

INSPECTION REPORT

NOREMARSH COMMUNITY JUNIOR SCHOOL

Wootton Bassett, Nr. Swindon

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126250

Headteacher: Mrs M Backhouse

Reporting inspector: Eileen Chadwick
19115

Dates of inspection: 9th-11th October 2000

Inspection number: 224829

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body, Noremarsh Community Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Senior
Date of previous inspection:	13 th to 17 th January 1997

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Brian Jones 9542	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How good does the school work in partnership with parents?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This school is an average sized junior school educating boys and girls aged between 7 and 11. It mainly serves the historic market town of Wootton Bassett. The school has 255 pupils and three per cent speak English as an additional language. This is higher than most schools and the main additional language spoken is Japanese. Five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, lower than last year at nine per cent, and below the national average for both years. Twenty-three per cent of pupils have special educational needs, this is above average, although only one has a statement of special educational needs which is below average. Since the last inspection, the pupils' attainment on entry has declined. It has varied from year to year from above to well below average because of weaknesses in literacy and numeracy. The current Year 3 entered with average attainment although it was below average for the current Year 6. Last year, 15 pupils joined and 12 left at other than the normal point of entry. Twenty per cent of pupils in the current Year 6 joined later than Year 3.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school substantially improved the standards attained in the 2000 national tests for last year's Year 6 in English, mathematics and science resulting in above average standards in English and well above average standards in mathematics. However, whilst standards observed at the time of the inspection show that the school is maintaining high standards in mathematics and has further improved standards in science those in English are now below average. This results from higher numbers of pupils entering the school with below average attainment and the school not having sufficiently rigorous systems for teaching reading and writing to pupils with special educational needs. The school has done well to maintain a high proportion of good teaching despite considerable changes of staff since the previous inspection. The curriculum is broad with the exception of information and communication technology, where there are weaknesses. The new headteacher has correctly identified the necessary improvements and is developing good systems to make this happen. Pupils' overall achievement and the value for money provided by the school are satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The current Year 6 pupils are achieving above average standards in mathematics, science, art and physical education.
- The school provides well for pupils' moral, social and cultural development and pupils behave well.
- The quality of teaching is good in numeracy and science and this promotes pupils' good achievement.
- The new headteacher provides strong leadership and is putting rigorous procedures in place for raising standards in literacy and information and communication technology.
- The school manages the National Numeracy Strategy very well which is raising standards throughout the school.

What could be improved

- The below average standards of reading and writing in Year 4 and Year 6 and pupils' below average achievement compared with similar schools.
- The below average standards in information and communication technology due to a lack of resources, including those for control technology, and the failure to implement the full National Curriculum.
- The unsatisfactory progress in literacy for pupils with special educational needs through a lack of thorough identification procedures and the regular teaching of small steps in reading and writing.
- The leadership of the governing body in helping to shape the direction of the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in January 1997, improvement has been satisfactory overall. The school has been through many changes including a decline in pupils' attainment on entry and the long-term absences of three teachers, including the deputy headteacher. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the weaknesses from the last inspection. However, progress was slow until the arrival of the new headteacher in May 2000. The school now has satisfactory assessment procedures and these are good for mathematics and science, but they are less effective in literacy as thorough identification procedures for pupils with special educational

needs are only just being put in place. The school has made satisfactory progress in putting schemes of work in place for all subjects. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well in numeracy, and satisfactorily for science and the foundation subjects overall. However, the development of co-ordinators' roles for literacy, information and communication technology and for pupils with special educational needs have been hampered by long-term absences. These problems are being resolved well: new co-ordinators are in place and their roles are developing rapidly. Governors' work is unsatisfactory and this has also been targeted for development. The school achieves well in English when pupils enter with sound standards in reading and writing but is not as effective when pupils enter with unsatisfactory standards in reading and writing. The provision for pupils with special educational needs does not meet the needs of pupils as it did at the time of the previous inspection. The school has done well to maintain the good standards in mathematics and science.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	C	B	A
Mathematics	B	C	A	A
Science	C	D	C	C

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

This information shows that pupils' attainment improved well in the Year 2000 tests in English and mathematics compared with all schools nationally as well as similar schools. This was the result of the school's rigorous target setting in Year 6 with pupils and their parents, effective systems for homework, booster classes and ability setting in Year 6. Pupils did very well compared with similar schools as the school fell into a higher free school meal category at 8.9 per cent in 2000. Pupils' attainment on entry was above average in English and mathematics. The pupils achieved appropriately in English and well in mathematics. However, standards in science are not as high as English and mathematics.

The school's formal targets for English for 2000 were too modest but were satisfactory in mathematics. They were exceeded in both cases. The formal targets set for 2001 are far too low in English and modest in mathematics. The school is on course to exceed both these targets.

The findings of the inspection are that:

By the age of eleven, pupils are on course to attain below average standards in English, including reading and writing, above average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, science, art and physical education. Standards are average in design and technology, geography and history and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. Standards are below average in information and communication technology. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music.

Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. There is not enough help for them in learning to read and write at their own level. There are many in Years 4, 5 and 6, mainly boys, whose weaknesses have not been correctly identified. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress because of systematic identification and specialist support. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Most are keen to learn and concentrate well. Occasionally, in Year 5, a small proportion of boys are not keen to learn and do not work hard enough. This results from a lack of high quality extra support during group work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils behave very well when moving around the school and well in most lessons. However, occasionally, when teaching fails to challenge them, a few boys become silly and distract others.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are keen to take responsibility. They relate well to each other and to adults. By Year 6, they work well in small teams and make joint decisions.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Punctuality is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	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.

In lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning were very good in 16 per cent, good in 50 per cent and satisfactory in 29 per cent. They were unsatisfactory in five per cent. Teaching in Year 6 is very good and pupils learn very well, which raises standards. The Year 6 teachers are skilled in managing pupils' learning to meet their wide range of attainment. The two unsatisfactory lessons occurred in Year 5 in two temporary teachers' lessons in literacy and numeracy. They resulted from a lack of match of work to pupils' previous attainment and ineffective deployment of classroom assistants in large classes.

The quality of teaching and learning in numeracy is good. The quality of teaching and learning in reading and writing is satisfactory overall. This is because the literacy hour is not as well implemented and there is not enough support for pupils with difficulties in reading and writing. Higher achievers make satisfactory progress overall, although their reading books are too easy. Pupils with special educational needs do not learn well enough because of unsatisfactory provision.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory overall. The curriculum is broad and relevant except that the full National Curriculum for information and communication technology is not in place. Pupils do not always have equal access to the same curriculum, as some pupils miss mathematics and science lessons when they have extra reading or music lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Unsatisfactory. It is satisfactory in numeracy but pupils are not identified or supported well enough in reading and writing.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good overall. There are good identification procedures and support by specialist teachers. Good opportunities are provided to speak in small groups in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There is good provision for moral, social and cultural development and satisfactory provision for spiritual. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and there is a clear new behaviour policy.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are provided with good personal support. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory and the school is working hard to improve links with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The new headteacher provides strong, determined leadership and is providing a clear educational direction for the school. Co-ordinators' roles for literacy, information and communication technology and special educational needs in monitoring and evaluating the curriculum are now developing well but this has been slow.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors are supportive but their strategic work and systems for evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses are undeveloped. Some governors spend little time in school because of their business roles.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school analyses its assessments carefully and seeks to improve standards. However, the school has only recently used assessment to evaluate the extent of the literacy problems.
The strategic use of resources	Accounts are kept in very good order by the finance officer. The deployment of educational support assistants is unsatisfactory. The school does not measure its cost effectiveness through analysing the effect of spending on raising standards.

The ratio of pupils to teachers is high and results in very large class sizes in Years 4 and 5. There are not enough trained classroom assistants for helping pupils with difficulties in literacy to learn the small steps in reading and writing. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, apart from those in information communication technology, but the library is small and there are not enough class fiction books.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Teaching is good. • Teachers have high expectations. • The school helps the children to become mature and responsible. • The school is easily approachable if parents have a question or problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like more information about their children's progress. • Fewer pupils or more support in the large classes. • Children with special educational needs making better progress in reading and writing. • The range of activities outside school for pupils in Years 3 and 4.

The inspectors agree with the positive statements. They find that last year's annual reports, although individual and detailed, were inconsistent in details of the information about the National Curriculum, targets for improvement and the progress pupils were making. Inspectors agree that the large class sizes restrict learning in some instances, especially in reading and writing. The range of extracurricular activities is good for older pupils, but there is little for pupils in Year 3.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Analysis of the school's provisional 2000 national end of Key Stage 2 tests for eleven year olds shows that standards were above the national average in English, well above average in mathematics and average in science. Compared with similar schools, pupils' results were well above average in both English and mathematics and average in science. The assessments made by teachers were significantly lower at Level 5 in English and science and lower in mathematics than the results of the tests, suggesting that teachers underestimated the ability of some higher achieving pupils. Pupils' test results for 2000 were much improved on the results achieved by pupils in 1999.
2. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds, standards were average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Compared with similar schools, these results were well below average in English, mathematics and science.
3. The school attributes these good improvements in 2000 in English, mathematics and science to rigorous target setting for pupils in their last year of school; close working with parents; the teaching of English and mathematics in ability groups from the Spring term in Year 6 and booster classes before school. Additionally, these pupils, Year 6 last year, entered school with above average standards in English and mathematics. Standards in science, however, in 2000 showed underachievement compared with the 2000 results in English and mathematics, and pupils' high attainment on entry.
4. The combined data for the years 1996 to 1999 show no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in English and mathematics, although in science, boys outperformed girls. In science, girls' performance was below average whilst that of boys was average. The trend for improvement for all core subjects was broadly in line with the national trend over this four-year period.
5. Pupils' results from 1997 to 1999 were too variable from year to year and, whilst pupils' overall attainment in all three subjects was above the national average in 1997, it was below the national average in 1998 and average in 1999. In 1998, pupils' attainment was also too variable from subject to subject. In English, in 1998, it was well below the national average compared with mathematics, which was above the national average, thus indicating pupils' significant underachievement in English.
6. The school's formal targets for 2000 were for 74 per cent of pupils to achieve the expectation, Level 4, in English, and 83 per cent in mathematics. The targets were too modest in English and satisfactory in mathematics. They were exceeded in both cases. The targets set for 2001 are far too low in English at 63 per cent and modest in mathematics at 80 per cent. These targets were exceeded in 1999 in English and in 2000 in both English and mathematics. The school is on course to exceed the targets set.
7. The findings of the inspection are that the pupils in the current Year 6 achieve below average standards in English, including reading and writing, above average standards in mathematics, including numeracy, science, art, and physical education and average standards in design and technology, geography and history. Standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Standards are below average in information and communication technology and there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music.

8. Standards observed are far lower than the standards that eleven year olds attained in the 2000 National Tests in English, lower in mathematics and higher in science. One reason for this is that the current Year 6 entered school with below average attainment in reading and writing, including spelling, and average attainment in mathematics compared with last year's Year 6 pupils, who entered with above average attainment. The current Year 6 are achieving well in mathematics and science compared with their attainment on entry. However, pupils do not achieve as well in English as they do in mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in English remains below average by the time they leave the school as it was on entry. This results from large numbers of pupils entering the school with below average standards in reading, writing and spelling and the school's lack of robust literacy teaching for pupils with special educational needs.

9. The findings of the inspection show that science standards have improved for the current Year 6 compared with those attained by the previous Year 6 in their 2000 tests. This is the result of teachers' good application of the high quality scheme of work, good science teaching and effective assessment procedures.

10. By the age of eleven, in English, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening. Most answer questions fluently and successfully take part in class discussions. However, a small proportion of pupils do not speak so confidently and their vocabulary is limited. Standards in reading are below average and too few pupils reach higher levels. A small number of pupils reach good standards and read accurately, fluently and expressively. Average achieving pupils read fluently and use phonics to read new words, but a significant proportion of pupils are lower achievers and cannot use phonics with such ease. Pupils' reading books are not always well matched as books are sometimes too easy or hard, including those for higher and lower attaining pupils. Few pupils know how to use a reference library.

11. Standards in writing are below average. Pupils successfully write for a range of purposes such as play scripts or writing persuasive accounts. Higher achievers use lively language and interesting vocabulary. However, although average and lower achieving pupils usually communicate their meaning, their spelling and punctuation are often inaccurate. Additionally, ten per cent of pupils achieve very low standards in literacy and read and write at levels that are two years or more behind their chronological age.

12. The proportion of pupils with unsatisfactory literacy skills varies from year to year and is very high in Year 4 where many pupils have below average reading and writing skills. Nearly one third of all pupils, mainly boys, are poor writers and cannot express themselves by writing simple sentences correctly. Their spelling and punctuation are very weak. These pupils entered the school with well below average standards in writing and spelling and standards remain low.

13. In mathematics, pupils' numerical skills are good. They understand and apply multiplication facts well, convert percentages to decimals and fractions and are good at working out challenging mental problems. They understand the four rules of number well and apply their numerical skills well to everyday life. When working with two-dimensional shapes and angles, pupils label the various shapes with confidence, and have a good understanding of acute and obtuse angles. They understand rotational symmetry well, and draw their shapes accurately on squared paper. Pupils have a good grasp of databases, and how to compile data using frequency tables to produce a graph.

14. In science, pupils plan and conduct their own experiments and predict and make fair tests well. Through their practical investigations, they achieve good standards in scientific knowledge, for example, in their understanding of gravity and the ways in which light and sound travel. In information and communication technology, pupils' word processing skills are good and they successfully use the

Internet and CD-ROMs for research. Pupils combine words and graphic effects when designing advertisements. However, standards in data handling and control technology are unsatisfactory as pupils spend little time on data handling and the school does not have the equipment for control technology.

15. Pupils apply their literacy and numeracy skills to other subjects satisfactorily as teachers match their work well to their literacy needs when they learn other subjects. This enables the pupils to apply and develop their basic skills through the curriculum. However, weak literacy skills often inhibit the pupils when recording in science. The application of information and communication technology to other subjects is unsatisfactory and applications to science and design and technology are particularly lacking in data handling and control technology.

16. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and science. Most pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English but pupils with special educational needs do not achieve well enough because of unsatisfactory provision for special educational needs. Neither the amount nor the quality of extra support they are given is adequate. Their individual education plans vary greatly in quality from class to class, and give too little guidance to teachers or pupils. There are a substantial minority of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6, who have never made sufficient progress. These pupils are not even on the register for special educational needs, even though their reading and writing are unsatisfactory. This is unsatisfactory, and denies pupils the support and guidance they need. The new headteacher realises this shortcoming and has recently tested all pupils' reading and identified those who are struggling.

17. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in developing numeracy through careful identification and well-matched work. More able pupils' achievement is satisfactory in mathematics and science. Higher achievers' progress is inconsistent in English because teachers do not always provide higher level work throughout the literacy hour. This results from difficulties teachers experience in managing the very wide range of attainment in the literacy hour, often in large classes.

18. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress through systematic identification and good support by specialist teachers and good opportunities to develop speaking skills through well-organised group activities when learning their subjects.

19. In information and communication technology, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory due to unsatisfactory implementation of the National Curriculum. More able pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, with good achievement in art and physical education. However, they make unsatisfactory progress in information and communication technology, design and technology and history through few opportunities to achieve at higher levels. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the achievement of gifted and talented pupils.

20. Compared with the findings of the 1997 OFSTED inspection, standards attained by the current Year 6 are similar in mathematics, science, design and technology, geography, history and religious education. They are slightly lower in art and physical education and have fallen in English, and information and communication technology. Considering that pupils' attainment on entry is not as high as at the time of the previous inspection when it was described as "average to above average", the school's progress is satisfactory overall. The school has done well to maintain above average standards in mathematics and science although not well enough in English as pupils' attainment remains below the national average as it was on entry to the school.

21. The school's test results in 2000 for English and mathematics show that the school achieves best when pupils enter the school with at least satisfactory attainment in reading and writing. However, the lack of rigorous provision in special educational needs for lower achievers in reading and writing makes this school less effective when pupils enter with lower standards in literacy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

22. Pupils have good attitudes to the school and their learning. They show keen interest in a high proportion of the lessons and sustain their concentration well. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good or better in more than six lessons out of ten. They respond well to the opportunity given by the "Work of the Week" assembly to show their good work. During the inspection, for example, three Year 5 pupils proudly presented an intricate model of comets in space to illuminate their solar system.

23. Pupils behave well. They respond positively to the good teaching seen in many lessons. However, in the two lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, the behaviour of a few pupils, mainly boys, became silly and unsatisfactory. Pupils maintain consistently high standards of behaviour at break and lunch times and as they move around the school. They take care to keep the school buildings tidy. No incidents of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection. The school has not excluded any pupils during the past or current years. Parents are confident that the teachers will listen to any concern, and resolve disagreements as they arise. Pupils have a very good understanding of the effect their actions have on others. They are very courteous to adults and welcoming to visitors.

24. Pupils' personal responsibility develops well. All classes devise their own rules, in line with the school's behaviour policy. Pupils look after materials and equipment, and keep their classroom tidy. They eagerly volunteer for jobs around the school. They blow up footballs and netballs, weed flower beds and sometimes simply ask if there is anything that needs doing. Older pupils take on a range of whole-school duties. Pupils show independent initiative. A group of Year 6 pupils, concerned about the country's waste of paper, wrote to a recycling company to ask if the school could have a paper recycling bin. Pupils develop leadership and maturity in a variety of sports and activities. The school's soccer team wins trophies frequently. Individual pupils from Year 3 upwards take part in local soccer and rugby teams. Pupils participate in gymnastics, swimming and ice-skating. In the week of the inspection, three pupils received their orange belts in karate. Over 40 pupils currently learn a musical instrument. Some play in a marching band and perform at carnivals. Pupils develop self-esteem in the school's Christmas dramatic productions and recently appeared in "Joseph" at the Wyvern theatre in Swindon.

25. Relationships at school are good. Pupils relate well to one another, to their teachers and other adults. They work together well in pairs and groups in many lessons. By Year 6, their ability to work in small teams is particularly good in mathematics, science and personal and social education lessons. They discuss other people's feelings sensitively in religious education lessons, showing consistent respect for others' values and beliefs. The school has a small number of pupils from Japan and Turkey. These pupils fit harmoniously into the life and work of the school.

26. Attendance is satisfactory. The 1999/2000 rate of 94.4 per cent is broadly average at 0.6 per cent higher than last year's national average for primary schools. It is above the figure recorded at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils arrive punctually and lessons start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. Despite a number of staff changes, the school has maintained the high proportion of good teaching since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of

lessons; the five per cent unsatisfactory teaching amounts to two lessons out of the 38 observed. Teaching was good in two thirds of lessons and this included 16 per cent of lessons that were very good. These proportions of good teaching are similar to the last inspection although no unsatisfactory teaching was observed then. However, this school has recently been through significant changes of staff and three teachers, including the deputy headteacher, the literacy co-ordinator and the special educational needs co-ordinators have all been on long-term maternity leave.

28. The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was good. Overall, given the circumstances of the school, it has made satisfactory progress in maintaining the good quality teaching since the previous inspection. The best teaching was found in Year 6 where all lessons were good and one third very good. This has a significant impact on pupils' learning and is raising the standards that pupils achieve. In Years 3, 4 and 5, although there was a substantial proportion of good teaching, it is not as consistently good within each year group as it is in Year 6. Scrutiny of pupils' work also confirmed this. This results from the weaker management of the National Literacy Strategy compared with the National Numeracy Strategy and the support that teachers have been given. It also reflects the limited extra support for teachers in the classroom when teaching lower achieving pupils in literacy. The two unsatisfactory lessons were found in Year 5 in two temporary teachers' lessons.

29. The main strengths of the teaching are that teachers explain the purpose of their lesson well so that most pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Teachers often plan interesting activities that capture the pupils' attention and are relevant to their daily lives. They have positive relationships with pupils and there is considerable use of praise to build pupils' self esteem. Lesson planning for the range of ability is usually good. Most teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and have effective strategies for dealing with pupils who have behavioural difficulties. The pace of lessons is often good which results in pupils' brisk learning.

30. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, including numeracy, is good overall and very good in Year 6. The main factor contributing to pupils' good progress and learning is the clear structure provided by the school's application of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers plan together and are well supported by the subject expertise of the mathematics co-ordinator. In one very good Year 3 numeracy lesson, the demanding content was planned very well by the teacher to ensure that all abilities were very well catered for and this led to very good learning for pupils during the whole-class mental sessions. Very good questioning and reinforcement of basic numeracy skills ensured that pupils of all levels of ability grasped important fundamentals. Group work was very well organised and behaviour management was very good. However, pupils' overall learning was only good, rather than very good, as there was no extra classroom support for the teacher during group work to enable all groups to learn at a rapid pace.

31. In a very good Year 6 lesson, the teacher's high expectations of all pupils and very good skills in matching work led to very good learning for all throughout the lesson. Pupils learned very well throughout as a class assistant supported them well during group work. She had been very well prepared for her role and this led to good learning for lower achieving pupils, which brought their attainment closer to the national expectation.

32. However, when the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory rather than good, the teacher is not so expert at engaging all abilities during introductions in the classroom. During group work, the same level of support is not provided for pupils' wide-ranging attainment as in good lessons. This is often because of the lack of a classroom assistant in lessons in large classes.

33. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good. Once again, the rigorous application of the scheme of work, and the sound use of assessment, lead to good lesson planning and well matched

work for the ability range. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they teach successfully by instruction and questioning the whole class as well as when they organise pupils into small teams for practical enquiry. Despite large classes, teachers often provide good practical sessions where pupils learn in groups as well as a class. In a good Year 4 science lesson, pupils with special educational needs were given good support by a classroom assistant during practical work thus enabling all pupils to learn well.

34. The quality of teaching in English, including literacy, is satisfactory overall. However, this varies from year to year and also within each year in Years 3 to 5. It ranges from very good to unsatisfactory and this is confirmed by the scrutiny of pupils' work. Once again, the quality of teaching for Year 6 is consistently good throughout both classes and results in pupils' good learning. The National Literacy Strategy is applied well, and planning follows the literacy framework carefully. The range of ability is generally well catered for in all parts of the lesson. The consistently good teaching across the year raises pupils' achievement in Year 6. However, in Years 3, 4 and 5, despite a half of all lessons being good or better, the remainder were only satisfactory and one, in Year 5, was unsatisfactory. In the satisfactory lessons, there are weaker elements. Teachers do not manage the wide range of attainment as well as in good lessons. The needs of lower achieving pupils are not as well met. In particular, the shared text is sometimes very hard for lower achievers to read as the text is aimed at the average and above average achievers. Occasionally, their reading and writing tasks during group work are also not well matched.

35. In Years 4 and 5, class sizes are 35 or more and there is not enough trained support from class assistants for the large proportion of pupils with lower attainment in literacy. Teachers have difficulty in managing the pupils' very wide range of attainment in these large mixed ability classes. This prevents pupils carefully learning the right steps in reading and writing throughout the lesson. Some parents expressed concern about the large class sizes in Years 4 and 5 and the lack of support for their children who have special educational needs in reading and writing. The inspection team agrees that this is a weakness of the school.

36. The two unsatisfactory lessons were in literacy and numeracy in two different Year 5 classes. In both these lessons, class introductions were not fitted to the range of ability and caused pupils to lose interest. During the group work in both cases, too many boys took a long time to settle, did not receive enough support, learned little and misbehaved. In unsatisfactory lessons, class management is weaker and too much time is spent regaining pupils' attention after they have lost interest.

37. The school has significantly higher proportions of pupils attaining below average standards on entry than at the time of the previous inspection, and there is not enough high quality provision for them in literacy. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. This is not because of the quality of teaching but because of the lack of support for special educational needs and rigorous identification procedures. When pupils are identified, teachers' lesson plans provide appropriate tasks for these pupils, and their written instructions are clear. When educational support assistants are present in lessons, pupils usually do well, and learn quickly.

38. The quality of teaching of art and physical education is good whilst the quality of teaching of all other subjects is satisfactory. The teaching of swimming is very good. Pupils are taught at the local swimming pool by expert coaches. A strong factor contributing to pupils' rapid learning is the way the pupils are taught in ability groups and lessons build very successfully on pupils' previous learning.

39. The quality of the teaching in information and communication technology lessons was satisfactory, although teachers do not have the required subject knowledge for teaching control technology. This, once again, relates to management of provision. Teachers confidently use the computer suite but large

class sizes in Year 5, and the way pupils are occasionally grouped in threes, limits the amount of time some pupils have for developing their computer skills.

40. In both mathematics and science, there is good assessment of pupils' strengths and weaknesses and teachers use this well for planning for the range of ability. Another striking feature, which helps to promote good quality teaching in mathematics and science, is the consistently good subject knowledge of the teachers. In English, assessment is not used well enough to plan rigorously for the full ability range, which results in inconsistent progress for higher achieving pupils and unsatisfactory progress for pupils with learning difficulties in reading and writing.

41. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. All marking is supportive but it does not always make clear to pupils how they need to improve their work. A few parents wrote to say that pupils' homework was not always marked and there are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to improve their work. The inspection team agrees with these comments.

42. The quality of homework in reading, writing and numeracy is satisfactory. The school has a satisfactory homework policy, although this is still in draft form and was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. However, pupils' home reading records are unsatisfactory. These records do not inform pupils and their parents of reading targets and what pupils are expected to achieve. They show only books read and, in some classes, these are not up-to-date.

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

43. The school offers a broad curriculum, which is relevant to pupils' daily lives. The statutory requirements for religious education through the locally agreed syllabus are met. However, the curriculum for information and communication technology lacks breadth and, in particular, does not meet statutory requirements for the teaching of data handling and control technology. The lack of equipment and the lack of training in these areas prevent the school offering the full National Curriculum. The school is aware of this and has planned to address these areas rigorously in the school development plan.

44. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum offered by the school was considered to be good and fully met requirements. However, that inspection identified, as a key issue, the development of schemes of work for all subjects with clear identification of how subject specific skills would be developed through the key stage. The report also noted the need to develop the role of the subject co-ordinators by enabling them to have more opportunities to evaluate and share classroom practice.

45. Although the school has made satisfactory progress overall towards addressing these key issues, there remain areas of weakness. All subject areas now have schemes of work and policies but, in some subjects such as history, policies are only in draft form and in subjects such as science, art and literacy, policies have been identified in the school development plan for completion. These draft policies and schemes of work generally reflect the requirements of the new curriculum 2000 and make good use of the documentation from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The role of the numeracy co-ordinator is very well developed and the very effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy provides a model for the further development of other subject coordination. Time allocations for subjects are generally satisfactory and within the national average range. However, the time allocated to English is slightly below average. When the variable pattern of pupils' attainment on entry to the school in literacy is taken into account, the time allocated to literacy is not always sufficient to ensure that the skills of extended writing, spelling and reading are satisfactorily developed.

46. Literacy and numeracy are taught daily. The school is delivering the National Numeracy Strategy well, with a positive effect on pupils' attainment. The cross-curricular application of numeracy in subjects such as science and design technology is satisfactory. Although the National Literacy Strategy is fully implemented, there has been some loss of momentum in its development, due to several changes of co-ordinator. This has resulted in the variability of pupils' achievement in some classes and the occasional mismatch of activities and tasks to pupils' ability. A new appointment has now been made and clear priorities are being established for the continued development of the subject. Literacy is satisfactorily developed in subjects such as history, religious education, science and geography where there are satisfactory opportunities to develop writing and speaking skills.

47. Curricular provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is good, and there is particularly good identification and support by specialist teachers. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory and has deteriorated from the good quality reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection. The quality of targets in pupils' individual education plans varies greatly from class to class. At their best, usually in support of mathematics, they give clear and achievable targets, such as 'learn number bonds to 20', but, too often, these targets are woolly, and aim to, for example, 'develop reading confidence' which does not show clear criteria for success. Consequently, pupils' progress is very inconsistent and, by Year 6, many have fallen further behind their peers. A further problem arises when pupils are occasionally withdrawn from lessons for extra reading sessions and miss valuable work in mathematics or science. Educational support assistants carry out activities planned by the teachers satisfactorily, and keep careful and appropriate records of pupils' progress.

48. A clear equal opportunities policy includes a checklist for equal opportunities and ways of organising the classroom to ensure equality of opportunity. However, whilst those for whom English is a second language are well integrated into lessons, a few pupils regularly miss lessons for instrumental music tuition. The school recognises boys' underachievement in reading and writing and has tried to address this problem by purchasing fiction books, which might appeal more to them. There is, as some parents note, a lack of extracurricular sports clubs for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Otherwise, all pupils have equal access to activities outside lessons. Internal stairs would make access for any pupils who were physically disabled very difficult.

49. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school's aims include raising the pupils' awareness of moral and spiritual values and encouraging respect for others. The school has sound links with local churches. Festivals are celebrated at St Bartholomew's church and the local Methodist minister has led assemblies in school. Acts of collective worship make a sound contribution to spiritual development on themes such as living in a community and the need to listen to other people and respond to their feelings. Pupils' effort and achievement are celebrated in a weekly sharing assembly and 'work of the week' is celebrated in some classrooms. A 'tree of thoughts' in the foyer encourages the pupils to celebrate acts of friendliness and kindness. The teachers in all years provide good opportunities for the pupils to reflect on the wonder of nature, music and art.

50. Provision for the pupils' moral development is good. A good draft behaviour policy has been recently developed, it aims to foster self-discipline, self-esteem and socially acceptable behaviour. It outlines the school's stance on bullying. The pupils have depicted the school's rules in symbolic form in an effective display in the information and communication technology suite. At the start of each year, the pupils in each class discuss 'golden rules' for their classrooms and these are prominently displayed. Positive behaviour and effort is rewarded through an effective system of house points and certificates.

51. Provision for the pupils' social development is good. Most parents feel that the school succeeds in helping their children to become mature and responsible. Older pupils carry out a range of tasks in school and all the pupils are encouraged to help out with tasks in individual classrooms. The teachers strive to make the pupils as independent as possible in their learning and to show initiative. The Year 6 teachers have begun to implement a weekly session where the pupils sit down to discuss issues of concern to them. The co-ordinator for personal and social education plans to revive the school council. The pupils' social development is effectively fostered through participation in extracurricular activities, sports matches and school productions. Year 6 have the opportunity to develop social skills during a residential visit to South Devon.

52. The teachers make the pupils well aware of the need for environmental conservation. Year 4 pupils write about people who litter the environment with rubbish. Earlier this year, the pupils planted trees in the school grounds. The pupils are encouraged to think of people less fortunate than themselves by supporting various charities. The teachers develop the social awareness of the older pupils through effective 'in the news' displays, where the pupils locate relevant world events, such as the elephant revival in Angola, floods in Central America and the petrol crisis in Britain. The teachers foster teamwork in lessons wherever appropriate, as in practical science investigations. The pupils are made aware of the dangers of local roads and railway lines. There is a cycling proficiency scheme for Year 6 pupils and the local police have emphasised the dangers of trespassing on the nearby railway line.

53. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. The pupils are encouraged to participate in school productions, such as 'Joseph' at the Wyvern theatre last term. Book fairs and visiting theatre groups enhance cultural development. In history, the pupils learn of the legacy of Tudor and Victorian times and they participate in a school Victorian day. Visits are made to local museums. In art, the pupils learn about the works of famous artists. In two assemblies observed, the pupils had the opportunity to listen to music from the Tudor era. Some pupils have instrumental music tuition and they have the opportunity to participate in a recorder club, orchestra and choir. The teachers strive to make the pupils aware of the diversity and richness of cultures worldwide and in Britain. In religious education, the pupils learn about Judaism and Islam and in geography, they learn about the culture of India. This was enhanced last year by a two-day visit from an Indian dancer. There are some instruments from a variety of cultures amongst the school's music resources.

54. The Japanese presence in the Swindon area is celebrated through an effective display of Japanese books and artefacts. Last year, the mothers of some Japanese pupils taught origami to Year 6. The good links with other local schools enhance pupils' learning, social development and confidence. In the summer term, Year 2 pupils from the infant school come in on the same day that the Year 6 pupils sample subject learning and sports at the secondary school. Other informal visits help to smooth the transition as pupils move from one school to the next. Pupils from the infant, junior and secondary schools took part together in the production of "Joseph" at the professional theatre in Swindon. Each year, secondary students spend two weeks work experience helping in the junior school. Most of the secondary school's intake comes from just two primary schools. This enables headteachers, year

teachers and special educational needs co-ordinators to meet frequently and liaise well. The supply of assessment information between the schools has greatly increased within the past two years.

55. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. A local policeman extends their understanding of road and other safety. A coach from Swindon Town Football Club improves the soccer skills of boys and girls. Assemblies taken by clergy from two local churches give pupils knowledge of different faiths. Japanese families provide artefacts, and an Indian resident dressed the pupils in Indian costumes. Pupils enjoy these occasions and gain understanding of other cultures. Donation of computers by a local business has enabled pupils to have a new computer suite.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

56. The previous inspection noted that the school was a caring community, but there were concerns about health and safety. Since then, the school has made significant improvements in procedures and premises. The school has a very good health and safety policy, which it follows meticulously. It now provides a good standard of care for the health, safety and wellbeing of its pupils. The site manager checks for health and safety every day. He carries out a formal check with a governor from the premises committee once each term and staff complete a written risk assessment each year, and notify concerns as they arise. The building is clean and its roofs did not leak during the recent heavy rainfall. Cleaning chemicals are now securely stored. Doors are finger-safe. The school is completing a shed that will safely store dining chairs and tables in order to make the school safe for physical education lessons in the hall. The principal remaining concern is that not all accessible windows have safety glass.

57. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection. She ensures that all teaching and non-teaching staff are familiar with the required procedures. A member of staff has the required current first aid certificate. Most teachers and assistants have received training in first aid procedures for schools. Together, they provide effective care for minor accidents.

58. Assessment was a key issue in the previous report. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievement are now satisfactory overall and the school has made satisfactory progress on this key issue. Assessment in mathematics is very effective. Teachers use it to focus and alter their planning in areas where pupils need extra help, thus enabling pupils to learn more successfully. In English, there is a good range of rigorous assessment. This has been enhanced by the very systematic reading assessment by the headteacher to enable her to assess the exact literacy needs of pupils. The school carries out the national optional tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Next year's class teachers mark these tests, ensuring that they know their pupils' abilities at the start of the year which is a very good strategy. Each pupil has a good assessment record and this has been enhanced recently to show the pupils' achievement in the end of Year 2 national tests compared with their results in the junior school in reading, writing, mathematics and science. However, there are weaknesses in English assessment, which relate to the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs. The procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs are weak and inconsistent. Whilst some pupils with slight reading problems are placed on the special educational needs register, others in Years 5 and 6 who are well behind in their reading are not. Consequently, they fall further and further behind. Some parents have expressed concern and the inspection team agrees with their concerns.

59. The school sets thorough targets in English and mathematics for Year 6 pupils, which are shared with their parents. The success of this was demonstrated by pupils' high attainment in Year 6 last year. Target setting for other year groups has been started but it is less rigorous than in Year 6. A significant weakness, before the new headteacher's arrival, was that details of pupils' individual attainment on entry were not thoroughly kept. In particular, assessment details of those who entered

later than the normal entry point in Year 3 were not always recorded. The school has now put this in place and has the management structure to achieve the further improvements that it knows are necessary for assessing pupils' reading and writing difficulties. The school is also aware that it does not have a register for gifted and talented pupils and acknowledges that it has a few pupils who fall into this category.

60. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory. Teachers and support assistants know the pupils well, but there are too many times when pupils in large classes have no extra support in literacy and numeracy lessons, and have to wait to be helped. The arrangements for pupils who have statements of special educational need are satisfactory, and ensure that these pupils make sound progress.

61. The school provides pupils with good personal support. Teachers know their pupils well, and respond to their individual needs and interests. The school promotes attendance and punctuality satisfactorily. It has a good policy for behaviour and discipline. Pupils value the opportunity to present good work and celebrate good behaviour at the weekly assemblies. At break times, a teacher and a learning support assistant carefully monitor the playground and the field. Six midday supervisory staff provide effective care in the hall and outside areas at lunchtime. The school has good procedures to eliminate oppressive behaviour. It deters any rare instances of bullying speedily and firmly. The school uses assemblies and religious education lessons to promote the idea of caring for other people and respecting their feelings and needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. Parents' responses to the questionnaire and at the parents' meeting were positive. Overall, they have at least a satisfactory opinion of the school. The large majority of parents agree that teaching and behaviour are good. They say that the school expects their children to work hard, that it is helping them to become mature and responsible, and that their children like the school. Virtually all feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or problem. However, 20 per cent say that they are not well informed about how their child is getting on. Some parents say, in the questionnaires and at the meeting, that the school does not offer a wide range of activities outside lessons. This applies particularly to the younger pupils. At present, the only activity for pupils in Year 3 is country dancing. Some parents say that the school does not provide adequately for children with special educational needs. Others express concern about the size of classes. The finding of the inspection is that, in some instances, for example, when using the computer suite, having 35 pupils or more in the class does indeed restrict their learning. The inspection team also agree that there is not enough support from adults in literacy and numeracy sessions, and that this is exacerbated when pupils are taught in very large classes.

63. Links with parents are satisfactory and the school is working hard to improve them. Parents discuss their child's progress with the class teacher at meetings in October and February. The school has also arranged an evening on numeracy this term. A high proportion of parents come for these meetings. The headteacher and class teachers meet parents at the end of the school day, and parents know that they can discuss concerns informally then. Parents play a major part in the active Friends' Association, which raises money for extra learning facilities. Social events, such as the children's disco, enhance their social skills. These come to the fore when children help run stalls at the summer fete and the Christmas fair.

64. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved with their child's support. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns and are consulted in all procedures.

Whilst most have indicated their appreciation of the school's support, a significant few are concerned about the lack of support in large classes. The inspection team shares these concerns.

65. The school provides parents with satisfactory information. Last summer's annual reports gave a great deal of information about what their children had studied. However, the reports were less consistent in evaluating pupils' progress. A good feature of the reports is that they invite parents and children to make comments. Some reports set targets effectively. In some cases, parents and pupils added targets for themselves. This good practice did not happen in all the reports. The school sends regular newsletters with information about subjects, topics, activities and events. The clearly presented prospectus invites parents to help with their children's learning at home and in school.

66. Parents' contributions make a satisfactory impact on their children's learning. Ten parents have volunteered support in literacy and other lessons and a parent with artistic skills helped pupils develop their skills in tie-dyeing. Parents accompany pupils to swimming and on visits. Pupils do more homework than at the time of the previous inspection, and 90 per cent now produce homework regularly. Some pupils put considerable effort and inspiration into research, artwork and topics. However, pupils' home reading diaries do not contain enough information for parents on the skills and targets for reading and how pupils are achieving. Some reading diaries do not contain enough information about when the pupils read and this is not checked sufficiently in school. Overall, the parents' responses to the questionnaires show that their satisfaction with the school is similar to that recorded at the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The headteacher gives strong and determined leadership and is providing a clear educational direction for the school. She has been in post just over one term and has already succeeded in working with the staff as a team and harnessing their considerable commitment and enthusiasm for improving the school. She has already won their respect and there is a strong sense of joint purpose. The headteacher works closely with the acting deputy who has a good understanding of her role. The headteacher also has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and, with the help of the senior management team, has constructed a useful short-term school development plan that focuses on the school's key weaknesses. The headteacher has correctly identified the need to focus on raising standards in literacy and information and communication technology and to develop the co-ordinators' and governors' roles. These weaknesses have now begun to be systematically addressed. The high standard of the leadership of the new headteacher is similar to that reported on the last inspection.

68. Governors' involvement in the school has not developed adequately since the last inspection and, by standing still, their effectiveness has declined. Governors do not help to steer the direction of the school sufficiently, their strategic role is unsatisfactory and they do not have good enough knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In the past, they have relied too heavily on information provided by the headteacher and have not developed their own ways of monitoring and questioning standards achieved. Governors have satisfactory committee structures and are responsible for curriculum areas. However, they spend little time observing the school at work. Many governors have very demanding professional roles and are aware they have not been able to devote enough time to monitoring the school's work. Although governors produced a satisfactory action plan for addressing the weaknesses from the previous inspection, they did not have effective systems for monitoring how well and quickly the school was addressing them.

69. The school did well to improve its standards in 2000 so that pupils attained high standards in English and mathematics appropriate to the same pupils' high attainment on entry. The successful measures leading to these improvements resulted from careful analysis of pupils' achievement in their

Year 6 mock National Curriculum tests. New targets were set and pupils' work was rigorously matched to their new targets. However, the school is less successful when pupils enter the school with lower achievement in literacy, as is the case with the current Year 6 and Year 4 pupils. In Year 6, whilst high standards in mathematics and science are being achieved, this is not the case in literacy. The school's strategies for raising pupils' attainment in reading and writing have not been effective. As a result, the new headteacher, in her concern about the standards of literacy, rigorously tested all pupils in the school in reading. This was to enable her to gather exact information in order to improve standards of literacy where needed. The new headteacher has correctly perceived the problems in the school and is taking very purposeful action to put them right.

70. The school has had to bear the impact of the long-term absences of the literacy co-ordinator, the special educational needs co-ordinator and an information technology co-ordinator, who is also the deputy headteacher. This represents considerable disruption and loss of expertise in a school of this size. A permanent literacy co-ordinator has just been appointed this term. The impact of the lack of leadership has taken its toll especially in literacy. Whilst the management and implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is very good, and has had the benefit of permanent leadership, this is not the case in literacy. The impetus created during the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, for example, monitoring teaching in the classroom, was not sustained because of the absence of the co-ordinator. This has resulted in inconsistent implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and standards that are not as good as in mathematics.

71. There are now rigorous systems in place for the headteacher and the new literacy co-ordinator to monitor standards in literacy. The school has developed the role of the science co-ordinator and those for foundation subjects satisfactorily since the previous inspection. However, although teachers are supported in their planning and opportunities for the sharing of practice have increased, there has been little monitoring of the quality of teaching. The role of the information and communication technology co-ordinator is now developing well and the co-ordinator is attending a long course. The school made limited progress on developing this key issue before last term although rapid progress is now being made.

72. The new headteacher has ensured that systems for teachers to implement the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's schemes of work are in now in place. Before her appointment, management of the curriculum was left too much to individual teachers, for example, in implementing the information and communication technology scheme of work.

73. The school developed good systems for assessing English, mathematics and science in response to the last OFSTED inspection and the staff use assessments well in mathematics and science. However, there are weaknesses in English related to the identification and planning of work for pupils with special educational needs. There are satisfactory assessment arrangements in most other subjects built into the new schemes of work. However, assessment for information and communication technology remains weak because of teachers' lack of subject knowledge. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress on addressing its key issues although there remains work to be done.

74. The management of the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs, is unsatisfactory. This important aspect of the school's work has declined since the previous inspection. The arrangements for identifying pupils with special educational needs are unsatisfactory, and miss a significant number of pupils, particularly those at the top of the school with reading difficulties. Consequently, these pupils reach Year 6 having fallen further behind their peers. Pupils' individual education plans vary greatly in quality from class to class because they have not been monitored effectively. There is a designated governor for special educational needs, who is very skilled and experienced, but is not able to come into school during the day.

75. Largely class teachers manage the allocation of educational support assistants. With no whole-school approach, this leaves too many pupils unsupported, particularly in literacy lessons. Consequently, the provision does not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. The number of support staff for special educational needs is modest in a school with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in literacy. Many have not received training for teaching the small steps in reading and writing.

76. The reasons for the decline in special educational needs provision is that the school, before the new headteacher's appointment, had failed to put robust provision in place to counteract pupils entering the school with lower standards in literacy. The previous special educational needs co-ordinator was given too little time to perform her role and pupils with special educational needs were given little extra support. The new headteacher is the temporary special educational needs co-ordinator and recognises that considerable improvements are needed in the current arrangements if pupils are to achieve higher standards in literacy.

77. The school still has many draft subject policies awaiting the approval of governors. These are often of a high quality although a few need updating to match curriculum 2000 requirements. The school is developing satisfactory systems for evaluating its performance, although these are weakened by the fact that, until recently, pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 national tests was not thoroughly recorded. The school has a good capacity to improve in the future.

78. The pupil ratio of pupils to teachers is well above average at 28 to 1 yet the proportion of classroom assistants is only average. As the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average, the proportion of trained teachers and their classroom assistants is low for this school. This has a negative impact on lower achieving pupils' learning especially in literacy where some teachers struggle to manage the wide ability range in very large mixed ability classes.

79. Teachers are well qualified for this age and for the subjects they teach and there is a good balance between longer serving and more recently qualified staff. Spending on staff training, including for classroom assistants, was very low last year. This is being addressed and there is to be increased staff training this year. Teachers and classroom assistants, have had little training in teaching the small steps in reading and writing for lower achieving pupils. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, the location and size of the library prevents pupils' easy access and it is underused. Additionally, the hall is in need of redecoration and there are too many tables and chairs stored in this area. Both of these weaknesses have been recently recognised as areas for improvement. The grounds provide good opportunities for sport and are well maintained. Resources are satisfactory overall. However, class fiction books are limited in range and quality and resources for computer control and data handling are unsatisfactory.

80. Accounts are kept in very good order by the school's finance officer. The school's short term development plan identifies the needs of the school well but has a weakness in that it does not show funds designated to raise pupils' standards in literacy, even though there are a significant number of pupils with poor reading, writing and spelling. The school has an average number of hours allocated to educational support assistants, but their deployment is unsatisfactory, and leaves too many pupils unsupported in large classes. A weakness in the previous OFSTED inspection was the lack of cost effectiveness measures, and this is still the case. The school does not have adequate measures in place to judge the effect of spending decisions on raising standards. For example, considerable sums were spent on an information technology suite but the criteria for measuring whether standards have improved are not specific enough. This prevents adequate monitoring of value for money of spending decisions. Otherwise, the school's measures for obtaining the best value from its spending are sound, and appropriate steps are taken to require tenders for large projects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

81. In order to improve the quality of education and the standards achieved the governors, headteacher and staff need to address the following key issues. The school has already identified most key points on their school improvement plan.

Raise standards in reading and writing, including spelling by:

- rigorous monitoring by the headteacher and the literacy co-ordinator of the quality of teaching and its impact on the standards achieved and taking effective action;
- reviewing the time allocations for teaching reading and writing and finding ways to manage the wide range of attainment in literacy sessions successfully so that pupils spend enough time on reading and writing at their own level, including lower and higher achieving pupils;
- enabling teachers to share good practice so that they can see model lessons for implementing the National Literacy Strategy and improve their subject skills.
- identifying the small progressive steps in reading, spelling and writing in order to teach these systematically;
- ensuring that pupils' reading is regularly monitored to enable a good match to be made to their previous attainment and that pupils' reading diaries contain targets for pupils to share with their parents.

(paragraphs 7-12,15-17,20-21,27-28, 30-37.44-47,58-59, 66,70-76, 82-94)

Raise standards in information and communication technology as a matter of urgency by:

- providing training for teachers in data handling and control technology;
- securing the necessary software and hardware for implementing the full National Curriculum;
- developing the co-ordinator's monitoring role, so that she supports teaching and rigorously monitors planning as well as the quality of teaching;
- ensuring that information and communication technology is used effectively across the curriculum to support pupils' learning in other subjects;
- ensuring that appropriate assessment systems are in place and are used to match work well with pupils' needs, including for the needs of higher achieving pupils.

(paragraphs 7,14,15,19,39,43,62,67,71-74,97,106,111,115,125,127-132)

Significantly strengthen provision for pupils with special educational needs in reading, writing and spelling so that they make good progress by:

- using assessment more rigorously to identify pupils who are underachieving;
- making more effective use of these assessments to set clear targets for pupils in their individual educational plans;
- monitoring pupils' individual educational plans and their progress towards their targets;
- reviewing the allocation of special educational needs support assistants so that pupils are better supported in literacy sessions;
- ensuring that teachers and assistants receive training in how to teach the small steps in reading and writing, including spelling, most effectively.

(paragraphs 12,16,21,27,30-37,42,47,60,62,70,74-91)

Develop the work of the governors so that they provide a clear direction for the school and evaluate the school's progress by:

- governors spending more time in school to monitor their areas of responsibility;
- including the governors more in the production of the school improvement plan;
- governors evaluating the cost effectiveness of spending decisions on raising standards;
- governors monitoring their action plan for its progress on addressing the identified weaknesses.

(Paragraphs 6,20,21, 67-81)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Monitor and manage carefully the withdrawal of pupils from lessons, for example when they are given music lessons by peripatetic music teachers or are given extra reading practice, so that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 47,48,99)

- Improve the school's library and the quality and range of classroom fiction books, ensure that it is used regularly and that pupils' reference skills are improved.

(Paragraphs 86, 93,106)

- Increase opportunities for the science co-ordinator to monitor teaching and standards.

(Paragraph 107)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

38

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

29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	50	29	5	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	Y3 – 6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	255
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	13
Special educational needs	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59
English as an additional language	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7
Pupil mobility in the last school year	
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	48	24	72

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	41	44
	Girls	23	21	23
	Total	62	62	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86(70)	86(70)	93 (74)
	National	75 [70]	71[69]	84 [78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	37	40
	Girls	22	21	23
	Total	59	58	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82(72)	81(78)	87 (71)
	National	71[68]	71[69]	79[75]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3-Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28.2
Average class size	32.1

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	138

Number of pupils per FTE adult	17.3
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	43,1846
Total expenditure	42,0597
Expenditure per pupil	1,611
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,340
Balance carried forward to next year	31,589

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	257
Number of questionnaires returned	70

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	46	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	32	52	9	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	68	4	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	61	12	3	7
The teaching is good.	35	61	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	49	20	0	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	43	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	52	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	21	57	16	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	31	54	1	0	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	31	60	6	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	24	49	12	6	10

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Most parents were supportive of the school. Several commented that the school promotes good progress from pupils' achievement as infant pupils. However, some parents are concerned about the lack of provision for pupils who enter with reading and writing difficulties. Several commented that although class teaching was good, they were concerned that their children were taught in very large classes and that there was not enough support for those who need it. A few said that the identification procedures took too long.

Some parents were concerned that, as a result of the literacy hour, they did not have enough information about home reading. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive comments and shares their concerns about the teaching of literacy to pupils with special educational needs in large

unsupported classes. The inspection team finds that pupils' reading records do not give parents enough information about reading targets and pupils' progress.

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

ENGLISH

82. Standards observed in Year 6 are below those found in most schools and much lower than the standards the previous Year 6 achieved in their 2000 national tests. In the provisional test results for 2000, pupils attained standards that were above the national average and well above standards attained by similar schools. Over the past four years, standards have been too variable in English with a significant drop in standards in 1998 and a rise in standards in 1999. However, standards in 1999 were well below those of similar schools. Taking the past four years together, there were no significant differences in the standards attained by boys and girls. The school set formal targets for 73 per cent of its pupils to achieve Level 4 and above in 2000 and 63 per cent in the Year 2001. These targets were exceeded in 2000 and do not represent enough challenge.

83. The findings of this inspection are that standards are below average in Year 6. No significant differences were observed between the attainment of boys and girls in Year 6 although girls outperformed boys in reading and writing in Year 4. The drop in standards attained by the current Year 6, compared with the standards achieved in 1999 and 2000 Year 6 national tests, is due to differences in the very variable attainment of pupils when they enter the school. The school does best when pupils enter with at least satisfactory standards in reading and writing, as was the case for the Year 6 pupils in 2000 who entered with above average standards. The school also attributes its success in 2000 to rigorous target setting and homework in Year 6, booster sessions and ability grouping for Year 6 pupils in the spring term.

84. The current Year 6 entered with below average standards in reading and writing and standards remain below average. This is because systems for teaching those pupils who enter with reading and writing difficulties are insufficiently robust. There has been a fall in standards since the last inspection when standards in English were found to be above the national average, however, pupils were reported then to be entering with attainment that was "average or above average".

85. By the age of eleven, pupils attain average standards in speaking and listening. Many pupils are confident speakers who answer questions willingly and readily join in discussions. They are often able to give detailed answers and discuss their feelings with maturity. However, a small number of lower achieving pupils have a limited vocabulary and need support to answer in whole class discussions. Most pupils in Year 6 are able to engage in more formal discussions as part of their preparation to write in an argumentative style about such topics as the advantages and disadvantages of wearing school uniform.

86. Overall, standards in reading are below average at the end of Year 6. Tests conducted by the school support this finding and indicate that this is also the case for a significant number of younger pupils in the school particularly in Year 4. In Year 6, a small proportion of higher achieving pupils read accurately, fluently and expressively. They draw on a good range of techniques to read and understand difficult words but do not always read a challenging range of books. Average achieving pupils read accurately but lower achievers do not have enough knowledge of phonics to help them work out unknown words and sometimes their reading books are too difficult. All pupils have reading diaries in which both pupils and parents can comment. However, these are inconsistently used and indicate a generally slow rate of reading. There are missed opportunities to involve parents in supporting their

child's development in reading. Many pupils have little experience of using the school library and have limited library skills.

87. By the age of 11, pupils' standards of writing are below average. They write for a satisfactory range of purposes, such as play scripts, personal writing about family and friends, poems, note taking, rewriting famous stories, writing about reading and writing argumentatively and persuasively. Higher achieving pupils often use lively language and their narrative writing moves confidently. However, there is little use of more complex sentence structures and the range of vocabulary is not wide. The writing of average and lower achievers generally conveys meaning and is coherent and average pupils use a clear narrative structure. However, the accuracy of both spelling and punctuation is too variable and too many do not have a secure grasp of basic spelling patterns. Planning of written work and drafting and editing skills are taught throughout the school, however, the emphasis and the consistency of these good practices are variable in different classes within year groups. Handwriting is generally clearly formed and most of the oldest pupils use a neat joined style of writing. However, the progression of these skills is not evident in all classes.

88. Overall the quality of teaching and the quality of learning in English are satisfactory. The current Year 6 entered the school with below average standards overall in reading and writing and well below standards in phonics and spelling. Most pupils, therefore, make satisfactory progress in English. However, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. Their progress is satisfactory when they receive well-focused additional support but there is an overall lack of regular, systematic provision for them in reading, writing and spelling. Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress overall. They make good gains in their learning when they receive specialist teaching and their learning is satisfactory when they are unsupported by specialists. In the school's previous report, the quality of teaching and learning was good. During the week of the inspection, good teaching was observed in two thirds of lessons but overall, the quality ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. One unsatisfactory lesson in Year 5 was observed although there were some weaker elements in satisfactory lessons.

89. In the most effective teaching, the teachers' confident subject knowledge promotes high expectations and skills in providing interesting and challenging work for the full ability range. Classes are well managed and very good productive relationships also ensure that pupils work with interest and good concentration and consequently learn well. These qualities were well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson where pupils learned how to develop more complex sentence structures in their writing. The teacher used a jumbled version of the traditional story of Red Riding Hood using both correct and incorrect vocabulary to join the sentences. Through skilful questioning and opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking, the teacher developed pupils' understanding of how complex sentences could be created.

90. When lessons are satisfactory rather than good, teachers are not as successful in managing the wide range of attainment in their classes and sometimes do not have enough support for lower achievers in group reading and writing tasks. For example, in one lesson on note taking in a very large class in Year 4, the work was well matched to average and higher achieving pupils throughout. However, lower achievers, mainly boys, had little support to help them to improve their poor spelling and writing during group work. Where teaching is weak, the management of pupils is inadequate leading to loss of attention and progress. Time spent in regaining pupils' attention leads to lack of time spent teaching literacy.

91. Examination of pupils' work, as well as lesson observations, shows that activities for different ability groups are not as well matched to pupils' needs as in good lessons. This lack of challenge inhibits the rate of learning in individual lessons and over time. All Year 4 and 5 classes are very large

and the ability range is very wide. There is also inconsistent additional support in the classroom particularly for group work. Although teachers plan effectively together in year group teams, the quality and quantity of pupils' work are too variable across classes and sometimes within year groups. Teachers have not had enough support or monitoring of their lessons to help them improve.

92. The curriculum in English is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The format of the literacy hour has been established satisfactorily but its management is inconsistent through the school. The framework for the National Literacy Strategy provides the scheme of work; however, the time allocated for English, although meeting the minimum requirements, is not sufficient for teachers to raise standards in the weaker areas of reading, extended writing and spelling. There is a good range of standardised assessment procedures in English but the results of these assessments are not used well enough to create sharp relevant targets for year groups, classes and individual pupils. The school has recently introduced a good range of procedures to assess reading and writing but this has not had time to have an impact on pupils' learning. Homework is used appropriately across the school to extend and reinforce pupils' learning. However, the quality of marking in pupils' books is variable and the use of good evaluative comments and the next goals for learning is not consistent.

93. The literacy co-ordinator, recently appointed, has a good understanding of her role. Before her appointment, coordination in the subject was weakened by several changes of staff and the impetus created during the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy had been lost. Monitoring in the subject has lapsed resulting in inconsistent practice through the school. The staff are aware of this and there are plans for rigorous monitoring and support to be re-established. Resources in English are satisfactory overall. Recent good quality purchases for literacy have boosted provision and the school has a good range of dictionaries and thesauruses. Although the number of fiction books in the classrooms is satisfactory, their quality and range are more limited. They do not provide an attractive and interesting selection to encourage more reluctant readers and to challenge more able readers. The school's library is situated in a school corridor and does not allow easy or prolonged access or for a whole class to use the area for research. It is currently underused and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to learn specific library skills and to develop independent study.

94. The subject is enhanced by the Additional Literacy Support Programme, book weeks, theatre visits and pupils' participation in drama projects with other schools. Other subjects make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy skills. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning in the subject although its use is not systematic. However, there are some useful opportunities for pupils to develop skills of discussion, reading and sometimes to write at length in history, geography, religious education and science. Although pupils learn a satisfactory range of special terms in each subject, this is not systematically taught and pupils' accurate use of this type of language is variable. English makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills. They write personally about their responses to family and friends, discuss and analyse traditional tales and modern classics such as Ted Hughes' Iron Man, and work well collaboratively. There are more limited opportunities for them to appreciate the works from other cultures.

MATHEMATICS

95. In the provisional results of the 2000 national tests, pupils achieved well above average standards in terms of both the expected Level 4, and the higher Level 5. These results were much improved on the standards attained in 1999. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 1999, the pupils' results in mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. When compared with those of similar schools, the results were well below average. There was no significant difference in the performance

of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils exceeding the national standard, and attaining Level 5, was average.

96. The findings of this inspection indicate that pupils in the current Year 6 are achieving standards that are above the national average. This judgement shows that the school has maintained the above average standards reported in the last OFSTED inspection. However, the pupils' use of mathematics and their problem-solving skills have improved. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of the multiplication tables up to ten, convert percentages to fractions and decimals confidently, and explain their mental strategies well. Pupils are good at working out challenging problems to do with timetables, for example, and the patterns made by expanding squares. They divide numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands accurately, and have a good understanding of the use of the decimal point. Pupils use non-calculator methods for long multiplication and long division, including the multiplication and division of decimals. They use their knowledge of percentages well in relation to everyday life in, for example, their work on calculating percentages of sums of money. When working with two-dimensional shapes and angles, pupils label the various shapes with confidence, and have a good understanding of acute and obtuse angles. They understand rotational symmetry well, and draw their shapes accurately on squared paper. Pupils have a good grasp of databases, and how to compile data using frequency tables to produce a graph.

97. Pupils make little use of information and communication technology in their mathematics because the school lacks appropriate programs. They have sound opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, when measuring liquids in science and using force meters in science. In one Year 3 registration, the teacher built well on work done in lessons by asking pupils how many were having a cooked lunch if six were eating sandwiches, and before a Year 5 games lesson, pupils were asked about the probability of rain spoiling their lesson outside.

98. Given their average standards on entry to the school, pupils are achieving well. They start well by building up good basic skills in Year 3, and achieve average standards in their work counting up and down in multiples of two, five and ten. Year 4 pupils are below average overall, particularly in their numeracy skills, having entered the school with well below average skills. Nevertheless, they are making sound progress as teachers teach and reinforce skills associated with calculating numbers mentally, and many achieve average standards in their work on shapes. Year 5 pupils achieve average standards. They are becoming increasingly comfortable with number, and round decimals up and down confidently. Their use of number is good, and their work on probability shows a clear understanding of how to tackle problems in different ways to achieve the required result. The demanding teaching in Year 6 ensures that pupils' progress accelerates rapidly, and their attainment is soon above average.

99. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. They do well when an educational support assistant is on hand to guide them through the work, but sometimes struggle in the large classes when unsupported. Pupils withdrawn from mathematics for extra reading work miss important parts of lessons, and then find it hard to catch up. High achieving pupils achieve good standards, and are supported well by challenging teaching. This results from good planning which helps to promote robust extension work. Their results in the national tests show the effectiveness of this support, and one third of pupils attained above average standards in 2000. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in mathematics, particularly in numeracy, and attain at least average standards by Year 6.

100. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and similar to that reported in the previous inspection. The main factor in the success of teaching, and pupils' good progress, is the clear structure provided by the school's implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers plan together

effectively in year groups, and are supported well in their planning by the mathematics co-ordinator. This gives teachers the knowledge and confidence to teach mathematical skills, and ensures that pupils build well on their learning from year to year. The teachers have high expectations of all pupils, and their planning shows a good regard for both high and low achieving groups. In the best lessons, the teacher, in question and answer sessions, says which ability group of pupils should answer the next question. This works well, because teachers set the level of questions precisely to pupils' attainment, and all groups are extended but reasonably sure of success. All teachers encourage the pupils to develop a mathematical way of thinking, and to explain how they work out their answers. This leads to a deeper understanding of mathematics, as pupils think back to work out how they came to an answer. Teachers' control of classes is generally good, but suffers when they talk too loudly over the noise made by pupils. Mental mathematics sessions are usually brisk and exciting, and are a key reason why pupils enjoy mathematics and develop quick recall of facts. Occasionally, however, these go on too long, pupils start to lose interest, and their learning slows down as a result. Teachers use plenary sessions very well, both to assess how much pupils have learned, and to gauge which topics may need to be revisited.

101. The teaching in Year 6 is consistently good, and is responsible for pupils' very good progress, both in their understanding of mathematical concepts, and in their application of this knowledge. Both Year 6 teachers have particularly high expectations of what pupils will achieve, and give a good mix of challenging direct teaching and carefully planned group work. As a result, pupils learn important skills quickly, and apply this new learning to demanding group tasks. In one of the best Year 6 lessons, the teacher began with a quick review of previous work on decimals, and moved swiftly on to teach pupils how to convert decimals to fractions and percentages. Her questioning was skilful in the way it brought all pupils into the lesson, and ensured that they had all mastered the essential information. The group work was pitched at just the right level, so that higher achievers had opportunities to explore the subject in great depth, whilst those with special educational needs, with valuable help from the educational support assistant, gained a clear understanding of the basic mathematical processes. At the end of the lesson, the plenary showed that all pupils had made great strides in their learning about the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages.

102. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum for pupils of all ages and abilities. A comprehensive subject policy is in place, and all classes have introduced the National Numeracy Strategy very well into their lessons, with an hour of numeracy teaching every day. The subject co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and gives high quality support to the staff. She has monitored mathematics teaching and provided staff with 'model' lessons. These are important reasons why the quality of teaching is consistently good. The co-ordinator has introduced a good scheme of work, which provides a good structure for teachers' planning, and excellent ideas for those who are not specialists in mathematics. Assessment is thorough, and is used well to identify elements of mathematics that pupils find difficult. Resources for the subject are satisfactory, with a range of books and practical equipment available in all classrooms to provide easy access for teachers, support staff and pupils.

SCIENCE

103. In Year 6, standards are above average, which is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. These standards are improvements on pupils' provisional results in the 2000 national tests when their attainment was average compared with all schools as well as similar schools. From 1996 to 1999, standards have been close to the national average, with boys achieving higher standards than girls. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, standards were below the national average and well below average compared with similar schools. The findings of the inspection show that standards are improving through systematic implementation of a high quality scheme of work and the good

standards attained in practical scientific enquiry. Those pupils for whom English is a second language and those with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress overall, particularly where they receive additional classroom support. More able pupils achieve satisfactorily.

104. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a good understanding of the scientific concepts of fair testing and prediction. Pupils plan and conduct their own tests well. They undertake practical investigations into the nature of gravity and the ways in which light and sound travel. They understand the functions of parts of flowering plants and the major organs of the human body. Pupils are able to use branching keys to identify plants and they have a good understanding of how plants adapt to different habitats. They understand the nature of reversible and irreversible changes in materials. They use their mathematical skills soundly to investigate and record, although weak literacy skills, particularly spelling, sometimes hinder recording in non-graphical ways. During work on forces and friction, Year 6 pupils use a Newton meter effectively and Year 4 pupils accurately measure the distance travelled by objects.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is almost always good. This is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection. Teachers maintain a good balance between giving information and allowing the pupils to investigate themselves. This had a good impact, for example, on Year 3 pupils' learning about magnetism. Here, the teacher asked, "Why wouldn't it be fair to change the magnets?" and this made the pupils think carefully about the nature of a fair test. The teachers pay due attention to health and safety in science. In a Year 4 lesson on dissolving materials, the teachers stressed that the pupils were not to taste anything. She made science relevant to the pupils' everyday life, for example by asking "What happens to the coffee granules when you pour the hot water on?" She developed the skills of careful observation and measuring, by providing the pupils with magnifying lenses and measuring cylinders. The teachers encourage the pupils to 'think like a scientist' and to use correct scientific vocabulary. Overall, they match work well to pupils' varying needs of the pupils, including extension activities for more capable pupils.

106. The teachers assess the pupils' attainment satisfactorily. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher realised that further work would be necessary to consolidate learning about evaporation and condensation and planned the next stage of pupils' work accordingly. The quality of the teachers' marking is variable, but satisfactory overall. The best marking helps the pupils to improve. For example, written comments by Year 6 teachers included "Targets: make explanations really clear; learn spellings of new scientific words" and "Write your ideas down clearly". The teachers foster enthusiasm for science by making it real and practical. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher placed the problem of separating mixtures into the context of survival on a desert island and this really motivated the pupils. Pupils' attitudes to science lessons are, therefore, generally positive. A minority of pupils, particularly in Year 5, display indifference and some inappropriate behaviour. Although older pupils have accessed the Internet for information, there is very little evidence of the teachers encouraging the pupils to use information and communication technology in science. Likewise, insufficient opportunities are provided for the pupils to research information from the very extensive range of science reference books in the school library.

107. The co-ordinator offers sound management. She realises that the subject policy needs review, although the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. A good quality scheme of work has been put into place since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator supports and monitors planning, in order to ensure consistency between classes in each year group, but has little opportunity to monitor teaching. She has advised colleagues on how to approach the teaching of scientific enquiry. Satisfactory procedures are in place to assess pupils' attainment and this is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has analysed the results of the most recent national tests, with a view to highlighting areas of relative weakness in performance. The previous

inspection found that learning resources for science were insufficient. The co-ordinator has done much to address this and resources are now adequate. There is a very extensive range of science reference books in the school library. The subject makes a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of a large wild area and a pleasant pond area. The pupils develop social skills by working in small teams and making joint decisions wherever appropriate. Some more able pupils participated in a science and technology challenge day at another school.

ART

108. In Year 6, standards are above average for pupils of this age. The previous inspection judged standards to be well above average. Pupils experiment with paints and mix colours to create effective colour wheels. They also mix colours to match commercial paint samples. In their sketchbooks, pupils show a good understanding of tone and proportion in drawing pencil sketches of faces and more detailed sketches of eyes and fingers. They experiment with line. Pupils are familiar with the work of famous artists, including Klee, Giacometti, Van Gogh, Kokoschka and Picasso. They create very effective paintings based on Picasso's blue period, with good attention to simple shapes and sharp edges. They use their literacy skills soundly to describe and give their opinions on John Grimshaw's 'Moated Grange' and Peter Rush's sculpture, 'The Vicar and his Sister'. In work linked to a book they have read in class, the pupils create effective paintings of the warm and cold faces of the bully.

109. They display good observational skills in producing detailed pencil sketches and paintings of Greek vases and flowers. There is photographic evidence that the pupils have created effective outdoor willow sculptures and good glazed frames, used as weaving looms. Some pupils have produced an effective batik of the pond area. Pupils for whom English is a second language and those with special educational needs achieve well. More able pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing their art and design skills.

110. The quality of teaching and learning in the two Year 6 lessons observed was at least good. The teachers use visual stimuli well and encourage the art of framing, in order to help pupils focus on one part of a detailed painting. They use questioning well, in order to make pupils think carefully and come up with interesting ideas. Teachers ensure that pupils make good use of their sketchbooks in producing good, annotated sketches of the textured paintings, which they will later produce. They prepare resources well, so that pupils have a wide choice of materials, from glue, sand and salt to pencil shavings, leaves and powder paints. They encourage experimentation and independence in pupils' learning: "Use your judgement", "It's your piece of work; I'm confident you can evaluate it yourself". The teaching of specific art skills is very good: "Use the glue to control the sand". As a result, the quality of work produced in these lessons was good and often very good. Pupils' attitudes to art are very good. They work quietly, taking a pride in their drawings and paintings and evaluate and improve their work.

111. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning in other year groups is good. In Year 3, art and design is linked well to science, where the pupils produce reflective silhouettes, and, in Year 4, well linked to literacy, where they create sound pictures based on the story of The Iron Man. Good links are made with music, for example, in Year 5, where a teacher encouraged the pupils to respond visually to an excerpt from Holst's Planet Suite. Teachers pay due attention to pupils' skills in making images and artefacts. Year 5 pupils have produced realistic papier-

mache models of fruits and gourds. However, the use of information and communication technology within art is irregular and is, therefore, unsatisfactory.

112. The co-ordinator recognises that the subject policy needs review. Planning is soundly based on Local Education Authority guidelines. The co-ordinator monitors planning, in order to ensure consistency of approach, but has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching. There is no formal recording of pupils' attainment, although the co-ordinator intends to develop a collection of work samples from across the whole age range. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning and the school benefits from the provision of a kiln. Parents are very supportive in helping to run a weekly art club. In encouraging the pupils to share resources responsibly and to become aware of different artistic styles and famous artists, the subject is making a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Some Japanese mothers have helped Year 6 pupils to become familiar with origami and the art of Japan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils' attainment is average in Year 6 and similar to the standards reported on the last inspection. Pupils' designing, making and testing skills are satisfactory overall. There are good features in pupils' ability to generate ideas for a purpose. When designing and making shelters, pupils consider the purpose of different shelters well and understand how they satisfy different people's needs. Pupils take this information into account when producing their good design ideas. They communicate their design ideas well by drawing, although they do not always show how they will make their models by producing step-by-step plans. Pupils' craft skills are average, for example, they cut, shape and join wood strip accurately for the purpose of making their own designs. However, when working with such construction materials, pupils do not select from a wide enough range of materials, especially when decorating and finishing their products. Their skills in evaluating their work as they design and make are average.

114. Pupils often successfully apply their knowledge and understanding to their designing, making and testing. For example, when Year 5 pupils design and make pop-up animal models, they apply their knowledge of forces well when using pneumatics to make their moving parts. When Year 3 pupils design and make photo frames, they develop a particularly good understanding of how different frames are designed to fit different purposes. However, when Year 4 pupils design and make pop up books, they do not develop a good enough understanding of the properties of different papers and card or select from a wide enough range of materials. Throughout the school, pupils' ability to apply their art skills to design and technology is average.

115. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve satisfactory standards. However, potentially higher achieving pupils make unsatisfactory progress, as they have few opportunities to learn at higher levels. Pupils apply literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily. They often write for a real purpose when recording their design ideas or evaluating their work. Although they measure carefully, little work on data handling was seen. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers in their design and technology work.

116. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Examination of pupils' work through the school shows that teaching is at least satisfactory. The lesson observed in Year 3, when pupils evaluated photo frames, was good. The teacher enthusiastically taught product awareness. She provided a good balance between whole-class and group work with effective questioning. Resources were organised well and the teacher provided very good opportunities for pupils to work together in small teams and to share their ideas.

117. The new co-ordinator, who is also the headteacher, is enthusiastic about the subject and has good subject expertise. The school uses the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for covering Curriculum 2000, and plans show a sound coverage of the National Curriculum. In particular, there are good plans for the pupils to use a range of materials, including food and textiles as well as construction materials. There are good assessment procedures built into the guidelines, which the school is using. The co-ordinator is effective in her role and supports and guides teachers well in their planning.

118. The draft policy is satisfactory overall but has not been updated to show designing and making as one attainment target as required by the new National Curriculum. It is awaiting the governors' approval. Resources are satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

119. Pupils' attainment is average in Year 6, and similar to the standards reported in the previous inspection. They have a sound grasp of maps, and draw their own with good attention to detail, including keys, coastal features, rivers and towns. Their imaginary tourist guide shows a good awareness of how different places are attractive or dull. Pupils have a sound understanding of the physical and human features of India, and make sound comparisons between lives there and in their own town. Their work on climate is good, particularly in the way pupils make comparisons of climate in different countries with that in England. In physical geography, pupils have an average knowledge of rivers, and the features they create on the landscape.

120. Given pupils' average knowledge and understanding of the world when they enter the school, they achieve sound standards by the time they leave. They make a good start, learning how to address letters correctly in Year 3, and developing a satisfactory understanding of the points of a compass. Pupils build soundly on these skills, and produce good work on their local town, including how the land is used for different purposes. In Year 4, pupils' work on tropical rainforests is of an average standard, but too much emphasis is placed on colouring borders around their work, and this reduces the amount done. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Higher achievers do well in geography; their written work is of a good standard, and their longer projects well researched. They use computers well to find information, both from the Internet and from CD ROM programs.

121. No teaching of geography was observed during the inspection. The new co-ordinator has helped to introduce the scheme of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, and this gives teachers a good basis for their planning. Teachers' termly plans are good, and identify clearly the learning to be achieved. The co-ordinator has monitored teachers' planning, but not their teaching. She has quickly identified gaps in the school's resources, and ordered new books and equipment. The scheme of work contains good opportunities for assessment, which the school is now using.

HISTORY

122. In Year 6, standards are average and similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Only one lesson of history was seen during the week of the inspection and judgements were made based on analysis of pupils' work, displays, discussions with teachers and subject documentation.

123. By the end of the key stage, pupils have gained some appreciation of aspects of life in Victorian Britain and compare their own experience of schools with the Victorian schoolroom. They have insight into the life in Victorian homes and the clothes people wore. In an effective link with their work in artefacts, pupils consider the work and influence of the artist William Morris on design in Victorian houses. They are able to compare their summer holiday experiences with the holiday experiences of Victorian children. Pupils throughout the key stage appropriately develop their knowledge of chronology by creating increasingly complex time lines covering the periods they have been studying. Younger pupils make good links with their work in geography when they compare maps of modern and Ancient Greece. They consider the legacy of Ancient Greece and learn about some of the important myths of that time. Pupils cover a satisfactory range of topics within each period studied but the work of older higher achieving pupils does not always contain sufficient depth and detail. Although pupils are given opportunities to carry out sustained research, this is often regarded as an additional area and not an integral part of pupils' developing skills. There are some useful opportunities to consider the value of different kinds of evidence in some of the periods studied but these are not consistently developed in each year.

124. Overall, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning are satisfactory, which is similar to the previous inspection. In a good lesson in Year 4, the qualities seen reflected the best aspects of work observed in the analysis of pupils' work. The teacher had planned carefully, selecting relevant and attractive Tudor portraits that illustrated both the splendour of the costumes and the significance of the detail. The teacher's enthusiasm was clearly communicated to the pupils. Activities were well matched to the abilities of all pupils in the class and well-organised group work enabled them to make relevant and thoughtful observations. They made good gains in their learning because of clear instruction and questioning and their ability to share ideas with each other. Indications are that where teaching is weaker, teachers do not expect pupils to be so productive and subject specific skills are not taught as thoroughly. There are some missed opportunities to use historical experiences for developing pupils' extended writing skills and the range of their writing.

125. The present policy and scheme of work, currently in draft form, have recently been updated to incorporate the requirements of Curriculum 2000. Good use has been made of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines and there is appropriate regard for the key skills in the subject. However, there is insufficient guidance about how these skills can be developed year by year. Assessment in the subject follows the whole-school pattern for most foundation subjects, in that assessment opportunities from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines are used. However, there is little use of information communication technology within the subject.

126. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of her role. She has monitored teachers' planning but has not monitored pupils' work or classroom teaching. She has begun the process of collecting examples of pupils' work, which reflect the new scheme of work to provide a useful baseline for the subject. Resources are satisfactory overall and are well organised and accessible. In a recent audit of resources conducted by the co-ordinator, she identified the need to develop resources for some units further. The school's curriculum is enhanced by visits to a local Victorian museum and a local railway village, visits from a local education authority advisor to provide Year 3 with an archaeology day, visits from a Roman soldier and a Victorian school day. The subject contributes well to pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures in the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

127. In Year 6, standards are below average and below those reported at the time of the previous OFSTED inspection. This is the result of limited opportunities for the pupils to use data handling

software and the school's lack of resources for all aspects of control technology. Neither of these aspects was reported upon at the time of the last inspection. The school now has a computer suite and this is used regularly for pupils to learn word processing and to interrogate the Internet but does not have the systems in place for control technology.

128. By the end of Year 6, pupils' word processing skills are good and they successfully interrogate the Internet and CD-ROMS for information. They design posters for advertising the school and use words and graphic effects well for attracting different audiences. Pupils rarely use e-mail and data handling for communicating and collecting information. Although pupils develop word processing skills well from Year 3 to Year 6, they do not systematically learn the skills for other aspects of information and communication technology and control technology is weak.

129. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory which is similar to their peers. More able pupils in particular underachieve through very few opportunities to achieve at higher levels in any aspect of the subject.

130. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Although the teaching observed in the three lessons observed was satisfactory, the lack of evidence of information and communication technology in pupils' books for the previous and current years showed that information and communication technology is infrequently used to support learning in subjects, including mathematics and science. There has been little subject training and some staff clearly lack subject knowledge.

131. In all the lessons seen, the teachers' subject knowledge was good for the areas being taught. This was demonstrated in Year 5 when the teacher gave very clear instructions on how to access the Internet for finding specific information and provided good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to new situations. This resulted in good learning for many pupils. However, the teaching was only graded satisfactory. Despite the teacher's competence and good behaviour management, the amount of learning in this lesson was only satisfactory overall. This was the result of the need to teach a large class in the computer suite when a small number of pupils were grouped in threes to each computer. The system for ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the computer was not fully efficient as a few pupils had little opportunity to practise their own skills on the computer and did not learn enough in the lesson.

132. Teachers have had little training and one co-ordinator, who is also the deputy Head, is on maternity leave. The other co-ordinator is currently attending a long specialist course. The development of the co-ordinator's role has been unsatisfactory since the previous inspection. However, this is now developing rapidly although there remains much to be done. There are plans on the new short-term school development plan for the co-ordinator to support and monitor teachers' teaching. The school has now started to use the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines although teachers still need training. This has also been targeted as a priority for the school. Although a few of the computers in the suite are equipped to use on screen control technology, most are not. The school has been slow to address this weakness. The scheme of work has good built-in assessment procedures but these are not systematically used. Resources are unsatisfactory for supporting mathematics, science and design and technology because of the lack of data handling software and control technology software and hardware.

MUSIC

133. Insufficient teaching of music was observed during the inspection to make an overall judgement on its quality throughout the school. On the evidence available, pupils' overall attainment by the age of eleven is average. This judgement is based on observation of one Year 5 lesson, one

peripatetic instrumental session, two assemblies and discussions with the staff responsible for coordinating music during the co-ordinator's maternity leave. The quality of singing observed in assemblies was satisfactory. The pupils can maintain rounds in two parts, both accompanied and unaccompanied. They sing with reasonably clear diction. Those pupils for whom English is a second language and those with special educational needs join in enthusiastically.

134. In a Year 5 lesson observed, the pupils listened with interest and concentration to a section of Mars, from Holst's Planet Suite. Most of the pupils recorded their response to this loud music through appropriate words and effective pictures, largely on the theme of war or science fiction. A few were less responsive. The judgement from this lesson is that listening and appraising skills are average. There is evidence in a number of classrooms that the pupils show average listening and appraising skills in responding to a range of music, such as Vivaldi's Four Seasons.

135. Forty-four pupils have instrumental tuition on woodwind, brass or stringed instruments. The quality of performance by some woodwind players and a violinist in assemblies was good. These pupils can read musical notation well and show good finger control. Three flautists observed having tuition from a visiting teacher showed satisfactory levels of performance.

136. An analysis of a few samples of Year 6 pupils' work kept in the co-ordinator's file indicates that composing skills are average. They create rhythm patterns in symbolic form and more able pupils can use conventional notation to create simple pieces. They also use appropriate written notations, such as 'crescendo' and 'accelerando'.

137. A good draft policy is in place, which includes useful guidance for non-specialists on teaching music. Planning is soundly based on guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, but there is no whole school system in place for recording pupils' attainment and progress. The evidence suggests that the co-ordinator provides good leadership, which inspires many pupils to take part in musical activities outside lessons. There is effective liaison with the peripatetic music teachers. The school has a good range of tuned and untuned instruments. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They participate in Christmas productions and in musical productions, including 'Joseph', 'Rats' and 'The Pirates of Penzance'.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. In Year 6, pupils' attain above average standards, which is similar to the standards reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection. By Year 6, pupils have above average games skills. They hold a bat correctly and strike the ball well. Their throwing is average but a few struggle to catch a small ball. They have good football skills, and the school team did very well recently to win the local tournament. Their gymnastic skills are average. Pupils move easily around the hall, and combine twists and rolls with reasonable skill to make an interesting sequence. They observe each other's work carefully, and improve their own performance well as a result. Pupils' swimming skills are above average, and nearly all swim well. They respond well to instructions, and are well aware of the effects of exercise on their heart and lungs.

139. Pupils make good progress in physical education, given their average skills on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language do well, and take a full part in all activities. The most able pupils make good progress, and do the school credit in competitive football and netball.

140. The quality of teaching and learning is generally good, as it was in the previous inspection. Teachers start physical education lessons promptly and in a well-organised manner. This is important,

and ensures that pupils' learning begins the moment the lesson starts. Warm-up activities are appropriate, and interest the pupils who work at a good pace. The lessons are challenging, and encourage pupils to attempt more and more demanding work. Teachers show sound knowledge of the subject in the instructions and demonstrations that they give. In one of the best lessons, the teacher used the best pupils to demonstrate the most effective techniques for skipping, and then joined in herself. As a result of this informed instruction, pupils' skipping improved considerably. Teachers generally control pupils' behaviour well, although occasionally a few older boys get excited in lessons, and slow the pace down as the teachers remind them to behave.

141. Physical education makes a good contribution to the social and moral development of the pupils as they learn to understand the benefits of teamwork. The subject is overseen capably by the headteacher, who has a sound knowledge of the curriculum. The school has a basic scheme of work, and the curriculum includes appropriate opportunities for swimming and outdoor adventurous activities. Assessment is weak, with no system to track pupils' progress, apart from the annual reports. The school has a good-sized hall, but tables and chairs around the edge pose a safety threat. The playing field is a very good asset for outdoor games. A sound range of extracurricular sports sessions helps to boost standards, especially by the most able pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. In Year 6, pupils reach standards that match the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. This judgement is similar to the judgement of the school's previous inspection. In this inspection, judgements are based on the two lessons seen, analysis of pupils' work, school documentation and discussion with the subject co-ordinator.

143. By the age of 11, pupils have a sound understanding of the basis of Christianity and of other world faiths, in particular, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. They are aware of the significance of some of the main Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, and places of worship such as an Anglican Church and an Islamic mosque. Pupils are respectful of beliefs, traditions and feelings distinct from their own. They write about the reasons why people believe in the authority of holy books and how people celebrate the holy days of their faith. They develop their appreciation of the natural world when they write about places, which are special for them. In Year 5, pupils consider what it means to belong to an organisation or to a faith and how that sometimes means personal sacrifice. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 understand the significance of important symbols in Christianity and consider the relevance of some of the stories of Jesus, such as the Good Samaritan, to their lives today. In their studies of Islam, they compare the most important festivals in each faith and the similarities and differences in the significant rituals.

144. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the previous inspection standards were similar. In the lessons seen, teachers were confident in their subject knowledge and through their use of effective questioning were able to develop pupils' thoughtful and sensitive responses. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where pupils' attention and interest were captured by an expressive reading of the story of the Good Samaritan appropriately adapted to their needs. The teacher, through careful questioning, was able to encourage pupils to relate the themes from the story to their own lives and experiences. Pupils were well involved in the discussion and contributed their own ideas willingly. They were able to develop and consolidate their ideas in their recording of their work because the format was appropriate to their stage of development and focused clearly on the main learning points of the lesson. Analyses of pupils' work indicate that pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on their responses and to consider the place of faith in their own lives. There is good regard for both the main

areas of the programme of study. However, the quality and range of recorded work are not consistent between classes, sometimes within the same year group.

145. The co-ordinator for the subject has a good understanding of her role and has produced a clear policy for the subject, which has been agreed by all staff. The new scheme of work is based on a commercial scheme closely linked to the recently revised locally agreed syllabus. It provides a good basis for the development of the subject and for teachers' planning. Assessment for the subject is clearly outlined in the policy and provides a good foundation for the school to work from. The co-ordinator has not had an opportunity to carry out her monitoring role but has recently been given time to discuss the new syllabus with staff.

146. Well-planned sessions of collective worship have a mainly Christian focus and provide good support for pupils' experience of religious practice. Local clergy take part in these sessions on a termly basis and the school visits the local church for festivals such as Harvest and Christingle. Representatives from the Islamic faith visit the school and give good support to pupils' understanding of other faiths. Resources for the subject meet the needs of the new scheme of work. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.