils use a desktop publishing program confidently to insert text and pictures, and adapt fonts and sizes to improve presentation. Pupils in Year 4 have developed appropriate skills in cutting and pasting, and pupils in Year 3 use good control skills when designing front covers that incorporated text and pictures for work on the Romans.

118. Most lessons are well taught by teachers who are confident, well prepared and who focus their explanations and questioning closely on what they want the pupils to learn. Early direct teaching in the information and communication technology suite is good, and pupils concentrate well on the skills to be learned. Explanations are usually clear, and questioning across the class ensures that previous learning is consolidated and new learning is clearly understood. In one lesson, the teacher provided a prompt card for pupils to refer to if they did not fully understand what to do. This enabled pupils to work more independently and allowed the teacher more time to work with individual pupils.

119. The scheme of work used by the school provides a suitable structure for the development of skills. Teachers use this appropriately in their planning. A former member of staff has provided a good lead for the subject, and the effects of this and the good provision of computers in the suite and in classrooms are evident in the overall confidence of teachers and the standards being attained. The temporary co-ordinator has a good understanding of the subject but has other major responsibilities in the school. At present, release time is not available for the co-ordinator to carry out her role. There is a need to ensure leadership of the subject is maintained at the best level to sustain and continue improvements. There is no structured approach to assessing and recording pupils' progress in the subject, and this is a weakness in sustaining pupils' progress.

## **HISTORY**

120. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1, as history was not the focus at the time of the inspection. However, from the scrutiny of past work and teachers' planning, it is clear that pupils are reaching appropriate standards at the end of the key stage. By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of chronology and they talk knowledgeably about the facts that they have learned about the past, and are beginning to understand some of the causes and outcomes of events. At Key Stage 2, pupils acquire satisfactory knowledge and understanding of different historical periods when they learn about Britain from 1930, the Tudors and the history and culture of ancient Greece and Rome. At the end of the key stage, standards of attainment are in line with the national expectations. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

121. In Key Stage 2, pupils give reasons for some of the main events and changes in Britain since 1930, and can identify the cause and effects of the Second World War. They describe some of the principal features of the period and compare and contrast them with life in Britain today. Most pupils have a sound factual knowledge of the ancient civilisations they study. In Year 3, pupils know that the Roman army was disciplined and well trained, and that this was an important factor in helping them to defeat Boudicca, as well as in expanding and maintaining the Roman Empire. In Year 4, pupils use their sound knowledge relating to the Spanish armada to develop their understanding of how significant this event is in our history, and they have begun to realise how life in Britain would have been influenced if the battle had been lost. In Year 5, pupils learn about the religious beliefs of Greeks and deduce from the information how their belief in their Gods helped the Ancient Greeks to explain the world around them.

122. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, and in some lessons it is good. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, and this is evident in the appropriate planning of the work. Teachers are very inventive in a number of lessons, and especially in Year 5 where the children became archaeologists, and sifted for evidence through bags of items provided by the teacher. This search for evidence resulted in a greater understanding by the pupils of how to find out information from the past. In Year 6, good use of resources and informative displays help pupils to work productively. Teachers ask challenging questions and have high expectations of the pupils' contribution to class discussion.

123. The result of this enthusiasm and skill demonstrated by the teachers is that pupils take a lively interest in their own history and in the history of other peoples. The pupils acquire a sound knowledge of the periods they study and develop useful skills to communicate what they have learnt. They are sufficiently inspired to use opportunities at home and at school to do some more research. Many pupils use home and school computers to search for more information in electronic encyclopaedias and on the Internet.

124. The management of the subject has improved since the last inspection. A scheme of work has now been introduced and is being effectively implemented. An assessment activity is undertaken at the end of units of work, which provides information on pupils' understanding and achievements. Day-to-day assessment is less well established so as to ensure that lesson planning is more closely matched to the needs of groups of pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

125. Only one lesson was seen during the period of the inspection, in Key Stage 1. No geography was being taught in Key Stage 2 at the time of the inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' previous work, discussion with pupils and the evaluation of teachers' plans and curriculum documents indicate that standards are in line with national expectations in both key stages. This reflects findings at the last inspection.

126. In Year 1, pupils successfully describe some of the physical and human features of the local area. For example, during their walk around the locality they talked about the different styles of houses, the types of shops in the precinct, and point out the health centre. This work is extended to their understanding of a simple map of the locality. Pupils talk knowledgeably about developments in the school environment, and are aware of the plans to the site. In Year 2, the pupils explore and develop their understanding of map work through the study of islands, led by Tilly the bear. The focusing of work on the continental island of Australia linked with the Olympic games, and their literacy work on the 'Isle of Strawy', were well planned and enhanced pupils' interest in the work. The visit of a didgeridoo player, and his comments on life in Australia, was also of great value in developing pupils' understanding of a different locality.

127. In the one lesson observed, the teacher reinforced the purpose of a village walk, with some skilful questioning which enabled pupils to recall well some previous work. Clear expectations of work and behaviour were given, and the accompanying adults were given clear guidelines about the activity and the tasks. The discussion after the walk enabled the pupils to share their observations with the class and this helped to reinforce their learning and the on-going work.

128. Discussion with pupils in Years 5 and 6 show that they are confident in using symbols and keys in planning their own maps, and pupils use the correct geographical terms when describing routes. They talked knowledgeably about their work, and the knowledge and understanding of the higher attaining pupils are good. Pupils are able to compare and contrast the area around Charmouth, where they have been on a field study visit, with Sonning Common, and they identify the influence that the sea has on Charmouth. They compare and contrast the soils of the two areas, and discuss in detail their discovery of fossils. Their work on rainforests demonstrates their abilities to carry out their own research work and find information.

129. The subject is effectively and enthusiastically led by the new co-ordinator. A development plan for the subject has been drafted, which identifies aspects of the curriculum, staff development, assessment and the use of ICT that need attention. The co-ordinator would like to observe teaching to inform her approaches to leading on improvements in the subject and has discussed this with the headteacher.

## **MUSIC**

130. The standards pupils attain in music are good in, and by the end of, both key stages. This represents an improvement at Key Stage 1, and the maintenance of good standards at Key Stage 2.

131. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to sing songs from memory and can play simple rhythms on untuned percussion instruments. Through singing they develop their understanding of the pitch and duration of musical notes. They learn about a range of musical instruments, including those from other cultures, and are beginning to recognise the sounds they make. Pupils explore sound by clapping and beating different rhythms. They listen to a wide range of music and can make personal responses to the mood of different pieces through creative movement.

132. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to identify many orchestral instruments by their sound through listening carefully. They improvise planned rhythmic ideas successfully, and select both tuned and untuned musical instruments to present these, using notes of different pitch, tempo and duration to compose music for an identified purpose. Pupils are able to record their compositions in writing, and have a good understanding of performance. They sing confidently with good control and show a developing ability to appreciate how music can convey moods and ideas. When evaluating their work, pupils make sensitive and thoughtful comments about each other's performance. They acquire a good understanding of musical terminology, and use this appropriately in discussions.

133. Pupils learn a range of songs, hear music, and use and learn about musical instruments from other cultures and this makes a good contribution to their cultural development. The opportunity to sing, hear a range of recorded music and reflect on music heard during assemblies and lessons contributes to their spiritual development.

134. The quality of teaching is good. Lessons proceed at a good pace and the subject knowledge of the teachers is appropriate. Lessons are planned carefully with clear class learning objectives, and there is a good balance between instruction, discussion and activity. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good, and good classroom management successfully engages the attention of the pupils. Pupils clearly enjoy musical activities and have good attitudes to their work. These factors contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning and the good progress they make. Pupils are attentive and behave well, showing good powers of concentration, sustained interest and enthusiasm. When required, they work well together, and collaborate effectively to produce planned musical effects.

135. Music contributes well to the life of the school. Instrumental tuition on a wide range of instruments is available to pupils and there is a school choir. In addition, the school holds its own regular musical events that involve all the pupils. Pupils participate in musical events with other schools. These activities enhance the curriculum and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

136. The two co-ordinators are enthusiastic and between them have specialist skills and knowledge that provide good support for colleagues. In addition, the school benefits from having other staff

members with musical expertise who take a good lead in teaching the subject. In Key Stage 1, the school is currently trialing national guidance for the subject, and in Key Stage 2, has adopted a published scheme of work. These provide sound support for those teachers without specialist skills. Termly planning is monitored, and the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator has taught other classes in the key stage to help evaluate pupils' skills and attainments. Records are kept of pupils' overall progress, but opportunities for on-going assessment that could inform a better match of some work to pupils' stages of development are not routinely in place. Resources are good and contribute to the quality of the work and the standards attained.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

137. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. These standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. However, the progress that pupils make is uneven, with some unsatisfactory learning evident in both key stages. The quality of teaching seen in both key stages was overall satisfactory, but ranged in both key stages from unsatisfactory to good, and this contributes to the uneven progress in pupils' learning.

138. By Year 6, pupils were able to demonstrate satisfactory dance skills in which they combined a variety of movement demonstrating appropriate balance and flexibility. Movement was well linked to music and careful attention was paid to mirroring the movements of others. Opportunities were provided for the practice of movement, so that by the end of the sessions, the range and quality of pupils' movement had noticeably improved. Gymnastic skills are also appropriately developed and pupils move with reasonable co-ordination and control, some pupils showing particular accuracy and control. Opportunities are given for pupils to observe and comment on the movement of others. In Year 6, teachers quickly establish a good purposeful atmosphere, time in the lessons is used well, and pupils are well motivated. Class management is very good, and pupils have been trained well to organise the resources they need.

139. These positive features, at an appropriate level, are not often evident amongst younger pupils in Key Stage 1, and the early years of Key Stage 2. In these age groups, opportunities for pupils to work purposefully are sometimes severely limited by the behaviour of a few. The pace of the lessons seen was too slow. Pupils have not been sufficiently trained to organise equipment quickly and effectively, and skills such as dismounts from apparatus and forward rolls are not sufficiently well developed. Problems also occur when pupils leave the hall in large numbers during the lesson, for example, to change reading books. On their return they have missed vital elements of the lesson. This does not help progress and the pursuit of improvement. The teaching seen in these age groups was unsatisfactory because of the quality of behaviour management and the resultant low expectations regarding the quality of movement and control.

140. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the physical education curriculum. Most of these allow girls and boys to compete alongside each other, for example, in mixed football teams. Swimming is taught both in the pool attached to the school and, for deep-water work, at the local swimming pool. Currently, the school does not record progress for all pupils, but most are reported to be able to swim by the age of eleven. Opportunities for pupils to experience outdoor adventurous activities are provided both by the schools Trim Trail, where pupils are able to undertake a wide range of athletic and gymnastic movement, and on residential visits organised for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.

141. The teaching of physical education is supported by a detailed scheme of work, a large hall and a generous sized playing field. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and opportunities to enter into competitive events enhance the learning opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 2. The co-ordinator has

a significant number of roles in the school, and has not had time to monitor teaching in the subject in order to identify and address inconsistencies.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

142. There has been improvement in the provision for the subject and pupils' attainment, which were unsatisfactory at the last inspection. Pupils at the end of both key stages are now attaining standards that are in line with the requirements of the local Agreed Syllabus for RE. Some of the attainment seen was good, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, in the quality of discussion by pupils in Year 6. Pupils in that year were exploring and arriving at personal ideas about the meaning of life as a journey. They drew on their own experiences well, concentrating and thinking for themselves in response to the very good teaching and probing questioning.

143. Pupils at both key stages learn and know about religious beliefs, practices, symbols and places of worship associated with Christianity and other faith traditions in Britain. Pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of fundamental Christian traditions and beliefs, including those associated with the birth of Christ. They develop a sound understanding of the differences among religions; for example, in learning about Judaism at Years 3 and 4 the pupils make comparisons between how Christians and Jews celebrate the Sabbath.

144. Pupils learn to respect themselves and each other through reflecting, for example in Year 1, on relationships, being special to others, and a sense of belonging. Previous work shows that pupils have learnt stories from the Bible, such as about Moses and the Good Samaritan. They have learnt about features of Islam and mosques.

145. In Year 3, pupils were working in pairs to suggest symbols for God, although this was a difficult concept for them. Past work done by previous pupils on a similar topic shows some responses that are shallow, and more humorous than truly reflective. As they progress through the school, pupils develop sensitivity to other faiths and take an interest in the different ways people practise their faith. Pupils in Year 4 were learning about the Five Pillars of Islam, but did not have sufficient opportunity to explore the meaning and significance of the pillars, and their personal response to them, although discussions with individuals showed they had the capacity to reflect and comment on them in a purposeful way. Pupils in Year 5 were learning about the Jewish celebration of Shabbat. Many were eager to answer questions and, in groups, studied with interest the artefact associated with the Jewish Sabbath. Their attainment was good in discussing and learning about the special day, but less good in the more constrained part of the lesson in which they stuck captions on worksheets prepared in their books in order to describe the sequence of events.

146. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1, in which the teaching was satisfactory, and it is not possible to come to an overall view of the quality of teaching in the key stage. However, work samples show pupils are covering the planned programme and that their attainments are appropriate for their ages across and at the end of the key stage. From recorded work it is not possible to judge the quality of the teaching that has led to it. In some cases thoughtful stories have been written, and pupils have clearly been stimulated to do so. Coloured pictures of mosques consolidate an appreciation of such places of worship but have involved a significant amount of time in a colouring activity.

147. In Key Stage 2 the teaching is good overall. Teachers model and encourage a strong sense of respect for beliefs and ask challenging questions that push pupils to think and extend their answers. As a result, pupils are generally engaged by the activities. On the occasions where the activity is less stimulating, pupils fidget and talk amongst themselves, but quickly respond when drawn in again. The

good use of artefacts, the careful questioning, the good marking seen with encouraging comments and supplementary questions, and the good management of pupils all lead to overall good learning and the examples of good attainment seen by the end of the key stage. Teachers across the school often make valuable links with the curriculum for personal and social education, the Human Values programme; for example when teaching about respect, care and tolerance.

148. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject, based on a good scheme of work drawn up recently by the co-ordinator and based on recent national guidance. It builds on an interim scheme introduced following the last inspection. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' plans for the subject and also the outcomes of termly assessments in each class. These have contributed to the improvements in teaching and the standards pupils attain. However, no time has been allocated for the monitoring of teaching to evaluate the implementation of the revised scheme of work.